

Biography of the blind, including the lives of all those, from Homer down to the present day, who have distinguished themselves as poets, philosophers, artists, &c.; &c; ... To which is prefixed a memoir of the author / [James Wilson].

Contributors

Wilson, James, the blind poet, 1779-Homer.

Publication/Creation

Belfast : D. Lyons, 1821.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/b6rpj3n5>

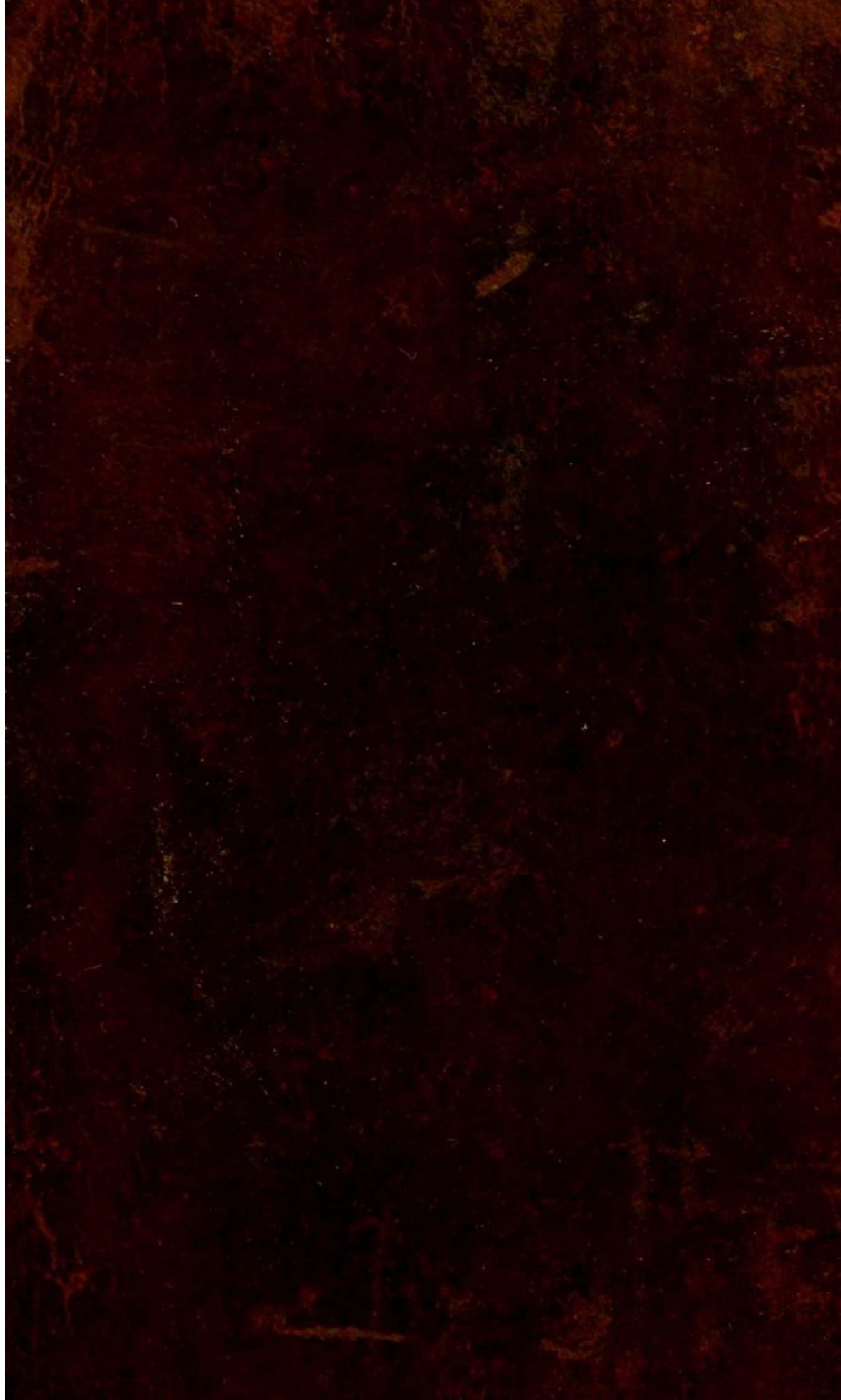
License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>





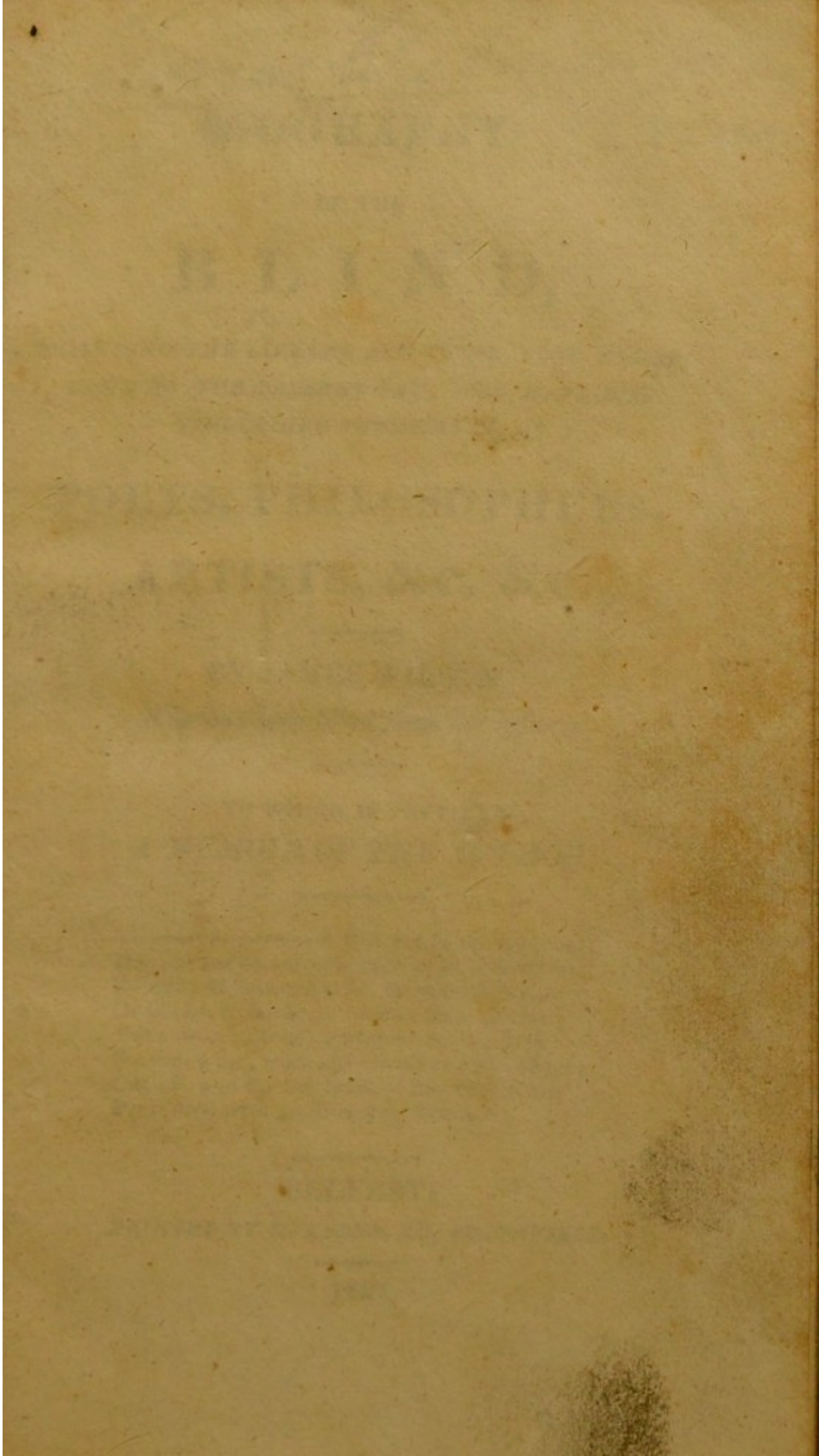


~~C~~ Co/m

53371/A

V. p. 213 - The life of Caroline
the Irish poet







DEDICATION

Ladies Directresses

OF THE

Molyneux Asylum for

BLIND FEMALES

This little work is
most humbly and res-
pectfully dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.



DEDICATION.

TO THE
Ladies Directresses
OF THE
Molyneaux Asylum for
BLIND FEMALES,
THIS little work is
most humbly and res-
pectfully dedicated by
THE AUTHOR.

TO THE READER.

When perusing the productions of the Philosopher, the Divine, or the Biographer, there is no inquiry more natural to the human mind, whether ignorant, or intelligent, than, 'who is the Author of this production.' If therefore a Memoir of the writer accompanies a pleasing, or interesting work, the account is read with avidity ; and although, there be nothing extraordinary in the narrative,—nothing in which the individual is peculiarly distinguished from his contemporaries, yet, the outlines of his life are calculated to gratify the the curiosity which his works have excited.

I have not the vanity however, to suppose, that any of my readers will have their curiosity so strongly excited in relation to the Author, or rather compiler, of the succeeding articles, neither do I vainly imagine that they would sustain an irreparable loss, by remaining ignorant of the particulars that are to follow. No, but as it is pleasing to a rational mind, to contemplate the footsteps of an all-directing Providence, to trace the progress of the human mind, in various relations, and to get acquainted with the actions of individuals, who have laboured under great difficulties, so the present Memoir is presented to the reader, as distinguished by these features, as a simple unvarnished tale, and as calculated to awaken those sentiments which are common to the Peasant, and to the Philosopher.

Persuaded from the kind encouragement I have experienced, that this narrative will fall into the hands of many of my most distinguished and disinterested friends, I would consider myself ungrateful, should I not declare, that no length of time, no change of circumstances, shall ever be able to efface from my memory, those pleasing recollections of unmerited kindness, so long experienced.—Recollections which are stamped in indelible characters upon my heart.]

JAMES WILSON.

INTRODUCTION.

The branch of Biography which the following pages contain, has not until now been entered on as a distinct subject. In all preceding works the lives of the blind have been classed, and confounded with those of others; and though individuals have been pointed out as objects of admiration and astonishment, yet, no work has appeared, in which they have been considered in a proper point of view, as a class of men seemingly separated from society, cut off as it were from the whole visible world, deprived of the most perceptive powers that man can possess; yet, in whom, perseverance, industry, and reflection, have in many instances overcome all those difficulties which would have been thought insurmountable had not experience proved the contrary.

In the pursuit of knowledge the blind have been very successful, and many of them have acquired the first literary honours, that their own, or foreign Universities could confer. In the different branches of Philosophy, if they have not excelled, they have been equal to many of their contemporaries; but more particularly in the science of mathematics, many of them having been able to solve the most obtruse problems in algebra. In poetry, they have been equally distinguished. Two of the greatest men that ever courted the muses, laboured under the deprivation

of sight.—Homer the venerable father of epic poetry, and the inimitable author of *Paradise Lost*. These two illustrious Bards will live in the minds of every true lover of poetry, as long as learning and learned men shall have a place in the page of history. In Philosophy, Saunderson and Euler appear in the most conspicuous point of view;—the former lost his sight when only twelve months old, but was enabled by the strength of his comprehensive genius to delineate the phenomena of the rainbow, with all the variegated beauty of colours, and to clear up several dark and mysterious passages, which appeared in Newton's *Principia*; and though the latter did not lose his sight until he arrived at the years of manhood, yet, from that period, he was able to astonish the world by his labours in the rich fields of science where he earned those laurels which still continue to flourish in unfaded bloom. He had the honour of settling that dispute which had so long divided the opinions of the Philosophers of Europe, respecting the Newtonian and Cartesian systems, by deciding in favour of Newton, to the satisfaction of all parties. The treasures of his fertile genius still enrich the Academies of Paris, Basle, Berlin, and St. Petersburg.

In mechanics, the blind have gone to a considerable length, almost to surpass the bounds of probability, were the facts not supported by evidence of unquestionable authority. Here we find Architects building bridges, drawing plans of new roads, and executing them to the satisfaction of the commission-

ers. These roads are still to be seen through the counties of York and Lancaster, where they have been carried through the most difficult parts of the country, over bogs and mountains. Indeed, there are few branches of mechanics in which the blind have not borne a part; as the reader will find demonstrated in the following pages.

TO MEMORY.

Come Memory, and paint those scenes

I knew when I was young,
When meadows bloomed, and vernal greens,

By Nature's hand were sung ;

I mean those hours which I have known,
Ere light from me withdrew—

When blossoms seemed just newly blown,
And wet with sparkling dew.

Yet, ah ! forbear, kind Memory cease

The picture thus to scan !

Let all my feelings rest in peace,

'Tis prudence' better plan ;

For why should I on other days,

With such reflections turn,

Since I'm deprived of vision's rays,

Which sadly makes me mourn !

And when I backward turn my mind,

I feel of sorrow's pain,

And weep for joys I left behind,

On childhood's flowery plain ;

Yet now through intellectual eyes,

Upon a happier shore,

And circled with eternal skies,

Youth sweetly smiles once more.

Futurity displays the scene,

Religion lends her aid,

And decks with flowers for ever green,

And blooms that ne'er can fade.

Oh happy time ! when will you come,
That I shall quit this sphere,
And find an everlasting home,
With peace and friendship there ?
Throughout this chequered life 'tis mine,
To feel affliction's rod,
But soon I'll overstep the line,
That keeps me from my God.

—00000—

A DREAM.

Night o'er the sky her sable mantle spread,
And all around was hushed in sweet repose ;
Nor silence suffered from intrusive noise ;—
Save now and then, the Owl's displeasing scream,
From yon old pile of ancient grandeur sent,
Broke in, obtrusive on the tranquil hours ;
Reflection took my mind, and o'er my thoughts
Unnumbered visions flit with rapid speed ;
I thought on man, and all his childless joys,
From rosy infancy to palsied age—
And oft the sigh of recollection stole,
Then heaved my breast with sorrow's poignant throb ;
For ah ! I feel what some have never felt,
That is, to be in one continued night,
From January's sun, till dark December's eve ;
And strange it is, when sleep commands to rest,
While gloomy darkness spreads her lurid veil,
That then by being blind, I suffer most ;—
O sight ! what art thou ? were my final words,

When sleep with leaden fingers sealed my eyes.—
Now free from care, and tumult's torturing din,
Young fancy led me from my humble cot;
And far through space, where suns unnumbered burn
I with her took a grand excursive flight,
Then back again to Erin's hills of green,
I with her wandered; nor did night, nor gloom,
One step intrude to shade the prospects round.
I saw sweet Scarvagh, in her loveliest garb,
And all her trees in summer's dress were clad;
Her honoured mansion, seat of peace and love,
Gave raptures to my breast, for there I've found
True hospitality, which once did grace
The halls of Erin's chiefs of old;—
But soon, alas! the hum of nightly bands,
And vagrants, strolling on in quest of sin,
Bore fancy from me with her golden train,
And once more left me in the folds of night.

When sleep with dreamy fingers sealed my eyes —
 Now free from care, and tumult's torturing din,
 Young fancy led me from my humble cot;
 And far through space, where euns unnumbered hung
 I with her took a grand extensive flight,
 Then back again to Erin's hills of green,
 I with her wandered; not did night, nor gloom,
 One step intrude to shade the prospect round.
 I saw sweet Eurydice in her loveliest garb,
 And all her tress in summer's tress were clad;
 Her honoured mansion, seat of peace and love,
 Gave raptures to my breast, for there I've found
 True hospitality, which once did grace
 The halls of Erin's chiefs of old; —
 But soon, alas! the hum of nightly bands
 And vagrants, striding on in quest of sin,
 Bore fancy from me with her golden train,
 And once more left me in the folds of night.

THE LIFE
OF
THE AUTHOR,
BY HIMSELF.

‘But what avails it to record a name
‘That courts no rank among the sons of Fame!’

I was born, May 24th, 1779, in Richmond, state of Virginia, North America. My father, John Wilson, was a native of Scotland. His family was originally of Queen's-ferry, a small village in Fifeshire, about 16 miles from Edinburgh; he had an uncle who emigrated to America when a young man, as a mechanic, where by honest industry and prudent economy, he soon amassed a considerable property. He wrote for my father who was then about 18 years of age, and promised to make him his heir in case he would come to America. My grandfather hesitated for some time, but at length consented; and preparations were accordingly made for my father's departure, who sailed from Greenock, and arrived safe at Norfolk; from whence he was forwarded by a merchant of that place,

and soon reached Richmond, where he was gladly received by his uncle. This man being in the decline of life, without a family, and bowed down by infirmities, now looked upon his nephew as the comfort of his life, and the support of his declining years; and therefore entrusted him with the entire management of his affairs, which he had the happiness of conducting to the old man's satisfaction. Thus he continued to act till the death of his uncle in 1775, when he found himself in possession of £3000 value, in money and landed property.

Prior to this event, my father on a visit to Baltimore, got acquainted with my mother, Elizabeth Johnson. To her he was introduced by an intimate friend, a Mr. Freeman, whom I may have occasion to mention hereafter. His uncle on hearing this, could not bear the idea of a matrimonial connexion during his life, and so stood as a grand barrier to the completion of his wishes; but at the decease of the old man, being left to think and act for himself, as soon as his affairs were settled, he hastened to Baltimore, where the long wished for union took place.

Shortly after his marriage he returned again to Virginia. His whole mind was now bent to the improvement of his plantation, and the acquiring of a paternal inheritance for his off-pring. Flushed with the hope of spending the eve of life on a fertile estate that amply rewarded the hand of industry—of spending it in the bosom of his family, and of tasting the pleasures which domestic retirement affords, he followed his avocation with alacrity, and could say in the midst of his enjoyments,—

‘The Winter’s night and Summer’s day,
‘Glide imperceptibly away.’

But alas! how uncertain are human prospects and wordly possessions! How often do they wither in the bud, or bloom, like the rose to be blasted when full blown! How repeatedly do they sicken, even in enjoyment, and what appears at a distance like a beautiful verdant hill, degenerates on a closer survey into a rugged barren rock!—This moment the sky is bright, the air is serene, and the sun of our prosperity beams forth in unclouded splendour, and in the next blackness and darkness envelope us around, the cloud of adversity bursts upon our devoted heads, and we are overwhelmed by the storm. It was so with my father, and of course, the misfortune was entailed on me.

The disturbance which took place at Boston, was at first considered only as a riot; but it shortly began to assume a more formidable aspect. The insurgents were soon embodied throughout all the Colonies, and the insurrection became general. Between them and the loyal party, no neutrality was allowed, and every man was finally under the necessity of joining one side or the other. For some time, indeed, my father strove to avoid taking an active part, but he was soon convinced that this was totally impossible. Many of his early friends had embraced the cause of the revolutionists, and were very anxious that he should join their party. To excite him to this, several advantageous offers were made to him, and when this expedient failed, threats were resorted to. Exercising the right which belongs to every man in politics,

as well as in religion, I mean, 'the right of private judgement,' he, in conjunction, with a number of his neighbours, enrolled himself in a corps of volunteers, for the joint purpose of defending private property and supporting the royal cause. The iron hand of War was now stretched out, and unrelenting cruelty had taken possession of the hearts of those persons towards each other, who were formerly united by the ties of neighbourly affection; consequently a band of enraged incendiaries, about 150 in number, mostly black slaves belonging to the neighbouring planters, no doubt, excited by their masters, attacked my father's house in his absence, plundered it of every valuable article, and finally burned it to the ground. From this alarming catastrophe, my mother and a few domestics narrowly escaped, and were obliged to seek shelter in the neighbouring woods, where they were exposed to the inclemency of the weather, during a severe winter night. It would indeed be painful to me to enter minutely into the sufferings of my parents at this eventful period. Suffice it to say they were stript of their all, and were left destitute and forlorn.

Down to the period of which I am now speaking, no political question had ever given rise to more controversy than the American War. It is not my business to enter into a discussion of the subject; all that remains necessary for me to say, is a word or two in relation to my father's political conduct. That man who would not rejoice in being able to speak well of a departed parent, is not entitled to the name

of man, and cannot be characterised by the feelings common to our nature. It affords me then a great degree of pleasure, to reflect that my father must have acted throughout from principle. On this point, I am perfectly satisfied when I consider him rejecting emolument, despising threats, volunteering in the royal cause, forsaking his own home, and thereby leaving his family and property exposed, braving every danger, serving during five campaigns, and continuing active in the cause he had espoused, as long as he could be useful to it.

Being attached to that part of the army, under the immediate command of Lord Cornwallis, he was taken prisoner when that gallant general was compelled to surrender to a superior force. His health during these disasters was much impaired; and on being liberated, he now thought of returning to Europe, in hopes that the air of his native country, would restore him to his wonted state of health and vigour.

My mother was now residing near New-York, in the house of a friend, and thither he directed his steps. There he abode for a year, and found his health so much improved, that he determined to lose no more time in America, and so prepared to re-cross the Atlantic—

‘And anxious to review his native shore,
‘Upon the roaring waves embarked once more.’

Bound for Liverpool, under the guidance of Captain Smith, the vessel set sail, and my parents bid a final adieu to the shores of Columbia; what his feelings were at this crisis, it would be difficult to des-

cribe. Separated from that country in which his best hopes centered, cut off from the enjoyment of his legal possessions, without a probability of ever regaining them, impaired in his constitution, and crossed in all his former prospects, we may view him mourning over his misfortunes, and devising plans for his future exertions. It is true, he might have consoled himself with the pleasing reflection that he was now about to revisit his native land, to meet with his nearest relations, and best friends, and to spend the remainder of his days in the place of his nativity, in peace and safety; but how vain and transient are the hopes of mortal man! All his joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, anxious cares, and premature plans, were shortly to terminate with him, and I was to be left at four years of age destitute of a father. They had scarcely lost sight of land when his disease returned with encreased violence, and 12 days after the vessel left New-York, he expired. The reader will not consider my situation as deplorable, while he thinks that still I had a mother to take care of me and to assist me in my childish years. True! I had a mother, and a mother who survived my father; but it was only for 20 minutes! for she being in the last stage of pregnancy, the alarm occasioned by his death brought on premature labour and terminated her existence. Thus on a sudden I lost both father and mother,—saw them sewed up in the same hammock and committed to a watery grave.

Here my misfortunes did not end. I was seized by the small pox, and for want of a mother's care and proper medical aid, this most loathsome dis-

ease deprived me of my sight. After a long and dangerous voyage, it being a hurricane almost all the time, the Captain was obliged to put into Belfast harbour as the ship had suffered much in her mast, rigging, &c. and as they crew were nearly exhausted.

When we arrived there, I had not recovered from the effects of my late illness, the symptoms of which, were at one period so violent as to threaten my dissolution. Happy indeed would it have been for me had I then terminated my existence. I would have escaped many of the severe trials and afflictions through which I have waded in this uncertain life. To make me the more comfortable, I was sent immediately to Belfast. The following circumstance is still fresh in my recollection.—The vessel was four miles from town, and one of the seamen who had been my nurse from the time of my mother's death, and who, during the passage rendered me all the assistance which his situation afforded, kept me on his knee in the boat, and this kind-hearted individual administered the only cordial he possessed, which was rum and water. Whether this agreed with my exhausted state or not, I cannot say; but it is well known that rum on all occasions is the British seaman's favourite medicine.

There was no time lost by Captain Smith in applying to the Church-Warden, in my behalf, and in order to prevent me from becoming a charge to the parish, he deposited in his hands a sum of money sufficient to pay the expence of supporting me for five years. I was soon provided with a nurse, and the

good Captain promised to write by every opportunity concerning me.

The ship being now completely repaired, the benevolent Captain and kind hearted crew left me in Belfast a total stranger. No one knew me, nor had ever heard any thing of my family. My situation at this time was truly pitiable, as I was deprived of my parents at the time I most required their care. Still however, I was under the protection of a merciful Providence, 'who can temper the wind to the shorn lamb.' In his word he has promised to be a father to the fatherless, and to me this gracious saying has certainly been fulfilled. Many of the first families in the province I can rank among my kindest friends, and to nothing can I attribute this but to the influence of his providence, who inclines the hearts of men to that which is pleasing in his sight.

My nurse was a good natured old woman, and the anxiety which she shewed for my recovery was much greater than could be expected from a stranger. —Night after night she sat by me, attended to my calls, and administered to my wants with all that maternal tenderness which a fond mother manifests to the child of her bosom. The prayers which she offered up in my behalf, and the tear of sympathy which stole down her aged cheek bespoke a heart that could feel for the miseries of a fellow-creature. Contrary to all expectations I recovered, and in the course of a few months was able to grope my way through the house, alone. Shortly after this my right

eye was couched by the late Surgeon Wilson, and in consequence of this operation, I could soon discern the surrounding objects and their various colours. This was certainly a great mercy, for though the enjoyment did not continue long, yet, the recollection of it affords me pleasure, even to the present day.

One day, when about seven years of age, as I crossed the street I was attacked and dreadfully mangled by an ill-natured cow. This accident nearly cost me my life, and deprived me of that sight which was in a great degree restored, and which I have never since enjoyed. Thus it was the will of Providence to baffle the efforts of human ingenuity, and to doom me to perpetual blindness; and this reflection enables me to bear my misfortune without repining. A few years after this event my foster mother died, and again I was left forlorn and without a friend. In this precarious state, the only means I had of obtaining subsistence were apparently ill-suited to my situation. The reader may perhaps smile when I inform him that at this time I was considered by many as a man of letters, and that I earned my bread in consequence of my practical engagements in relation to them. This indeed was the case; for I was employed to carry letters to and from the offices of the different merchants in the town and neighbourhood. My punctuality and dispatch in this respect were much in my favour, so that I was generally employed in preference to those who enjoyed the use of all their senses. In the course of time my sphere was enlarged, and often on important business, I have borne dispatches to the

distance of thirty or forty miles. This was certainly not a little extraordinary in a place where the confusion and bustle of business subjected me to many dangers.

Being advised to attempt the study of music, I made an almost fruitless effort as I had no person to instruct me ; but although I could only scrape a few tunes which I had learned merely by ear, this did not prevent me from being called on occasionally to officiate at dances. It could not in truth, be said to me then in every sense of the word,

‘ Old Orpheus played so well he moved old nick,
‘ But thou movest nothing but thy fiddle-stick.’

For no matter how despicable the musician or insignificant his instrument, the sound operates like an invisible charm, elevates the passions of the lower orders, makes them shake their grief and their care off at their heels, and moving on the light ‘fantastic toe,’ causes them to forget the bitterness of the past, and prevents them from brooding over the prospect of future evils.—

‘ And happy, though my harsh touch, falt’ring still,
But mock’d all time and marr’d the dancer’s skill ;
Yet, would the village praise my wondrous power
And dance forgetful of the noon-tide hour.’

I soon found in consequence of this avocation that I was exposed to numerous vices. I was obliged to associate with the dregs of society, to witness many scenes of folly and great wickedness, to stay out late at night, and thus expose myself to dangers of

different kinds. As my feelings were continually at variance with this occupation, which I adopted more from necessity than choice, I soon gave it up and composed a farewell address to my fiddle, of which the following couplet is a sufficient specimen.

Long time I strove to scrape life out of tharm,
Which tired my patience as it tired my arm.

The family in which I lived was both poor and illiterate. Not one among them could spell their own name, and hence I was a considerable time before I acquired any taste for knowledge: but although, they were by no means attentive to any duty of a religious kind, being rather given to swearing, drinking, gaming, &c. yet, they were strictly honest in their dealings, and would not defraud on any account whatever. They were generous and humane to all who required their help—

‘ And to the houseless child of want,
Their door was open still;
And though their portion was but scant,
They gave it with good will.’

I present these circumstances to the reader, that he may know the kind of society in which I mingled during the first fifteen years of my life. It cannot be imagined that much information could be derived from such a source as this.

About this time I began to pay some attention to books; but my first course of reading was indeed, of a very indifferent description. I was obliged

to listen to what was most convenient ; however, I made the best of what I heard, and in a short time, in conjunction with a boy of my own age, who read to me, I was master of the principal circumstances in Jack the Giant Killer, Valentine and Orson, Robinson Crusoe, and Gulliver's Travels. The subject matter of these formed my taste, was swallowed with avidity, and inspired me with a degree of enthusiasm, which awakes even at the present day, on hearing a new and interesting work read. These however, were soon laid aside for Novels and Romances, several hundred volumes of which I procured and got read in the course of three years ; but although there are few passages out of all I heard then which I think worth a place in my recollection now ; yet, at that time I was well acquainted with the most interesting characters and events contained in these works. My present dislike to this kind of reading, I do not entertain without reason. For, first a great deal of precious time is thereby spent that might be more usefully employed. Second the judgement is left without exercise while the passions are inflamed. And third, those who are much in the habit of Novel-reading, have seldom a taste for books of any other kind ; and hence their judgements of men and things must differ as far from his who has seen the world, as the most of Novels differ from real life.—I am well aware that some of them are well written, and display ability in the Author, have the circumstances well disposed, the characters ably delineated, and the effect preserved till the final close of the last scene,

which generally proves interesting and affecting. But to what does all this tend? (except in recording the customs and manners of the times which they represent,) only to mislead the imagination, to foster a morbid sensibility to fictitious woe, and a romantic admiration of ideal and unattainable perfection, without strengthening the judgement, cultivating active benevolence, or a just appreciation of real worth. In contrasting the characters of Tom Jones, and Sir Charles Grandison, with those of the Duke of Sully and Lord Clarendon, we observe a striking difference between the real and fictitious personages: yet, the mere Novel reader is neither improved nor amused in reading the lives of these illustrious characters, while the tear of sympathy steals down his cheek as he pores over the imaginary sufferings of his heroes and heroines. There are, I know, many novels to which the above observations do not apply, particularly some of modern date, which are very superior to those abovementioned, but still the best, even of these, present overcharged pictures of real life, and in proportion as they are fascinating, they indispose the mind to more serious reading..... But to return.

I now engaged with Mr. Gordon, Editor of the Belfast News-letter, to deliver the papers to subscribers on the days of publication. Half a dozen of papers and two shillings per week were my wages in this service.—The papers I hired to tradesmen at a half-penny an hour, and when the time allotted to the first set of customers was expired, it afforded me an agreeable exercise to collect and distribute them to others.

While in this employment I had sometimes occasion to go four or five miles into the country ; but having an accurate knowledge of the surrounding neighbourhood, and being well acquainted with every gentleman's seat in the vicinity of Belfast, however remotely situated from the public road, I was able to execute my business with exactness and dispatch.

At this time the French Revolution gave a sudden turn to the posture of affairs in Europe, and every mail which arrived, brought an account of some important change in the political state of that unhappy country. All the powers on the Continent now armed against France, and She on her part received them with a firmness which reflected honour upon her arms. The public mind at this period was much agitated, and the wisest politicians of the day were filled with alarm, and dreaded the consequences which were likely to result from a revolution that threatened every government in Europe with a total overthrow. For my part I had little to lose as an individual, and the only concern I felt, was for the safety of my country. Politics, therefore became my favourite study, and I soon got acquainted with the passing news of the day. It was now I was able to appreciate the pleasures of memory in a superior degree. I knew the names, stations, and Admirals, of almost all the ships in the Navy, and was also acquainted, with the number, facing, and name of every regiment in the Army, according to the respective towns, cities, or shires from which they were raised. I served of course, as an Army and Navy list, for the poor in the neighbour-

hood, who had relations in either of these departments, and was capable of informing them of all general news.

The following anecdote shows the powers of my memory at that period. Being invited by a friend to spend an evening at his house, I had scarcely sat down when three gentlemen entered. The conversation turning on the news of the day, I was requested by my friend to repeat the names of as many of the ships of the British Navy as I could recollect, telling me that he had a particular reason for making the request.—I commenced, and my friend marked them down as I went along, until I repeated 620, when he stopped me, saying I had gone far enough. The cause of the request was then explained. One of the gentlemen had wagered a supper that I could not mention 500, he, however, expressed himself much pleased at his loss, having been, as he acknowledged highly entertained by the experiment.

Although at this time, I had little relish for any other kind of reading but newspapers and novels, yet, I was not wholly insensible to the charms of poetry. I amused myself with making verses at intervals, but never could produce any thing in that way which pleased myself. My acquaintances, particularly the young people, gave me sufficient employment in composing Epigrams, Love Songs, Epistles, and Acrostics, in praise of their sweet-hearts. Many of those juvenile productions are still extant, and though miserable in themselves, continue to find admirers among the classes for whom they were composed.

The first of my productions which met the public eye was 'An Elegy on the death of an unfortunate female.' This poor maniac was known for more than 20 years in the neighbourhood of Belfast, by the appellation of Mad Mary. She was found dead in the ruins of an old house, where she had taken refuge during a stormy winter night. This little piece being much noticed, on account of the subject having excited a general interest, I was advised to collect my best productions, and give them to the public. Encouraged by the patronage of a few generous individuals, I set about the work which in a few months made its appearance, and here insert a quotation from one of the poems 'An Ode to friendship.'—

'To heal each woe's thy kind employ,

To wake the cheerless heart to joy,

And tell of coming bliss ;

Gently to wipe the tears that flow,

To lift the load of heart-felt woe

That sinks to deep distress.'

On the above stanzas the reader is left to comment as he thinks proper. Composed when I was but seventeen years of age, destitute of sight, of learning, and even of an intelligent friend, who could correct my compositions, they must of course stand very low in the scale of merit. Still however, they were of service to me, and I found the public rather disposed to pity, than to censure an humble individual so far beneath the notice of the critic.

Lord Cornwallis, who succeeded Earl Camden in the vice-royalty of Ireland, in making the tour of that

kingdom in 1799, arrived at Belfast.—This appearing a favourable opportunity, I was determined to petition his excellency in relation to the losses of my family in America. A petition was accordingly drawn up, stating my father's possessions in that country, his services in the army, and his death on his passage returning to Europe, as already related. This petition I put into the hands of the late George Joy, Esqr. who kindly offered to present it, bidding me to call on him the next day. I did so, but to my utter disappointment, I found that Mr. Joy on dressing for dinner the preceding evening, had unfortunately forgotten my petition in the pocket of his coat which he had worn in the morning;—disappointed in this quarter, I resolved on following his Lordship to Annadale, the seat of the late Honourable Chichester Skeffington, as he had left Belfast for that place, at seven o'Clock in the morning. I did so, and again I was fated to feel the bitter pang of disappointment, for on arriving at Annadale, I was informed that his excellency had a few hours before left that for Dublin. Thus terminated the only hope I ever had of obtaining an independence; but as there was no use in repining, I endeavoured to submit to the disappointment with resignation.

At this time I now turned my attention to a new occupation, and fixed on that of a dealer; for this purpose I borrowed a few pounds from a friend, with which I purchased a stock of such hardware articles as might suit the country people.

Being at the bottom of fortune's wheel, every

new revolution might raise me, but could not possibly depress me farther ; and hence I commenced my peregrinations in the country. While employed in this way I had an opportunity of meeting with a variety of characters, and of mingling in different societies. It is but justice here to remark that among the peasantry of Ulster, I have met with many individuals, whose good nature, benevolent dispositions, and kind hospitality, are not only an honour to their country, but even to human nature. In the County of Antrim I remember being acquainted with an old farmer who invited me often to his house. While in the neighbourhood I generally abode with him during Saturday night and Sunday. His family were good natured enough to read to me, and as I generally carried a small edition of Milton, Young, and Thompson along with me, I was never at a loss for an author to my mind.

Although many of the country people have a relish for poetry, yet few of them properly understand it, and do not in general consider any thing deserving of the name but what rhymes ; hence they are apt to read blank verse in such a manner as to convert it into the dullest prose, of which the following example is an instance.—My old host already mentioned, having returned from sermon one Sunday evening, asked me if I had a desire to hear him read as I had often heard the rest of the family. I thanked him for his kindness, and determined to listen with attention. He soon produced two volumes, and sitting down he read the title page of the first he opened as follows, ‘An Easy on Christmas, by Alexander Pope.’ At

this I could not help smiling, as I understood it to be the celebrated Essay on *Criticism* which he had in his hands. This volume, however, he laid aside immediately, saying, 'this is not fit to be read on Sunday night,' and so he opened Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which he remarked, 'was an Orthodox Book,' and so he proceeded to instruct me by reading. This indeed, would have been a difficult task at the instant; for his opinion of the book connected with his manner of reading it, operated so powerfully on my risible feelings, that I could scarcely contain myself. He understood it as matter of fact destitute of all fiction, and read it as a dull narrative, with a drawling voice, and sing-song tone that might have served a parish clerk as a proper key for raising the tune of *Elgin* or *Martyrs* to a large congregation. I was glad however, when he made an end, for had any additional circumstance been thrown into the scale, I might have forfeited the good old man's favour by an open display of my feelings.

While vending my hardware through the country I found this occupation ill-suited my circumstances, and that I was exposed to many inconveniences, and experienced much fatigue and distress, both in body and mind. The want of sight made it difficult for me to steer my course aright, and I was often exposed both to hardships and danger. Many a time I have heard the thunder roll over my head, and felt the teeming rain drench me from neck to heel, while I have unknowingly passed by a place of shelter, or stood like a statue, not knowing which hand to turn to, with-

in a few paces of a house. Still however, while reflecting on all these circumstances, and contrasting the sympathy which I was sure to meet with after my sufferings, I have been often led to conclude that the balance was in my favour, when compared with those whose circumstances were more comfortable, and who enjoyed the use of every sense; so as there is no rose without its thorn, neither is there any state without its comforts.—While travelling, I was in little danger from horses and carriages in motion, as their noise warned me of their approach; hence, if I was injured it was generally from something at rest. It may be imagined however, that I was not exposed to any harm whatever, in the day-time, nor will it be supposed that any person could be so cruel as intentionally to injure a blind man; but I have suffered repeatedly from the intemperance of some, and the brutality of others, and had I trusted entirely to the good nature of the multitude, I might have been ridden down oftener than the humane mind would be willing to suppose, of which the following example is a proof.

One day in the middle of winter as I travelled from Coothill to Rockcurry on a very deep road, I heard a horse coming up behind me at a very smart pace. I turned round immediately to give the rider an opportunity of seeing that I was blind, as I could not get out of his way for mud that was gathered on each side of the road. I had no idea whatever, but that he would pass without injuring me; but in this I was much mistaken. He rode so close

to me that his knee projected me forcibly on my side into the dirt, and as I happened to fall on a cairn of stones, I was much hurt. This unfeeling man rode on and seemed to take no notice of my situation. When I recovered from the fright occasioned by my fall, I called out, 'Sir I am at a loss to know whether you or your horse has most manners,' upon which he stopped, rode up to me, and told me that they both had manners, and asked me if I knew to whom I was speaking; 'do you not know said he, that I am a gentleman, you insolent fellow;' he then caught me by the handkerchief and threatened to put me in the stocks. To this I replied, that I had committed no crime; he continued however, to drag me along by the side of his horse, until he tore my shirt, and after proceeding in this manner for more than a mile, perceiving a man pursuing his rural occupation, he called him to his assistance. The man came up and inquired what was the matter? I want you said this imperious gentleman, to take this fellow to Lord C—, and have him put in the stocks. I expostulated with him on his ungentleman-like conduct, reminding him that so far from having injured him, it was he who without provocation had injured me, and was adding insult to injury; but it was in vain that I remonstrated, and pleaded my blindness; argument and entreaty were alike ineffectual, until a person coming up interfered in my behalf, and besought him to let me go. To this he consented on condition that I should beg his pardon, but to these terms I neither could nor would consent, as I had not offended nor done any thing

to merit such treatment. Finding at last that he could not make any thing of me, he rode off, leaving me in the hands of the person whom he had first called to his assistance, ordering him to bring me on. After the gentleman had left me I enquired his name, but the only information I could obtain, was, that he was a gentleman, who, if he had been sober would have been sorry to injure me.' The poor man put me on my way, and I proceeded on my journey without farther interruption.

In the early part of my life, I prided myself much on my activity as a pedestrian. I have frequently travelled through a part of the country with which I was totally unacquainted, at the rate of thirty miles in a day ; but this was only in case of emergency, for my usual rate was fifteen or twenty miles per day ; this however, is too much for a person in my situation, for supposing a blind man sets out to travel on foot alone, to a distance of twenty miles, he will experience much more fatigue, and go over more ground than he who has his sight will do in a journey twice that length. This is evident from the zig-zag manner in which he traverses the road, and as Hammond says in his description of the drunken man staggering home, ' from the serpentine manner in which he goes, he makes as much of a mile as possible.' In the summer time the blind man is subject to shock his whole frame by trampling in the cart ruts that are dried upon the road, and in winter he travels through thick and thin, as it is impossible for him to choose his steps, and at this season of the year the water is

collected into puddles on the road which he cannot avoid, and hence, in walking to a distance he is sure to wet both his feet and legs, which is not only disagreeable, but frequently injurious to his health—at one time he bruises his foot against a stone, at another he sprains his ankle, and frequently when stepping out quickly his foot comes in contact with something unexpectedly, by which he is thrown on his face—thus in travelling on foot he labours under various disadvantages unknown to those who are blest with the sense of sight.

The above accidents however, are not the only misfortunes connected with the state of the Blind in walking alone; he often wanders out of his direct way, sometimes into fields, and sometimes into bye-paths, so that the greater part of the day may be spent before he can rectify his mistake. Often have I been in this predicament myself, and frequently have I sat a considerable part of the day, listening by the wayside for a passing foot, or the joyful sound of the human voice, and sometimes have I been obliged in the evening, to retrace the ground I had gone over in the morning, and thus endured much fatigue of body and mind before I could regain the road from which I had wandered; how different then is my situation from his who has his sight? From the impediments which cause me so much pain he is happily exempt; while he pursues his journey he can trace the various beauties of the surrounding scenery. The picturesque landscape, the spreading oak, the flowing brook, the gloomy cavern, the towering mountain that hides its

blue summit in the clouds, the majestic ocean dashing on the 'shelly shore.' and the vast expansive arch of Heaven bespangled with innumerable stars, have all for him their respective beauties, and fail not to awaken pleasing and agreeable sensations; but to the blind these pleasures are unknown, the charms of Nature are concealed under an impenetrable veil, and the God of light, has placed between him, and silent, and animated nature, an insuperable barrier.

'When to the breezy upland led,
At noon, or blushing eve, or morn,
He hears the Red-breast o'er his head,
While round him breathes the scented thorn;
But Oh! instead of Nature's face,
Hills, dales, and woods, and streams combined;
Instead of tints, and forms, and grace,
Night's blackest mantle shrouds the blind.'

A blind person always inclines to the hand in which his staff is carried, and this often has a tendency to lead him astray, when he travels on a road with which he is unacquainted. But were there no danger arising from this, still from his situation he is liable to imminent dangers on his way, from which nothing can preserve him but an all-directing Providence, and this I have frequently experienced.

In a cold winter evening as I travelled to Lisburn, I happened to wander from the direct road into a lane which led immediately to the Canal. Unconscious of the danger to which I was exposed, I was stepping on pretty freely when my attention was sud-

denly arrested by a cry of 'stop, stop!' Of the first or second call I took no notice, as I judged some other person was addressed; but at the third warning I stopped, when a woman came running up almost breathless, and asked me where I was going, I replied to Lisburn. 'No, said she, you are going directly to the canal, and three or four steps more would have plunged you into it.' My heart glowed with thankfulness to the all-wise disposer of events, and to the female, who was made the instrument of my preservation. She said, 'she happened to come to the door to throw out some slops when she saw me posting on, and thinking from my manner of walking that I was intoxicated, she became alarmed for my safety, as a person had been drowned in the very same place, not many days before.'

About three miles from Strabane, at the little village of Clady, there is a bridge across the Finn. I had just passed along it on my way to Strabane, when a man enquired if I had been conducted over by any person. I replied, in the negative. 'It was a fortunate circumstance, then indeed, said he, that you kept to the left side, for the range wall is broken down at the right side, just above the centre arch, and the river is there very rapid, and the bank on each side steep. Had you fallen in, you must have been inevitably lost.'

The following instance of Providential preservation, is still more singular than either of the preceding. From Ballymena, I was one day going out to the Rev. Robert Stewarts. At the end of the town the road

divides, and one branch leads to Ballymoney, and the other to Broughshane. In the forks, an old well was opened for the purpose of sinking a pump. It being one o'clock in the day, the workmen were all at dinner. I was groping about with my staff to ascertain the turn of the road, when a man bawled out to me, to stand still and not move a single step. I did so, when he came forward and told me that two steps more would have hurried me into a well 80 feet deep, and half full of water. He held me by the arm, and made me put forth my staff to feel, and be convinced of my danger; and when I found that I was actually not more than one yard from the edge, the blood ran cold in my veins.—I was scarcely able to stand erect—

“And every limb unstrung, with terror shook.”

These are but a few of the numerous instances of hair-breadth escapes, which I have experienced in my peregrinations through life.

In the year 1800, there was an institution established in Belfast for the purpose of instructing those who were deprived of sight, in such employments as were suited to their unfortunate situation;—this was styled ‘The Asylum for the Blind.’ As it is of infinite importance to the well-being of society, that all who have not independent fortunes, should be enabled to support themselves by their own industry, which the blind are seldom qualified for, owing to their unhappy state, and the want of a suitable education; hence, this Asylum promised to be of the greatest utility. I entered on the books of the institution as

an apprentice, and continued in it until within a few months of its dissolution. When I left the Asylum, I proposed working on my own account, and having acquired a partial knowledge of the Upholstering business, I was soon employed.—My friends exerted themselves on this occasion, to promote my interest, and though there were several individuals who had learned the business in the same Asylum, and who could work better than me, yet, I generally got the preference. Many of my friends went so far, as even to contrive work for me for which they had not immediate use, merely to keep me employed. Although, my pecuniary circumstances were not much improved, yet, I now experienced a greater share of mental happiness than I had ever enjoyed before. I was in a situation that afforded me better opportunities of acquiring knowledge than I had ever possessed, previous to this time. I met with much friendship from many to whom I was but very little known, and when it was understood that I was desirous of information, I generally received assistance in this way, even where I could not expect it; either the lady of the house in which I was employed, or one of the children generally read to me while I was at work. Thus, I improved my mind while labouring for my support—time glided pleasantly away; no room being left for idle speculations or gloomy forebodings.

In 1803, a number of young men formed a reading society in Belfast, and although they were all mechanics, yet, they were also men of taste, and some of them were possessed of considerable talents. Into this

society I was admitted a member, at the same time, that I was kindly exempted from the expense attending its regulations. One of the members was a man of the most extraordinary character I had ever known; and therefore, I attached myself to him. To good-nature he united an original genius, a good taste, and extreme sensibility; and had an early education been his lot, or had his mind been sufficiently expanded by study, he would have become an ornament to society; but he was totally devoid of ambition, and never had a wish to aspire beyond the rank of an humble mechanic. This man proposed to read to me, if I would procure books; our stated hours for this employment was from nine o'clock in the evening, until one in the morning, in the winter season, and from seven until eleven in summer. When I was not particularly engaged, I frequently attended him at other intervals;—at breakfast he had half an hour allotted to him, at dinner a whole hour. Every minute of this was filled up, for he generally read to me between every cup of tea, and by this means, I committed to memory a vast collection of pieces both in prose and verse, which I still retain, and which has been until the present hour, a never failing source of amusement to me. The more I heard read the more my desire for knowledge increased, while I learned at the same time that

“The more a man knows, he finds he knows the less.”

So ardent and steady was my desire for knowledge at that time, that I could never bear to be absent a single night from my friend, and often when working

in the country where I could have been comfortably accommodated, I have travelled three or four miles in a severe winter night to be at my post in time. Pinched with cold, and drenched with rain, I have many a time sat down and listened for several hours together, to the writings of Plutarch, Rollin, or Clarendon. For seven or eight years we continued this course of reading, but to give a catalogue of the Authors we perused in that time would be foreign to my present purpose ; suffice it to say that every book in the English language which we could procure, was read with avidity. Ancient and modern History, Poetry, Biography, Essays, Magazines, Voyages, Travels, &c. were among our studies.

I continued occasionally, to compose some pieces of Poetry consisting principally of Songs written on the wit and good humour that prevailed in the club, of which I was a member, with a few Prologues to Plays, that were performed by the young men in the neighbourhood, for charitable purposes. These I collected together to prepare them for the press, but on examination, I found they had many faults, which had at first escaped my notice ; and though warmly urged by my friends to give them to the public, yet, I was so well convinced they were destitute of merit, that I committed them to the flames, with the two first acts of a Play called ‘ The Irish Exile’s return.’

The first of my literary acquaintances, of any respectability, was John Lushington Reilly, Esq. of Scarvagb, to whose family I was warmly recommended by a lady who introduced me as a lover and com-

poser of Poetry. In this gentleman's house I was employed for some time, and during my residence there, I was not treated as a common workman, but was highly entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Reilly, who had the goodness to read to me by turns, whilst I was at work, and in their absence a person was appointed to supply their place; here there was a fine library where I first met with Spencer's Fairy Queen. When I left home I did not expect to remain at Scarvagh, longer than three or four weeks at farthest, but such was the partiality of that worthy family for me, that I was detained there for nearly three months. On taking leave of my benefactors, Mrs. Reilly observed that I ought not to be tired of them, as they were not tired of me. To Mr. Reilly I addressed a few verses on his return from the army, which appeared in the second edition of my Poems.

I had listened with much pleasure to the Treatise on Solitude, by that inimitable Philosopher, Zimmerman; but although I had learned from books to imagine the pleasures of solitude, yet I never had an opportunity of experiencing its enjoyments until my residence at that time in the country. Some of our busy town's-people shudder at the idea of a country life, and conclude that the want of variety would render them miserable in retirement, but the happiness of such is derived from bustle and confusion—from sources unstable as the wind, and Nature is to them destitute of charms; it was not so with me, the murmuring of the streams, the rustling of the leaves, the singing of the birds, the lowing of the cattle, and the bleat-

ing of the lambs, each had for me its charms, and excited in my mind the most pleasing sensations.—As Nature is superior to Art in all her operations, so are the pleasures derived from the one far superior to the pleasures derived from the other, and every man of experience will acknowledge that independent of religion, there is not any thing which affords such delight to the contemplative mind, as the works of creation—

“By boundless love, and perfect wisdom formed,
“And ever rising with the rising mind.”

From Scarvagh I went to Drumbanagher, the seat of John Moore, Esq. where I was also employed for some time. Mr. and Mrs. Moore, were particularly attentive to me, and shewed me much kindness; and after spending some time in a few other gentlemen's houses, I returned again to Belfast.

I now thought of turning my attention to some work of a literary nature, and entertained the design of writing an abridgement of the History of Ireland. I was aware that there were many works on this subject already published, by men of acknowledged talents; but these are generally considered to be too much calculated to awaken party spirit, and to keep alive those dissensions, by which this unhappy country has been for so many centuries distracted.—Dissensions which ought long ere now to have been buried in oblivion. If a middle course was therefore pursued in which the extremes that those writers have been hurried into were avoided, something beneficial might be produced, and posterity benefited. Thus I reflected, and therefore set about the

work, determining that if embellishment and scientific arrangement did not grace the narrative, it should be, what history ought to be, a true relation of facts. I chose Goldsmith for my model, collected my materials, and got on pretty well to the close of the second chapter, when I found the undertaking attended with so many difficulties, that I was obliged to abandon the project.

The improvement of my mind by the acquisition of useful and substantial knowledge, now engrossed my attention. To attain this, I knew that books and conversation were the only means, and therefore, I carefully cultivated the attention of such persons as were distinguished by their taste and intelligence. I was very fortunate in getting acquainted with a number of individuals, whose literary acquirements and love of virtue, reflected honour on their names. In the society of such persons I could not fail in acquiring much mental improvement. Their conversation, their remarks, and their advice were of great use to me. Among the number of my friends at this time were three young gentlemen, to whose friendship I owe much of my present happiness, and I should act a most ungrateful part were I to pass over their names unnoticed, or suffer their characters to sleep in silence.—The ravages of disease and time may crumble the mortal part down into its original dust, but while the powers of understanding and memory, and a sense of gratitude remain in the soul the names and virtues of Mr. Andrew M'Nair, of Cregagh, Mr. Wm. B. Nelson, and Mr. Henry Fielding Grimshaw, both of Belfast,

shall not be effaced from my memory, nor estranged from my affection. In taste, in talents, and in universal benevolence, they might be equalled, but could not be surpassed; and I feel no hesitation in asserting that in their premature death, society has met with an irreparable loss.

It has been remarked by an elegant writer, that Geography is the eye of History, the latter recording the time, and the former the place, in which any remarkable event has happened. To be acquainted with the names, situations, and boundaries of places, together with the transactions of other years forms now an essential part of a good education. To the blind, in this respect, a large field is laid open, and if a good memory accompanies attention in conversation, and in hearing History and Geography read, they may lay up a store that will not fail as a source of amusement, both to themselves and others. In these two branches of knowledge I was very assiduous, and find that to the present day my memory is exceedingly tenacious of what I then learned. In relation to Geography, I got acquainted with every place of note, on the habitable Globe, so that on being examined by some who were either curious, or doubtful of my knowledge; my descriptions have been found to coincide with the best constructed Maps. Respecting history, the reader will best judge of the power of my memory by the following relation.

To a few select friends who wished to prove my knowledge of English History, I repeated to their entire satisfaction, an Epitome of the History

of England, from the Norman conquest, till the peace in 1783, including invasions, conspiracies, insurrections, and revolutions;—the names of all the Kings and Queens, the year of their accession, and the length of their reigns; the affinity each had to his predecessor, together with the names and characters of all the great Statesmen, Heroes, Philosophers, and Poets, who flourished in the different reigns. In consequence of this, and similar rehearsals, I was termed ‘the Living Book,’ and ‘a Walking Encyclopædia.’ To others, my knowledge in such circumstances, appeared as a prodigy, but to myself it proved a source of consolation, and beguiled many a tedious hour.

The circle of my acquaintance was at this time greatly enlarged, and I had the honour of ranking among my friends some of the most distinguished characters of this country. Among these was Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore. This great man was the last of that illustrious school, of which, Johnson, Goldsmith, and Cumberland, were members. His fine taste and literary talents were accompanied by sweetness of temper and a benevolent disposition. From the Rev. H. Boyd, (a gentleman well known in the literary world, as the translator of the Italian Poet, Dante, and Author of some other original works of great merit,) I received the most marked attention. The kindness of himself and family indeed, I cannot easily forget. On several occasions he has rendered me the most essential services, and it yields me no small degree of pleasure, to reflect that I still enjoy the friendship of a man as eminently distinguished for his virtues as for his talents.

In 1812, I became acquainted with the late ingenious Miss Balfour. This lady was the Author of several interesting works, in both prose and verse. I was introduced to her by John Templeton, Esq. of Malone, a gentleman whose literary and scientific acquirements are too well known to require any eulogium from such an humble individual as I am. Miss Balfour felt much for my situation, and endeavoured by every means in her power to promote my interest. She offered to teach me Grammar, and in order to encourage me, she said it would only require three weeks or a month at most: and as soon as I had attained a knowledge of the English language, she proposed to teach me French. But owing to the narrowness of my circumstances, I could not afford to devote to these studies, the time which they would have required. I had a large family depending on me for support, for which, I had no other means of procuring bread but by my own industry. My poor wife had been long afflicted with bad health, and was unable to render me any assistance; and to add to this, I was often employed in the country. Had I then turned my attention to these studies my children might have starved; and I was therefore obliged to decline this friendly offer, and of which, I was desirous to avail myself, as it might have been of much future advantage to me. This was one of the greatest sacrifices I ever made. It is true, I had a few friends, who had they been made acquainted with these circumstances, would have been sorry to let me lose such an opportunity; but I was too sensible of their kindness, and

was therefore unwilling to make any farther claim upon their bounty. These friends were indeed, few in number, but they were persons who had long been distinguished for their taste, their talents and their virtues. While I remained in town Miss Balfour read to me, and introduced me to such of her friends as she thought would be useful to me, and it still affords me pleasure to reflect upon the many happy hours which I have spent under her instructions. I have often been gratified by her reading to me her own pieces before they went to press. She possessed a correct taste, a sound judgement, and an original genius, which were heightened by one of the sweetest tempers, and the best natural dispositions that ever formed the human character.

Thus far I have endeavoured to give some account of myself, but have been obliged to omit several particulars, which might be interesting to the reader.—Should this narrative meet with the approbation of my friends, I shall be highly gratified to have the sanction of individuals, to whose generosity and disinterestedness, I owe the most sincere gratitude, and with these feelings I take my leave of my friends and the public at present.

In the first page of my life there was a mistake. It was stated that the Queen's Ferry was sixteen miles from Edinburgh, whereas, it is only eleven.

AN ACCOUNT OF
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF
H O M E R.

~~~~~  
" High on the first the mighty HOMER shone;  
" Eternal adamant composed his throne;  
" Father of verse in holy fillets drest,  
" His silver beard waved gently o'er his breast;  
" Tho' blind, a boldness in his looks appears;  
" In years he seemed, but not impaired by years."

~~~~~

THE Man, an account of whose life and writings is given in these pages, was the most extraordinary genius that any age or country has ever yet produced. Whether we view him as a Poet, a Philosopher, or an Historian, he excites our astonishment, and he claims our admiration: Whoever has read his truly sublime compositions will join with me in regretting that so little is now known of his History; and we have to lament, that the few particulars of his life which have been handed down to us, are in such a mutilated and

imperfect state, that they can afford but little pleasure to the admirers of ancient literature. As many of his early biographers have substituted fiction for facts, it is no easy task to unravel their irregular accounts, and form a connected story. I have consulted the best writers who mention him, and have endeavoured to select such parts, as tend to illustrate both the man and his writings: but alas! after all my inquiries, how little have I been able to procure! The veil of time is now thrown over both the author and the scene which called forth the gigantic powers of his mind.

“And now by Time’s deep plough-share harrow’d oer,
 “The seat of sacred Troy is found no more:
 “No trace of all her glories now remains,
 “But corn and vines enrich her cultured plains—
 “Silver, Scamander leaves the verdant shore;
 “Scamander oft o’erflowed with hostile gore.”

This venerable father of Epic Poetry, as he has been justly called, flourished according to some accounts, 340 years after the siege of Troy, and according to others, 907 years before the Christian era. The place of his nativity is not known, but such was the veneration the Greeks had for his memory, that no less than seven illustrious cities contended for the honour of his birth, as is well expressed in the following lines—‘SMYRNA. CHIOS, COLOPHON, SALAMIS, RHODOS, ARGOS, ATHENÆ.—Orbis de patria certat, Homere tua.’

The opinion however, which appears to have the

best foundation, is, that he was born at Smyrna. We have not on record any thing that is certain respecting the particulars of his birth; but the following is the only account that I have seen, which can be relied upon. A man of Magnesia, named Menalippus, went to settle at Cuma, where he married the daughter of a citizen called Homynes, and had by her a daughter called Critheis. Her parents dying, Critheis was left to the care of one Cleonus, her father's friend; but she being deluded, proved with child; her guardian, finding his care had not prevented this misfortune, was however, anxious to conceal it; and therefore sent her to Smyrna, which was then building. Critheis being near her time, went one day to a festival, which the inhabitants were celebrating on the banks of the river Meles, (1) where the pains of labour coming upon her, she was delivered of the immortal HOMER; whom from that circumstance she called MELESIGENES. Critheis having no other means of subsistence, was forced to spin; but a man named Phemius, (2) who taught literature and music in Smyrna, having often seen Critheis, and being pleased with her good house-wifery and behaviour, took her into his house to spin the wool which he received from his scholars for their schooling. In this situation she behaved so modestly and agreeably that Phemius married her, and adopted her son, in whom he discovered early marks of an extraordinary genius, enriched by an excellent natural disposition. After the death of Phemius and Critheis, Homer succeeded his father in his school; and was admired, not only by the inhabitants of Smyrna, but also by

strangers, who resorted from all parts to that place of trade. A person called Mentès, who traded thither, being a man of learning and a lover of poetry, admired him so much, that he requested him to accompany him in his voyages. Homer who had then begun his *Iliad*, thought it of great consequence to see the places he should have occasion to mention; and therefore embraced this opportunity, and embarked with Mentès. During these voyages he passed through all Greece, Asia-minor, and many other places, where he never failed carefully to note down, all that he thought worthy of notice. He travelled into Egypt, whence he brought into Greece all the names of their gods, the chief ceremonies of their religion, and a more improved knowledge of the arts. He next visited Africa and Spain, returning whence, he touched at Ithaca, where he was seized with a complaint in his eyes. Mentès being desirous of returning to Leucas, his native country, left Homer well recommended to the care and protection of Mentor, one of the chief men of the island, who took great care of him. There Homer was informed of many things relating to Ulysses, which he afterwards made use of in composing his *Odyssey*. On his return to Ithaca, Mentès found Homer cured: they embarked together, and after much time spent in visiting the coasts of Peloponnesus, and the islands, they arrived at Colophon, where he was again seized with a disease in his eyes, which proved so fatal, that it is said to have been the occasion of his blindness. This misfortune obliged him to return to Smyrna, where he finished his *Iliad*.

Some time after, the bad state of his affairs, forced him to visit Cuma, where he hoped to have found relief. Here his poems were highly applauded, and he was received with great joy ; but when he proposed to immortalize their city, if they would allow him a salary out of the public treasury, he was told there would be no end of maintaining the ‘Homeroi or blind men,’ and it was from this he got the name of Homer or a blind man. On this being refused, he left that city uttering this imprecation, ‘may no Poets ever be born in Cuma, to celebrate it by their poems ;’ and came to Phocæa. He afterwards wandered through several places, and arrived at Chios, where he married, and composed his *Odyssey*. Some time after having added many verses to his Poems, in praise of some cities of Greece, especially Athens and Argos, he went to Samos, where he spent the winter singing at the houses of the great, with a crowd of boys after him. From Samos, he went to one of the Sporades, intending to prosecute his voyage to Athens. Where he died, or where he was buried is altogether uncertain ; however the inhabitants of Cos, one of the Sporades claimed that honour, which was also contended for by the Cyprians.

It has been doubted by some of Homer’s Commentators, whether he was blind or not ; but thus, the ancients generally represented him, as appears from all the portraits, busts, and medals, which have been preserved.

I have already observed that he had composed some of his *Iliad* before his sight began to fail him,

but that he laboured under this privation when he composed his *Odyssey*, has never been questioned. In the 8th book of that poem, in the person of Demodocus, he has described his own helpless situation in the most tender and pathetic language.

“ Dear to the Muse, who gave his days to flow,
“ With mighty blessings, mixed with mighty woe ;
“ With clouds of darkness quenched his visual ray,
“ But gave him power to raise the lofty lay.”

Neither the virtues nor the talents of Homer could procure him a single patron in the country, which at that time was the seat of literature and science ! (3) Shame to Greece that suffered a man who reflected more honour on her, than all the warriors or statesmen she ever produced, thus to live in poverty, and die in obscurity ! The only incontestible works which Homer has left behind him, are the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* ; both of which, for masterly invention, grandeur of sentiment, nobleness of character, and richness of colouring, excel any thing of the kind, in that or any other language. Nothing is equal to the clearness and majesty of Homer's style, to the sublimity of his thoughts, to the strength and sweetness of his verses ; or to that easy, natural simplicity of manner, which is the crowning ornament of composition ; which gives lustre to every other beauty, and is justly called ‘the dress of Nature.’ All his images are striking, his descriptions lively and exact, the passions so well expressed, and nature so justly and finely painted, that he seems to give to every thing motion,

life and action. In a word, the more he is read by a person of taste, the more he is admired. Nor are his works to be esteemed, merely as interesting poems, nor as the monuments of a sublime and varied genius; no, he was in general so accurate with respect to costumes, that he seldom mentions persons or things, that we may not conclude to have been well known during the time in which he wrote. It is Pope's opinion, that his account of people, princes, and nations, is purely historical, founded on the real transactions of that age, and is by far the most valuable piece of history, and geography extant, concerning the state of Greece in that early period of the world. His geographical divisions of that country were thought so exact, that we are told of many controversies concerning the boundaries of Grecian cities being determined by the authority of his poems. Alcibiades, once gave a rhetorician a sound box on the ear for not having the writings of Homer in his school. Alexander the great, was so charmed with them, that he commonly placed them under his pillow beside his sword; he enclosed the Iliad in the most precious box of Darius, in order, said he to his courtiers, that the most perfect production of the human mind may be enclosed in the richest casket in the world; and one day seeing the tomb of Achilles, in Sigæa; 'Fortunate hero, said he, thou hast had an Homer to sing thy victories.'

Longinus, the most refined of critics, beautifully compares the Iliad to the mid-day, and the Odyssey to the setting sun; and observes, that though the Iliad claims an uncontested superiority over the Odyssey, yet in the latter the same force, the same sublimity

and elegance prevails, though divested of its most powerful fire, and it still preserves its original splendour and majesty, though deprived of its meridian heat. Lycurgus, Solon, and the kings and princes of Greece set such a value on Homer's works, that they took the utmost pains in procuring correct editions of them, the most esteemed of which was that of Aristarchus. (4) Didymus (5) was the first who wrote notes on Homer, and Eustathius, (6) archbishop of Thesalonica, in the twelfth century, is the most celebrated of his commentators. Homer composed several other works besides the Iliad and the Odyssey: There are ascribed to him, the battle of the Frogs and Mice, 32 Hymns and several other pieces, most of which are Epigrams; but the most probable opinion, is, that there are none of Homer's works now extant, except the Iliad and Odyssey. Pope has given us an elegant translation of the Iliad, adorned with all the harmony of poetic numbers; this inimitable poem is so much read and so generally admired, that I will not attempt to describe its many beauties: the Moonlight scene, in the 8th book, I here give as a specimen of Pope's translation:

“As when the Moon, refulgent lamp of night!
“O'er Heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light;
“When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
“And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene:
“Around her throne, the vivid planets roll,
“And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole;
“O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
“And tip with silver every mountain head;

"Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospects rise—
 "A flood of glory bursts from all the skies!
 "The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
 "Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light."

Madame Dacier translated both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into French prose, of which there is an English version by Broome.—Cowper has also translated the works of Homer into blank verse:

I here insert, for the information of my readers, Cowper's translation of the above passage; and though at first sight they may not be able to judge which is the more literal, they will easily perceive which is the more poetical.

"As when around the clear bright Moon, the stars
 "Shine in full splendour, and the winds are hushed,
 "The groves, the mountain-tops, the headland-heights
 "Stand all apparent, not a vapour streaks
 "The boundless blue, but æther opened wide—
 "All glitters, and the shepherd's heart is cheered."

But those who wish to know the several editions of Homer, and the writers who have employed themselves on the works of that great poet, may consult Fabricius, in the first vol. of his *Bibliotheca Græca*.

"Read Homer once, and you can read no more,
 "For all books else appear so mean, so poor;
 "Verse will seem prose—yet still persist to read,
 "And Homer will be all the books you need."

AUTHORITIES.

WOOD'S Essay on the Genius and Writings of
HOMER....CUMBERLAND'S Observer....ENCYCLOPEDIA
BRITANNICA....LEMPRIERE'S Classical Dictionary.

NOTES TO HOMER.

(1) A river of Asia Minor, in Ionia, near Smyrna. The Ancients supported this opinion of Homer's being born on its banks, and said that he thence got the name of Melesigenes, and his compositions Melitoea Charta. They even say that he composed his poems in a cave near the source of that river.

(2) A man introduced by Homer as a musician among Penelope's suitors. Some say he taught Homer, for which the grateful Poet immortalized his name.

(3) It was not enough that his hard-hearted and unfeeling countrymen treated him with neglect, while living; but even a wretch was found so dead to every feeling of justice and humanity, as to attempt to injure the character of a man, who, by his writings had rendered so much service to mankind. Zoilius, (whose name, we, at this distant period, would be utterly unacquainted with, were it not for the part he took against Homer,) collected from the works of that great master, what he was pleased to call Homer's errors, and absurdities; these were given to the world in the

form of a book. In this scurrilous production, he attempted, not only to prove Homer a plagiarist, but denied him all claim to originality; he even went so far as to assert, that he was both irreligious and licentious—charges, which were as false as they were groundless: both himself and his book were every where treated with that contempt which they so justly merited. Finding no encouragement in Greece, he travelled into Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus who was a great patron of learning and learned men, and of course an admirer of Homer. It was at the celebration of the Olympic games, at Alexandria, that Zoilius intended to disseminate his calumnies; but the king hearing that he was on the field, and having been previously informed of the object of his journey, ordered him to be taken into custody and publicly whipped; and it is said, that those to whom was entrusted the execution of this sentence, performed their duty so well, that the unhappy man expired under the lash.

(4) A celebrated grammarian of Samos, disciple of Aristophanes; he lived the greatest part of his life at Alexandria, and Ptolemy Philometor entrusted him with the education of his sons. He was famous for his critical powers, and revised Homer's poems with such severity, that ever after all severe critics were called Aristarchi; he wrote above 800 commentaries on different authors, much esteemed in his day. In his old age he became dropsical, upon which he starved himself to death in the 72d year of his age, B.C. 157.

(5) A Scholiast on Homer, surnamed Chalkenteros, flourished, B.C. 40.

(6) A Greek commentator on the works of Homer. It is to be lamented that the design of Alexander Politus, began at Florence in 1735 and published in the first five books of the Iliad, is not executed as a Latin translation of these excellent commentaries, is among the desiderata of the present day.

THE LIFE
OF
JOHN MILTON.

~~~~~

" BUT MILTON next, with high and haughty stalks,  
" Unfettered in majestic numbers walks ;  
" No vulgar Hero, can his Muse engage,  
" Nor earth's wide scene, confine his hallowed rage,  
" See ! see ! he upwards springs, and towering high,  
" Spurns the dull province of mortality,  
" Shakes Heaven's eternal throne with dire alarms,  
" And sets the Almighty thunderer in arms.  
" Whate'er his pen describes, I more than see,  
" Whilst every verse arrayed in majesty,  
" Bold and sublime, my whole attention draws,  
" And seems above the Critic's nicer laws :  
" How am I struck with terror and delight,  
" When Angels with Archangels cope in fight?  
" When great Messiah's out-spread banner shines,  
" How does the chariot rattle in his lines ?



“ What sound of brazen wheels, what thunders scare  
“ And stun the reader with the din of war?  
“ With fear my spirits and my blood retire,  
“ To see the Seraphs sunk in clouds of fire!  
“ But when, with eager steps from hence I rise,  
“ And view the first gay scenes of Paradise;  
“ What tongue, what words of rapture can express,  
“ A Vision so profuse of pleasantness?”

WITH the name of Milton, must ever associate in a British mind, the highest sentiments of veneration. He who makes the least pretensions to liberal knowledge and taste, and who, notwithstanding, feels no wish to learn the circumstances of the life of such a writer, may justly be suspected of some dislike, not only to the Muse, but Goodness itself; and to that greatness of mind which procures distinguished honours.

Paradise lost, however, has established an imperishable fame. Human nature must suffer an awful wreck before that work can cease to interest the numerous thousands of its readers! No wonder then, that memoirs of the life of its Author have long followed one another, with increasing success, till the subject through all its authorities, is now nearly exhausted: the substance of the whole I shall endeavour faithfully and briefly to comprise in the following sketch.

This great Poet was descended of a respectable family in Milton, in Oxfordshire. His grandfather was a bigotted Catholic, and disinherited his son for embracing the Protestant religion; upon which he came to London and settled there as a scrivener; where the



subject of this narrative was born, on the 9th of Decr. 1608. He received the first rudiments of his education from a private tutor, who was brought into the family for that purpose: from his father's house he went to St. Paul's School, and entered a student of Christ's College, Cambridge; during his residence there, he composed most of his Latin poems, in a style exquisitely imitative of the best models of antiquity. Milton is said to have been the first Englishman who wrote Latin verse with classical elegance. On leaving the university, after having taken out his degree of A. M. in 1632, he returned to his father, then residing at Horton, in Buckingham-shire; where he pursued his studies with unparalleled assiduity and success. They did not however, so entirely absorb his attention, as not to afford him time to produce the *Mask of Comus*, a work adorned with all the ornaments of diction!—where allusions, images, and beautiful epithets embellished every period with lavish decoration: for though, it is a drama, too much in the epic style to please on the stage, yet, in whatever light it is viewed, whether as a series of lines, a masque, or a poem, it can be considered as inferior only to *Paradise Lost*. His next production was *Lycidas*, a poem no less beautiful of its kind, than the last; being a monody on the death of his friend Edward King, son of Sir John King, secretary for Ireland, and who was lost on his passage to that country. Milton, having now remained with his father about five years, obtained on the death of his mother, the liberty which he so ardently desired, to travel; he left England in 1638; first,



went to Paris, where he visited the celebrated Grotius, and thence hasted into Italy, whose language and literature he studied with uncommon diligence. There he was received with marked attention by the learned and great; for, notwithstanding the undissembled openness of his political and religious opinions, he was introduced to a musical entertainment by Cardinal Barberini, (afterwards Pope Urban the 8th,) in person, who waited for him at the door, and led him by the hand into the assembly. From Rome he went to Naples; where he was received with no less respect by Manso, Marquis of Villa, who had been before the patron of Tasso: after which, he visited the rest of Italy, carressed and honoured by every one, conspicuous for high rank or distinguished abilities. Among the last was the great Galileo, whom he did not omit to visit, although, at that time a prisoner in the Inquisition, for having taught the annual and diurnal motions of the earth! after having spent two years in his travels, which were designed to extend to Sicily and Greece, on hearing of the troubles in his native country, he hasted home, judging it criminal, to remain indifferent, or to indulge in amusements, while his countrymen were contending for their liberties. On his return he took a house in Aldersgate-street, where he superintended the education of his nephews, by his sister; and also received other young gentlemen to be boarded and instructed. In his 35th year, he married Mary, the daughter of Richard Powel, esq. of Forrest-hill, Oxfordshire; but a separation, or rather a desertion on the wife's part, took place in a



month after the ceremony ; on her refusing to return in compliance with repeated requisitions, he was so provoked, that he was induced to publish several treatises on the doctrine of divorce, and also to pay his addresses to a young lady of great wit and beauty. A reconciliation was the consequence, for his wife, in an unexpected interview, throwing herself at his feet, implored his forgiveness; impressed with this event, he is said to have conceived the pathetic scene in *Paradise Lost*, in which Eve addressed herself to Adam, for pardon and peace.

—————Her lowly plight  
Immoveable, till peace obtained from fault :  
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought,  
Commiseration ; soon his heart relented  
Towards her, his life so late and sole delight,  
Now at his feet submissive in distress !  
Creature so fair, his reconciliation seeking,  
His counsel whom she had displeased, his aid :  
As one disarmed, his anger all he lost.

From this period till the Restoration, our author was so deeply engaged in the controversies of the times, that he found no leisure for polite literature. The *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, however, appeared in a collection of Latin and English poems, published in 1645. These delightful pieces are, undoubtedly, the two best descriptive poems that ever were written: had he left no other monuments but *Comus*, *Lycidas*, and the *Matchless Pair*, yet they alone, would be sufficient to render his name immortal. They were however, little noticed on their publication, and remained for near a century disregarded, or at least scarcely



known; while his polemical tracts, (now only in their titles remembered,) made their author's fortune, and spread his fame over Europe: of these the most celebrated, is, his "*Defencio Populi Anglicani*," or "*Defence of the English People*," in answer to Salmasius, professor of polite literature at Leyden; who was employed by Charles the 2nd when in exile, to write the "*Defensio Regis*," or "*Defence of the King*." Milton's piece was so severe, and so much admired, that it is said to have killed his antagonist with vexation. (1) For this tract, he was rewarded with £1000. a sum 20 times greater than he made by all his Poetical works put together! and was also promoted to be Latin secretary to the Protector. On the second of May, 1652, his family was increased by the birth of his 4th child, Deborah; and the mother dying in child-bed, he was left with three orphan daughters in domestic solitude, and in a state, rapidly advancing to blindness.

The prediction of his Physicians was now hastening to its fatal accomplishment; his sight naturally weak, and impaired by incessant study, from the earliest periods of his life, had for several years been sensibly declining; and when he engaged in his last great work, had discovered symptoms of approaching extinction. In the course of that honourable labour he entirely lost the vision of one eye, and that of the other closing soon afterwards, he was resigned to total darkness.

The fortitude with which he supported himself under this afflicting privation, is admirably discovered



in that Sonnet to his friend Cyriac Skinner, the grandson of the great Lord Coke, which I shall now transcribe. I could never read it without paying to its author the profound homage of my respect.

Cyriac, this three-years-day, these eyes, though clear  
To outward view, of blemish, or of spot,  
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot ;  
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear  
Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year !  
Or man, or woman!—yet I argue not  
Against Heaven's hand, nor will, nor bate a jot  
Of heart, or hope, but still bear up and steer  
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?—  
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied,  
In liberties defence, my noble task,  
Of which all Europe rings from side to side :  
This thought might lead me through the world's vain  
mask,  
Content, though blind, had I no other guide.

Of the completion of this misfortune, the date is by no means accurately settled. All his biographers, with the exception of Todd, place it in 1654 ; but it unquestionably happened in some antecedent period, as appears by his letter to Phalaris, written in the autumn of that year ; (2) and we know, that when he was visited by his Athenian friends, at a time not greatly posterior to the publication of his defence, he was totally blind. Todd has noticed in Thurloe's state papers, a letter from the Hague, dated June 20, 1653, in which Milton is mentioned as blind. We must conclude, therefore, that his total loss of sight, soon followed the publica-



tion of his answer to Salmasius, and happened early in 1652. He was forewarned by his physicians of the contingent calamity, and in the alternative of evils, preferred the loss of sight to the dereliction of his duty.

Milton, however did not long remain a widower, he shortly after married Catherine, daughter of Capt. Woodcock, of Hackney: she seems to have been the object of her husband's fondest affection; and like her predecessor, dying in child-bed, within a year after her marriage, she was lamented by him in a pleasing and pathetic Sonnet, which will be felt by every sensible bosom; it may not be irrelevant to remark, that the thought in its concluding line, which on a cursory view may be branded as a conceit, is strictly correct and just. In his dreams, a blind man may expatiate in the full blaze of the sun, and the morning, in which he awakes, unquestionably restores him to his darkness. The fault is in the expression alone—"I waked, she fled, and I replunged in night;" would perhaps be sufficiently unexceptionable.

Methought I saw my late espoused saint,  
Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave,  
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave;  
Rescued from death, by force, though pale and faint.  
Mine was, whom washed from spot of child-bed taint;  
Purification in the old law did save,  
And such, as yet once more I trust to have  
Full sight of her in heaven without restraint;  
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind;  
Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight,



Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined,  
So clear as in no face with more delight :  
But oh ! as to embrace me she inclined—  
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night !

The daughter whom she bore him, soon followed her to the tomb. On the Restoration, he was obliged to quit his house, together with his employment, and to secret himself in an obscure abode, in Bartholomew Close: his friends had some difficulty to prevent him being excepted in the act of oblivion; to lull research, and to gain time, they had recourse to the expedient of a mock funeral. By the act of oblivion he was at last freed from danger, but his polemical writings were burnt by the common hangman. From Bartholomew Close he removed to Jewry street, and married for his third wife, Elizabeth Minstur, daughter to a gentleman in Cheshire. He was now in his 52d year, blind, infirm, and comparatively poor, for he had lost by the civil wars his paternal estate, and by the Restoration his acquired property; but neither his infirmities, nor the vicissitudes of fortune, could depress the vigour of his mind, or prevent him from executing a design he had long conceived, of writing an heroic poem. The great work of *Paradise Lost*, was finished in 1665, at Chalfont, in Bucks, where the author had taken refuge from the plague; and published in 1667, when he returned to London. He sold the copy to Samuel Simmons for five pounds in hand, and five pounds more when 1300 copies should be sold, and the same sum, on the publication of the 2d and 3rd editions, for each edition. Of this agreement, Milton received



15*l*. and his widow afterwards sold her claims for 8*l*. Such was the first reception of a work, which constitutes the glory, and boast of English literature; a work, which notwithstanding the severity of criticism, may be ranked among the noblest efforts of human genius; for though in variety of character and choice of subject, it may yield to some; yet in grandeur and sublimity it is confessedly superior to all. The measure of this divine poem is blank verse, between which and rhyme there are endless disputes for pre-eminence—but surely the essential qualities of poetry can no more depend on either, than those of a man on the fashion of his cloathes. Dr. Johnson, who could not endure blank verse, yet confesses, that “he could not prevail on himself to wish that Milton had been a rhymers.” *Paradise Lost* is not however without faults; perfection in this life is unattainable. The attempt of the author to give language and sentiment to the Deity, is where he seems to have failed most in the execution; but in such an attempt, what mortal could have succeeded? Other exceptions it has endured in passing the fiery ordeal of Doctor Johnson’s criticism; yet, every reader capable of relishing true poetry, will agree with him in concluding, that “this is not the greatest of heroic poems,” only because it is not the first.

Three years after the publication of *Paradise Lost*, he published *Sampson Agonistes*, a tragedy in the purest style of the Greek Drama, and *Paradise Regained*; which he is said to have preferred to his great work, but in which preference, he remains a-



lone. *Paradise Regained* has suffered much in the comparison; it is said the following circumstance gave rise to this poem. Elwood, the quaker, who had been introduced to him for the purpose of improving himself by the perusal of the classical writers, suggested the idea of such a work just before he came to Chalfont, and the Poet presented him with it on his return to London. Milton had indeed given him the perusal of *Paradise Lost* in M. S. who having read it, upon returning the copy put this quaint interrogation—"What hast thou to say to *Paradise found*?" This simple, yet natural question gave rise to *Paradise Regained*; a work as much obscured by the splendour of *Paradise lost*, as the lustre of the morning star by the sun's meridian blaze; but if any other than Milton had been the author, it would have justly claimed, and received universal praise. Our great Poet, at last worn out by the gout, paid the debt of nature on the 10th of November, 1674, in his 66th year, at his house in Bunnhill-fields, and was buried in St. Giles's Cripplegate; his funeral was splendidly and numerously attended. He left £.1500 to his family; a proof, that notwithstanding his losses, he never was in indigence.

There are few characters in the annals of literature, that have been so often, and so ably delineated as that of Milton. His learning, his talents, and his genius, have been the theme, and admiration of every country, which his works have reached, while his eminent piety, and many other virtues give additional lustre to his character. Milton's religious principles



were founded on the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. When he broke off from the communion of the Church of England, he joined a religious society, who called themselves independants, and with whom he continued till his death: among the many illustrious philosophers, who by their lives and writings have done honour to the cause of Christianity, Milton holds a distinguished rank. As to his politics, he was a zealous republican, and of course an enemy to the Kingly Government. On the Restoration, Milton's friends were greatly alarmed for his safety, lest he should be proceeded against as a regicide: they therefore used all their influence to procure him a pardon, in which, I am happy to say, they succeeded. The Government contented themselves with calling him before the house, as may be seen by the following extract from the journal of the House of Commons.

*Saturday, 15th December, 1660.*

“Ordered, that Mr. Milton now in custody of the Sergeant attending this house, be forthwith released, paying his fees” A complaint made, that the sergeant at arms had demanded excessive fees for the imprisonment of Mr. Milton, the House again

“Ordered—that it be referred to a committee of privileges, to examine this business, and to call Mr. Milton and the sergeant before them, and to determine what is fit to be given to the sergeant for his fees in this case.”

Milton seems to have been saved principally by



the earnest and grateful interposition of Sir William D'Avenant, who had been captured by the fleet of the Common Wealth, on his passage from France to America, and had been ordered by the Parliament in 1651, on his trial before the High Court of Justice; the mediation of Milton, had essentially contributed to snatch him from danger; and urged by that generous benevolence which shone conspicuously in his character, he was now eager to requite, with a gift of equal value, the life which he had received. For the existence of D'Avenant's obligation to Milton, we have the testimony of Wood, and for the subsequent part of the story, so interesting in itself, and so honourable to human nature, the evidence is directly to be traced from Richardson to Pope, and from Pope to Betterton, the immediate client and intimate of D'Avenant. The following anecdote of Milton and the Duke of York is related by Symmons. The Duke as it is reported, expressed to his brother a great desire to see old Milton, of whom he had heard so much. The king replied, that he felt no objection to the Duke's satisfying his curiosity, and therefore soon afterwards James went privately to Milton's House, where, after an introduction which explained to the old republican the rank of his guest, a free conversation ensued between these very dissimilar and discordant characters. In the course, however, of the conversation, the Duke asked Milton whether he did not regard the loss of his sight as a judgement inflicted on him for what he had written against the late King. 'If your Highness thinks that the calamities which befall us here, are indications



of the wrath of Heaven, in what manner are we to account for the fate of the King, your father? The displeasure of Heaven, must on this supposition, have been much greater against him than against me—I have lost my eyes, but he lost his head.’ Much discomposed by this answer, the Duke soon took his leave and went away. On his return to Court, the first words he spoke to the King, were, ‘Brother, you are greatly to blame that you do not have that old rogue (Milton,) hanged:’ ‘Why,—what is the matter James,’ said the King, ‘you seem in a heat. What; have you seen Milton?’ ‘Yes;’ answered the Duke, ‘I have seen him.’ ‘Well,’ said the King, ‘in what condition did you find him?’ ‘Condition; why, he is old and very poor.’ ‘Old and poor! well, and he is blind too—is he not?’ ‘Yes; blind as a beetle.’ ‘Why then,’ observed the King, ‘you are a fool James, to have him hanged as a punishment: to hang him will be doing him a service, it will be taking him out of his miseries—No—if he be old, poor, and blind, he is miserable enough, in all conscience, let him live!’

His nuncupative will, which has lately been discovered in the Prerogative Registry, and published by Mr. Warton, opens a glimpse into the interior of Milton’s House, and shows him to have been amiable and injured in that private scene, in which alone he has generally been considered as liable to censure, or perhaps, rather not entitled to our affection. In this will and in the paper connected with it, we find the venerable Father complaining of his ‘unkind



Children,' for leaving and neglecting him, because he is blind; and we see him compelled, as it were, by their injurious conduct, to appeal against them, even to his servants. We are assured also, by the deposition on oath, of one of these servants, that his complaints were not extorted by slight wrongs, or uttered by capricious passion on slight provocations; that his children, (with the exception probably of Deborah, who, at the time immediately in question, was not more than nine years old,) would occasionally sell his Books to the dunghill-women, as the witness calls them; that these were capable of combining with the maid-servant, and advising her to cheat her Master and their Father in her marketings; and that one of them, Mary, on being told that her Father was to be married, replied, 'that is no news, but if I could hear of his death, that were something.'

This account of the ingratitude of his Children I have taken from Symmons' Life of Milton, which the reader may consult.

Much has been said on the unequal flow of our Poet's genius; and by some it has been represented as under the influence of particular seasons, while by others, it has been regarded as the effect of immediate and positive inspiration. Philips declares that his uncle's poetic faculty was vivid only in the Winter, and Toland assigns the Spring, as the season of its peculiar activity; while Richardson with a proper respect to the ardent character of the Author's mind, expresses a doubt whether such a work could be suffered for any considerable period to stand absolutely



still. Philips, to whom his relation was accustomed to show the Poem in its progress, informs us that, not having seen any verses for some time on the approach of Summer, he requested to know the cause of what appeared to him to be extraordinary; and that he received as a reply from the Poet, that 'his vein never flowed happily, but from the Autumnal Equinox till the Vernal, and that what he attempted at other times was never to his satisfaction, though he courted his fancy ever so much.' In opposition to this, and in support of his own opinion, Toland adduces the information given to him by a friend of Milton's, and the testimony of the Bard himself, who, in his beautiful Elegy on the arrival of Spring, speaks of that delightful Season, as renovating and invigorating his genius: While the former part of this evidence cannot be poised against that of the Author's confidential friend and nephew, the latter must be considered as too weak and uncertain to be entitled to any great regard. Mrs. Milton, who survived her husband, says, that he composed principally in the Winter, and on his waking in the mornings would make her write down sometimes twenty or thirty verses. On being asked whether he did not frequently read Homer and Virgil, she replied, that, 'he stole from nobody but the Muse who inspired him.' To a Lady who inquired who that Muse was, she said, 'it was God's grace, and the Holy Spirit that visited him nightly.'

A small monument, with his bust, has been erected not long since, to his memory in Westminster Abbey. Milton, in stature, did not exceed the middle size,



but was formed with perfect symmetry, and was moreover in his youth eminently beautiful ; of which many portraits yet to be seen, and the following epigram of the Marquis of Villa, are incontestible proofs.

*“ Ut mens, forma, decor facies, mos, si pietas sic,*

*“ Non Anglus sed Angelus ipse fores.”*

Which (omitting the exception to his religion) may be thus Englished.

*“ So perfect thou, in mind, in form, in face ;*

*“ Thou art not of English, but Angelic race.”*

In his habits, he was abstemious in his diet, and naturally disliked all strong Liquors. In his youth he studied late, but afterwards reversed his hours. His amusements consisted in the conversation of his friends, and in music, in which he was a great proficient: after he became blind, he was assisted in his studies by his daughters, whom he taught to read Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, without their understanding any of them ; and for transcribing, he employed any casual acquaintance. His literature was great ; he was a perfect master of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, French and Spanish ; of the English Poets, he preferred Spencer, Shakespeare and Cowley : his deportment was erect, open, and affable : his conversation easy, cheerful, and instructive ; his wit, on all occasions, at command, facetious, grave, or satirical, as the subject required ; his judgement just and penetrating ; his apprehension quick ; his memory tenacious of what he read ; his reading only, not so extensive as his genius, for that was universal. With so many accomplishments, not to have faults and misfortunes to be laid in the balance,



with the fame and felicity of writing *Paradise Lost*, would have been too great a portion for humanity. Many years after Milton's death, and at a period when his works were read and admired by every person of taste in the Kingdom, the public were very much surprised on the appearance of a pamphlet, entitled, "*Milton's Plagiarisms detected.*" In this Essay the writer attempted to prove Milton a servile imitator, a Plagiarist, and no Poet. (3) The unfortunate Lauder was obliged to skulk from place to place, like a common felon, in order to avoid detection; for the public indignation was so great, that had he been taken, he would have shared the fate of his predecessor, Zoilius. He was forced to fly his country and seek an Assylum in one of our remotest Colonies, where he lived detested and died unlamented; and the name of Lauder like that of Zoilius will only be remembered to be abhorred. Before I dismiss this article, I shall take the liberty of inserting the following passage of the 3rd Book of *Paradise Lost*, in which our Author in the most affecting language laments his loss of sight!

Hail, holy Light! offspring of Heaven, first-born,  
Or, of the Eternal Co-eternal Beam;  
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,  
And never but in unapproached light  
Dwelt from Eternity; dwelt then in thee,  
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.  
Or hearest thou, rather, pure ethereal stream,  
Whose fountain who shall tell? Before the sun,  
Before the Heavens thou wert, and at the voice  
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest



The rising world of waters dark and deep,  
Won from the void and formless infinite.  
Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,  
Escaped the stygian pool, though long detained  
In that obscure sojourn; while in my flight  
Through utter, and through middle darkness borne,  
With other notes than to the orphean lyre,  
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night;  
Taught by the Heavenly Muse to venture down  
The dark descent, and up to re-ascend;  
Though hard and rare. Thee I revisit safe,  
And feel thy sovereign, vital Lamp: but thou  
Revisitest not these eyes, that roll in vain  
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;  
So thick a drop serene has quenched their orbs,  
Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more  
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt,  
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,  
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief  
Thee Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,  
Nightly I visit; nor sometimes forget  
Those other two, equalled with me in fate,  
So were I equalled with them in renown;  
Blind Thamyras, and blind Mæonides,  
Tyresias and Phineus, prophets old;  
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move  
Harmonious numbers! as the wakeful bird  
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid,  
Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus, with the year  
Seasons return; but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn,



Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ;  
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
Surrounds me ; from the cheerful ways of Men  
Cut off, and for the Book of Knowledge fair,  
Presented with an universal blank  
Of nature's works, to me expunged and rased ;  
And Wisdom, at one entrance quite shut out.  
So much the rather, thou, celestial Light,  
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate ; there plant eyes ; all mist from thence  
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell  
Of things invisible to mortal sight.

As Milton equalled Homer in his genius, so he equalled him in his misfortunes. Homer had reached the years of manhood before he lost his sight ; so had Milton. Homer's great work was his *Iliad* ; Milton's, his *Paradise Lost*. Homer's second great work was his *Odyssey* ; Milton's, his *Paradise Regained*. The *Odyssey* is as much inferior to the *Iliad*, as *Paradise Regained* is to *Paradise Lost*. Homer had Zoilius, and Milton had Lauder. These two great Epic Poets, like Saturn and Jupiter in the Planetary system, shine bright Stars of excellence, round which, inferior orbs for ever move in dull succession : Homer and Milton have long held the first rank among Poets. The vigour of their minds, the brilliancy of their imaginations, the flights of their genius, like those of inspiration, extended to the very boundaries of time and space.



I will close these remarks with the following  
Panegyric on Milton by the Author of the Seasons.

Is not each great, each amiable Muse  
Of classic ages in thy Milton met?  
A genius universal as his theme;  
Astonishing as Chaos, as the bloom  
Of blowing Eden fair, as Heaven sublime.

~~~~~  
AUTHORITIES.

SYMMONS' Life of MILTON...JOHNSON'S Lives of
English Poets...HALEY'S Life of MILTON...ANDER-
SON'S Lives of the Poets...M'NICOLL'S Life of MILTON.

~~~~~  
NOTES TO MILTON.

(1) This celebrated controversy was of that magnitude, that all Europe took a part in the paper-war of these great men. Salmasius was a man of vast erudition, but no taste. His writings are learned, but sometimes ridiculous. The opening of his *Defensio Regis*, provokes a laugh:—

“Englishmen, who toss the heads of Kings as so many tennis balls; who play with crowns as if they were bowls; who look upon sceptres as so many crooks!” He reproaches Milton, as being but a puny piece of Man; an homunculus; a dwarf deprived of the human figure; a bloodless being, composed of nothing but skin and bone; a contemptible pedagogue,



fit only to flog his boys; and sometimes, elevating his mind into a Poetic frenzy, he applies to him the words of Virgil. 'Monstrum, horrendum, informe ingens, cui lumen ademptum.' 'A monster, horrid, hideous, huge and blind.'

To this senseless declamation, our great Poet made a spirited reply, and concluded with these words; 'Even my eyes, blind as they are, are unblemished in their appearance; in this alone, and much against my inclination, I am a deceiver!'

(2) Devoted from my earliest youth to every thing connected with Greece, and your own Athens, my Phalaris, in particular, I have always steadfastly believed, that the time would come, when that city would bestow upon me some signal proof of her gratitude in return; by giving to me in you, a genuine Son of Attica, and an affectionate friend; the ancient genius of your illustrious land, has fulfilled my most sanguine expectations. Known to you only by my writings, and widely separated in our abodes, I was first honoured by your kind correspondence; and afterwards, when an unexpected occasion brought you to London, with the same kindness you came to see me, who could see no-body. One labouring under an affliction which can entitle him to little observation, and may perhaps expose him to much disregard. As however, you entreat me not to abandon all hopes of recovering my sight, and state that you have a Medical friend at Paris, (M. Thevenot,) particularly eminent as an oculist, whom you could consult upon the subject, if I would transmit to you the causes, and the



symptoms of my disease ; that I may not seem to neglect any means, perhaps divinely suggested, of relief, I will hasten to comply with your requisition. It is now, I think about ten years, since I first perceived my sight to grow weak and dim, and at the same time my spleen and other viscera heavy and flatulent. When I sate down to read, as usual, in the morning, my eyes gave me considerable pain, and refused their office till fortified by moderate exercise of body. If I looked at a candle it appeared [surrounded with an iris. In a little time a darkness covering the left side of the left eye, which was partially clouded some years before the other, intercepted the view of all things in that direction. Objects, also in front, seemed to dwindle in size, whenever I closed my right eye.

This eye, too, for three years gradually failing, a few months previous to my total blindness, while I was perfectly stationary, every thing seemed to swim backward and forward ; and now thick vapours appear to settle on my forehead and temples, which weigh down my eye-lids, with an oppressive sense of drowsiness ; so as frequently to remind me of Phineus the Salmydessian in the Argonautics.

In darkness swam his brain, and where he stood,  
The steadfast earth seemed rolling as a flood ;  
Nerveless his tongue and every power oppressed,  
He sank and languished into torpid rest.

I ought not however, to omit mentioning, that, before I wholly lost my sight, as soon as I lay down in bed, and turned on either side, brilliant flashes of light used to issue from my closed eyes, and



afterwards on the gradual failure of my powers of vision, colours proportionably dim and faint, seemed to rush out with a degree of vehemence, and a kind of noise. These have now faded into uniform blackness, such as ensues on the extinction of a candle; or blackness only varied, and intermingled with dunnish grey. The constant darkness, however, in which I live day and night, inclines more to a whitish than to a blackish tinge; and the eye turning round, admits as through a narrow chink, a very small portion of light. But this, though perhaps it may offer a similar glimpse of hope to the Physician, does not prevent me from making up my mind to my case, as one evidently beyond the hope of cure; and I often reflect, that as many days of darkness, according to the wise man, are allotted to us all, mine, (which by the favour of the Deity, are divided between leisure and study,) are recreated by the conversation and intercourse of my friends, and far more agreeable than those deadly shades of which Solomon is speaking: but if, as it is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God:' why should not each of us likewise acquiesce in the reflection, that he derives the benefit of sight, not from his eyes alone, but from the guidance, and providence of the same Supreme Being, whilst he looks out and provides for me as he does, and leads me about, as it were with his hand, through the paths of life, I willingly surrender my own faculty of vision, in conformity to his good pleasure, and with a heart as strong and steadfast as if I were a Lynceus, I bid you my Phalaris farewell.



(3) In 1747 William Lauder, a native of Edinburgh, and a man of considerable talents and abilities, excited general attention by publishing through the medium of the Gentleman's Magazine, a paper to which he gave the title of 'An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns;' the design of which was to prove that our great Epic Poet had made free with the works of some obscure Latin Poets of modern date, in his immortal work of Paradise Lost. Many answers were given but all failed in the desired object of freeing him from these calumnious aspersions. Flushed with his success, Lauder ventured in 1750 to publish his Essay in a separate form, in which he dwells upon the supposed Plagiarisms in a train of triumph and impudence, which it would be difficult to parallel in the history of literary impostures. One passage from this scarce and curious performance may be amusing to the reader, as displaying the spirit of Lauder and his unblushing effrontery: And hence, said he, 'I could produce a cloud of witnesses, as fresh vouchers of the truth of my assertion, with whose fine sentiments, as so many gay feathers, Milton has plumed himself; like one who would adorn a garland with flowers secretly taken from various gardens, or a crown with jewels stolen from the different diadems, or repositories of Princes, by which he shines indeed, but with the borrowed lustre of a surreptitious majesty.' The literary World were in a state of great anxiety for the vindication of their Poet when Dr. Douglass, bishop of Carlisle published a detection of Lauder's forgeries in a letter to the Earl



of Bath, his patron, entitled, 'Milton Vindicated from the Charge of Plagiarism brought against him by Mr. Lauder.' In this masterly Pamphlet, the learned Critic proves that the passages, which had been cited as the works of Masenius, Staphortius, Taubmannus, and other obscure writers, had been interpolated by the learned forger, Lauder himself; who had also foisted into his quotations whole lines from Hogg's Latin Translation of Paradise Lost, into which no examiner but Dr. Douglass, had been inquisitive enough to look.

(4) The following anecdote may not perhaps be uninteresting to many of my readers. I have taken it from Sir Herbert Croft's Life of Dr. Young.

"Voltaire having ridiculed Milton's Allegory of Death and Sin, in the company of that great man, (most probably at the celebrated Bub Dodlington's)—the following extempore epigram was the punishment to which that celebrated Frenchman exposed himself on this occasion."

Thou art so witty, profligate, and thin,

At once we think thee Milton, Death, and Sin



**THE LIFE**  
**OF**  
**THOS. BLACKLOCK, D.D.**

~~~~~  
"IN manners gentle, in affection mild,
"In wit a man, simplicity a child."

~~~~~  
THE life of BLACKLOCK has a claim to notice beyond that of most of the Poets of our nation, with whom he is now associated. He who reads his Poems with that interest which their intrinsic merit deserves, will feel that interest very much increased, when he shall be told the various difficulties which their author overcame in their production; the obstacles which Nature and Fortune had placed in his way to the possession of those ideas which his mind acquired, to the communication of those which his Poetry unfolds.



The facts stated in the present account, are chiefly taken from the learned and ingenious Dr. Anderson's narrative, which is written with such copiousness of intelligence, as leaves little to be supplied, and such felicity of performance as precludes the most distant hope of improvement. Among the few additional particulars detailed here, the present compiler has endeavoured to give a complete account of his writings.

Dr. Thomas Blacklock was born at Annan, in the county of Dumfries, Novr. 10, 1721. His parents were natives of the county of Cumberland, his father was by trade a bricklayer, his mother, the daughter of a considerable dealer in cattle; both respectable in their characters, and it would appear possessed of considerable knowledge and urbanity; which, in a country where education was cheap, and property a good deal subdivided, was often the case with persons of their station. Before he was six months old, he was totally deprived of his sight by the small pox, and reduced to that forlorn situation, so feelingly described by himself in his soliloquy. This rendered him incapable of any of those mechanical trades, to which his father might naturally have been inclined to breed him, and his circumstances prevented his aspiring to the higher professions. The good man, therefore kept his son in the house, and with the assistance of some of his friends, fostered that inclination which he early showed for books, by reading to amuse him; first the simple sort of publications which are commonly put into the hands of children, and then several passages out of some of our Poets. His compan-



ions, (whom his early gentleness, and kindness of disposition, as well as their compassion for his misfortune, strongly attached to him,) were very assiduous in their good offices, in reading to instruct and amuse him. By their assistance, he acquired some knowledge of the Latin tongue ; but he never was at a grammar School till at a more advanced period of life. Poetry was even then his favourite reading, and he found an enthusiastic delight in the works of Milton, Spencer, Prior, Pope and Addison, and in those of his countryman, Ramsay ; from loving and admiring them so much, he soon was led to endeavour to imitate them, and when scarcely twelve years of age, he began to write verses. Among these early Essays of his genius, there was one addressed to a little girl whom he had offended, which is preserved in his works, and is not perhaps inferior to any of the premature compositions of boys, assisted by the best education, which are only recalled into notice by the future fame of their authors.

He had attained the age of nineteen, when his father was killed by the accidental fall of a malt-kiln belonging to his son-in-law. This loss, heavy to any one at that early age, would have been, however, to a young man possessing the ordinary advantages of education comparatively light ; but to him thus suddenly deprived of the support on which his youth had leaned, destitute almost of any resource which industry affords to those who have the blessing of sight, with a body feeble and delicate from nature, and a mind congenially susceptible, it was not surprising that this blow was doubly severe, and threw on his spirits that



despondent gloom to which he then gave way, and which sometimes overclouded them in the subsequent period of his life.

Though dependent, however, he was not destitute of friends, and Heaven rewarded the pious confidence which he expressed in its care, by providing for him protectors and patrons, by whose assistance he obtained advantages, which had his father lived, might perhaps never have opened to him.

He lived with his mother about a year after his father's death, and began to be distinguished as a young man of uncommon parts and genius. These were at that time unassisted by learning; the circumstances of his family affording him no better education than the smattering of Latin which his companions had taught him, and the perusal and recollection of the few English authors, which they or his father, in the intervals of his professional labours had read to him.

Poetry, however, though it attains its highest perfection in a cultivated soil, grows perhaps as luxuriantly in a wild one. To Poetry he was devoted from his earliest days, and about this time several of his poetical productions began to be handed about, which considerably enlarged the circle of his friends and acquaintances.

Some of his compositions being shown to Dr. Stephenson, an eminent physician in Edinburgh, who was accidentally at Dumfries, on a professional visit, he formed the benevolent design of carrying him to the metropolis, and giving to his natural endowments, the assistance of classical education.



He came to Edinburgh in 1741, and was enrolled, says Mr. Mackenzie, 'a Student of Divinity in the university there, though at that time without any particular view of entering into the Church.' But this account may be reasonably doubted; for in the university of Edinburgh, no student is admitted into the theological class, till he has completed a course of languages and philosophy. Besides it appears by the following letter from the Rev. Richard Batty of Kirk Andrews, whose wife was Blacklock, cousin to Sir James Johnston, bart. of Westerhall, dated January 21, 1744, and printed in the 'Scottish Register, 1794,' that he continued at the grammar School in Edinburgh, till the beginning of 1745.

'I had a letter sometime ago from Mr. Hoggan at Comlongan, signifying that Lady Annandale had spoke to you about a bursary for one Thomas Blacklock, a blind boy, who is now at the grammar School in Edinburgh. He is endued with the most surprising genius, and has been the author of a great many excellent Poems. He has been hitherto supported by the bounty of Dr. Stephenson, a gentleman, in Edinburgh. I understand that there will be a bursary vacant again Candlemas; if, therefore, you would please to favour him with your interest, it will be a great charity done to a poor lad, who may do a great deal of good in his generation.'

The effect of this application is not known; but he seems to have continued his studies under the Patronage of Dr. Stephenson, till the year 1745.

Of the kindness of Dr. Stephenson, he always



spoke with the greatest warmth of gratitude and affection, and addressed to him his 'Imitation of the First Ode of Horace.'

After he had followed his studies at Edinburgh, for four years, on the breaking out of the Rebellion in 1745, he returned to Dumfries, where he resided with Mr. M'Murdo, his brother-in law, in whose house he was treated with kindness and affection; and had an opportunity from the society which it afforded, of considerably increasing the store of his ideas. In 1746, he published a small collection of his Poems, in octavo, at Glasgow.

After the close of the Rebellion, and complete Restoration of the peace of the country, he returned to Edinburgh, and pursued his studies there for six years longer.

In 1754, he published at Edinburgh a second edition of his poems, very much improved and enlarged, in octavo, to which was prefixed, 'an account of his life in a letter to the publisher,' from Mr. Gordon of Dumfries. On the title page he is designed 'student of philosophy in the university of Edinburgh;' so that he was not then as Mr. Mackenzie supposes, 'enrolled a student of Divinity.'

This publication attracted the attention of Mr. Spence, the patron of Dodsley, Duck, and Richardson, and other persons of indigent and uncultivated genius; who conceived a great regard for Blacklock, and formed the benevolent design of recommending him to the patronage of persons in affluence or power, by writing a very elaborate and ingenious 'account of



his life, character, and poems,' which he published at London, in 8vo. 1754.

During his last residence in Edinburgh, among other literary acquaintance, he obtained that of the celebrated David Hume, who, with that humanity and benevolence, for which he was distinguished, attached himself warmly to Blacklock's interests. He wrote a letter to Dodsley, March 12, 1754, containing a very favourable representation of the 'goodness of his disposition, and the beauty of his genius,' which contributed to promote the subscription for an edition of his poems, in 4to, which was published at London, 1756, under the superintendence of Mr. Spence, with his 'account of the life, character, and poems of Mr. Blacklock,' which had been printed separately in 1754. He testified his obligations to Mr. Spence, to whom he was personally unknown, in an epistle written at Dumfries, 1759.

In the course of his education at Edinburgh, he acquired a proficiency in the learned languages, and became more a master of the French tongue than was common there, from the social intercourse, to which he had the good fortune to be admitted in the house of Provost Alexander, who had married a native of France.

At the university, he obtained a knowledge of the various branches of philosophy and theology, to which his course of study naturally led, and acquired at the same time a considerable fund of learning and information in those departments of science, and belles lettres, from which his loss of sight did not absolutely pre-



clude him. In 1756, he published at Edinburgh, an *Essay towards universal etymology, or the analysis of a sentence*, octavo.

In this pamphlet, the general principles of grammar, and the definitions of the several parts of speech are given in verse; and illustrations in the form of notes, constituting the greatest part of it, are added in prose. The notes and illustrations are concise, but judicious; the verses are not remarkable for learning or poetical embellishment; the subject did not allow it; the concluding lines however, on the advantages of grammar, are in a style more worthy of Blacklock.

In 1757, he began a course of study, with a view to give lectures on Oratory, to young gentlemen intended for the bar or the pulpit. On this occasion, he wrote to Mr. Hume, informed him of his plan, and requested his assistance in the prosecution of it. But Mr. Hume doubting the probability of its success, he abandoned the project, and then adopted the decided intention of going into the church.

After applying closely for a considerable time to the study of theology, he passed the usual trials in the presbytery of Dumfries, and was by that presbytery licensed a preacher of the Gospel in 1759.

As a preacher, he obtained high reputation, and was fond of composing Sermons. In 1760, when the nation was alarmed by a threatened invasion from the French, he published '*The Right Improvement of Time, a Sermon*, octavo.' He seems to have imbibed pretty deeply the apprehensions of his countrymen.



The sentiments it contains are just and solid, and the advices are calculated to be useful at all times, particularly in the prospect of national danger or distress.

The same year he contributed several poetical pieces to the first volume of Donaldson's 'collection of original Poems, by Scotch gentlemen,' 12mo.

Mrs. Blacklock ascribes the 'Epistle on Taste,' printed in this volume, as Mr. Gordon's to Blacklock, excepting the lines relating to himself.

In 1761, he published 'Faith, Hope, and Charity compared,' a Sermon octavo. Though this cannot be called a first rate performance, it abounds with just and elegant remarks, and his favourite topic of Charity, is agreeably and forcibly illustrated.

In 1762, he married Miss Sarah Johnston, daughter of Mr. Joseph Johnston, Surgeon in Dumfries, a man of eminence in his profession, and of a character highly respected; a connection which formed the great solace and blessing of his future life, and gave him with all the tenderness of a wife, all the zealous care of a guide and a friend. This event took place a few days before his being ordained minister of Kirkcudbright, in consequence of a presentation from the crown, obtained for him by the Earl of Selkirk, a benevolent nobleman, whom Blacklock's situation and genius had interested in his behalf. But the inhabitants of the parish, whether from an aversion to patronage, so prevalent among the lower ranks in North Britain, or from some political disputes which at that time subsisted between them and Lord Selkirk, or from those prejudices, which some of them might



naturally entertain against a person deprived of sight, or perhaps from all those causes united, were so extremely disinclined to receive him as their minister, that, after a legal dispute of nearly two years, it was thought expedient by his friends, as it had always been wished by himself to compromise the matter, by resigning his right to the living, and accepting a moderate annuity in its stead.

The following anecdote of Blacklock, mentioned in Dr Cleghorn's *Thesis de Somno*, happened at the inn in Kirkcudbright, on the day of his ordination, and is authenticated by the testimony of Mrs. Blacklock, who was present with Mr. Gordon and a numerous company of his friends, who dined with him on the occasion. It merits notice, both as a curious fact, relative to the state of the mind in sleep, and on account of the just and elegant compliment with which it concludes.

“Dr, Blacklock, one day harrassed by the censures of the populace, whereby not only his reputation, but his very existence was endangered, and fatigued with mental exertion, fell asleep after dinner. Some hours after he was called upon by a friend, answered his salutation, rose and went with him into the dining room, where some of his companions were met. He joined with two of them in a concert, singing as usual, with taste and elegance, without missing a note, or forgetting a word; he then went to supper, and drank a glass or two of wine. His friends, however, observed him to be a little absent and inattentive; by and by he began to speak to himself, but in so low and con-



used a manner, as to be unintelligible. At last being pretty forcibly roused, he awoke with a sudden start, unconscious of all that had happened, as till then he had continued fast asleep," Dr. Cleghorn adds with great truth, after relating this fact:

"No one will suspect either the judgement or the veracity of Dr. Blacklock. All who knew him bear testimony to his judgement; his fame rests on a better foundation than fictitious narratives; no man delights in, or more strictly adheres, on all points, to the truth."

With this slender provision, he removed in 1764 to Edinburgh, and to make up by his industry, a more comfortable and decent subsistence, he adopted the plan of receiving a certain number of young gentlemen as boarders into his house, whose studies in languages and philosophy, he might, if necessary, assist. In this situation he continued till 1787; when he found his time of life and state of health required a degree of repose, which induced him to discontinue the receiving of boarders.

In the occupation which he thus exercised for so many years of his life, no teacher was perhaps, ever more agreeable to his pupils, nor master of a family to its inmates, than Blacklock. The gentleness of his manners, the benignity of his disposition, and that warm interest in the happiness of others, which led him so constantly to promote it, were qualities that could not fail to procure him the love and regard of the young gentlemen committed to his charge; while the society, which esteem and respect for his character and genius, often assembled at his house, afforded



them an advantage rarely to be found in establishments of a similar kind. In the circle of his friends, he appeared entirely to forget the privation of sight, and the melancholy, which at other times it might produce.

He entered with the cheerful playfulness of a young man, into all the sprightly narrative, the sportful fancy, and the humorous jest that rose around him. It was a sight highly gratifying to philanthropy, to see how much a mind endowed with knowledge, kindled by genius, and above all lighted up with innocence and piety, like Blacklock's, could overcome the weight of its own calamity, and enjoy the content, the happiness and the gaiety of others. Several of those inmates of his house were students of physic, from England, Ireland, and America; who retained in future life, all the warmth of that impression, which his friendship at this early period had made upon them; and in various quarters of the world he had friends and correspondents, from whom no length of time nor distance of place, had ever estranged him. Among his favourite correspondents may be reckoned Dr. Tucker, Author of 'The Bermudian,' a poem, and 'The Anchoret,' and Dr. Downman, author of 'Infancy,' a poem, and other ingenious performances

I will again trespass upon the patience of the reader by inserting the following Ode, written by Dr. Blacklock upon the departure of a young gentleman, one of his pupils, for Guinea.

Attend the muse, whose numbers flow  
Faithful to sacred Friendship's woe,



And let the Scotian lyre,  
Obtain thy pity and thy care,  
While thy loved walks and native air,  
The solemn sounds inspire.

That native air, these walks no more  
Blest with their fav'rite, now deplore,  
And join the plaintive strain,  
While urg'd by winds and waves, he flies,  
Where unknown stars, through unknown skies,  
Their trackless course maintain.

Yet think, by ev'ry keener smart,  
That thrills a friend or brother's heart,  
By all the griefs that rise,  
And with dumb anguish heave thy breast,  
When absence robs the soul of rest,  
And swells with tears the eyes !

By all our sorrows ever new,  
Think whom you fly, and what pursue ;  
And judge by your's our pain :  
From Friendship's dear tenacious arms,  
You fly perhaps to war's alarms,  
To angry skies and main.

The smiling plain, the solemn shade,  
With all the various charms displayed,  
That Summer's face adorn ;  
Summer, with all that's gay or sweet,  
With transport longs thy sense to meet,  
And courts thy dear return.



The gentle sun, the fanning gale,  
The vocal wood, the fragrant vale,  
Thy presence all implore :  
Can then a waste of sea and sky,  
That knows no limits, charm thine eye,  
Thine ear, the tempest's roar ?

But why such weak attractions name,  
While ev'ry warmer social claim,  
Demands the manful lay ?  
Ah ! hear a brother's moving sighs,  
Through tears, behold a sister's eyes  
Emit a faded ray.

Thy young allies, by nature taught  
To feel the tender pang of thought,  
Which friends in absence claim ;  
To thee with sorrow all sincere,  
Oft pay the tributary tear,  
Oft lisp with joy thy name.

Nor these thy absence mourn alone,  
O dearly loved ! though faintly known ;  
One yet unsung remains :  
Nature when scarce fair light he knew,  
Snatched heaven, earth, beauty from his view  
And darkness round him reigns.

The Muse with pity viewed his doom,  
And darting through the eternal gloom,  
An intellectual ray



Bade him with Music's voice inspire  
The plaintive flute, the sprightly lyre,  
And tune the impassioned lay.

Thus, though despairing of relief,  
With every mark of heart-felt grief,  
Thy absence we complain :  
While now perhaps the auspicious gale  
Invites to spread the flying sail,  
And all our tears are vain.

Protect him Heaven ! but hence each fear,  
Since endless goodness, endless care  
This mighty fabric guides ;  
Commands the tempest where to stray,  
Directs the lightning's slanting way,  
And rules the reflux tides.

See, from the effulgence of his reign,  
With pleased survey, Omniscience deign  
Thy wond'rous worth to view ;  
See, from the realms of endless day,  
Immortal guardians wing their way,  
And all thy steps pursue.

If sable clouds, whose wombs contain  
The murm'ring bolt, or dashing rain,  
The blue serene deform ;  
Myriads from heaven's ethereal height,  
Shall clear the gloom, restore the light,  
And chase the impending storm.



In 1766, upon the unsolicited recommendation of his friend Dr. Beattie, the degree of Dr. of Divinity was conferred on him by the University and Marshal College of Aberdeen.

In 1767, he published *Paraclesis, or Consolation deduced from Natural and Revealed Religion*; in two Dissertations. The first supposed to have been composed by Cicero, now rendered in English; the last originally written by Thomas Blacklock, D.D. 8vo.

His motive, he tells, in a letter to a friend, prefixed to this work, for translating the first, and writing the last *Treatise on Consolation*, was to alleviate the pressure of repeated disappointments, to sooth his anguish for the loss of departed friends, to elude the rage of implacable and unprovoked enemies, and to support his own mind, which, for a number of years, besides its literary difficulties, and its natural disadvantages, had maintained an incessant struggle with fortune. Of the Dissertation ascribed to Cicero, he endeavours to prove the authenticity; but his arguments are by no means satisfactory. The generality of Critics have questioned its authenticity. Dr. Middleton, in his *Life of Cicero*, says it is undoubtedly spurious. The translation is well executed; it is both faithful and elegant. The second Dissertation is mostly taken up with a clear and succinct view of the evidences of Christianity, the professed subject of it; the Consolation derived from Revealed Religion, is touched upon towards the conclusion, though at no great length.

In 1768, he published without his name, two Discourses on the Spirit and Evidences of Christianity.



The former preached at the Hague, the 8th Sept. 1762. The latter delivered in the French Church at Hanan, on the occasion of the late peace, to a congregation composed of Catholics and Protestants; translated from the original French of the Rev. Mr. James Armand, Minister of the Waloon Church in Hanan, and dedicated by the translator, to the Rev. Moderator of the general Assembly, 8vo. The Dedication, which is a long one, is chiefly intended for the perusal of the Clergy of the church of Scotland, but deserves the attentive consideration of all who are intended for, or engaged in the work of the ministry. The observations it contains are judicious and pertinent; the style is sprightly and animated; and the spirit it breathes, though sometimes remote from that charity, which on other occasions he so eloquently enforced, and so generally practised, is the spirit of benevolence and love to mankind. The discourses themselves are lively and animated, and the style of the translations clear, nervous, and spirited.

In 1773, he published at Edinburgh, a poem, entitled, 'A Panegyric on Great Britain,' 8vo. This poem, which is a kind of satire on the age, exhibits shrewdness of observation, and a sarcastic vein, which might have fitted him for satirical composition, had he chosen to employ his pen more frequently on that branch of Poetry.

In Music, both as a judge and a performer, his skill was considerable; nor was he unacquainted with its principles as a science. Whether he composed much is uncertain, but there is published in the Edin-



burgh Magazine and Review, for 1774, 'Absence,' Pastoral, set to Music, by Dr. Blacklock; and those who have heard him sing, will upon perusal of this little piece, have the idea of his manner and taste, strikingly recalled to their recollection.

The same year he published the 'Graham,' an Heroic Ballad, in four Cantos, 4to. It was begun, he tells us in the advertisement prefixed to it, and pursued by its author to divert wakeful and melancholy hours, which the recollection of past misfortunes, and the sense of present inconveniences, would otherwise have severely embittered.

The professed intention of his Graham, is to cherish and encourage a mutual harmony between the inhabitants of South and North Britain. To this end he has exhibited in strong colours, some parts of those miseries which their ancient animosities had occasioned. His Graham is an affecting story, in which love and jealousy have a principal share; the narration is animated and agreeable; the fable is beautifully fancied, and sufficiently perspicuous; the characters are boldly marked; the manners he paints suits the times to which he refers, and the moral is momentous; and we perceive scattered through the whole piece, those secret graces, and those bewitching beauties, which the critic would in vain attempt to describe; but it is perhaps too far spun out, and the stanza in which it is written is not the best chosen, nor the most agreeable to the ear.

This was the last publication which he gave to the world with his name: from this time the state of



his health, which had always been infirm and delicate, began visibly to decline. He frequently complained of a lowness of spirits, and was occasionally subject to deafness, which, though he seldom felt in any great degree, was sufficient in his situation, to whom the sense of hearing was almost the only channel of communication with the external world, to cause very lively uneasiness. Amidst the indispositions of body, however, and disquietudes of mind, the gentleness of his temper never forsook him, and he felt all that resignation and confidence in the Supreme Being, which his earliest and latest life equally acknowledged. In summer 1791, he was seized with a feverish disorder, which at first seemed of a slight, and never rose to a very violent kind; but a frame so little robust as his was not able to resist; and after about a week's illness it carried him off on the 7th of July 1791, in the 70th year of his age. He was interred in the burying-ground of the Chapel of Ease, in the parish of St. Cuthbert, where a decent monument was erected to his memory by his widow, who survived him several years. There is something in the character of this great man, which the good will value above every other consideration; that was, his deep and unaffected piety, and his resignation to the Divine Will; which was evinced through his long and useful life, and shone conspicuously in the man and in the christian, and added an additional lustre to his other virtues. Mr. Mackenzie in his Dissertation on the life and writings of Blacklock, has made some judicious remarks. That elegant writer has treated the subject



in a philosophic point of view, which the reader will find comprised in the following pages.

The additional poems, now first published in this volume, says Mr. Mackenzie, will, I think, be found to possess equal merit with those which their author formerly gave to the world.

There is perhaps a certain degree of languor diffused over some of them, written during the latter period of his life, for which the circumstances I have mentioned above, may account; but the delicacy and the feeling remain undiminished: one of those latter poems, the 'Ode to Aurora on Mellissa's Birth Day,' is a compliment and tribute of affection to the tender assiduity of an excellent wife, which I have not any where seen more happily conceived, or more elegantly expressed. His peculiar situation I do not mean to plead as an apology for defects in his compositions. I am sufficiently aware of a truth, which authors, or their apologists are apt to forget, that the public expects entertainment, and listens but ill to excuses for the want of it; but the circumstances of the writer's blindness will certainly create an interest in his productions beyond what those of one possessed of sight could have excited, especially in such passages of his works as are descriptive of visible objects.

Mr. Spence, in his introduction to the quarto edition of those poems, published in 1756, has treated this descriptive power which the poetry of Blacklock seemed to evince in its author, as a sort of problem which he has illustrated by a very great number of quotations from the poems themselves, by hypotheti-



cal conjectures of his own, drawn from those passages, and from the nature of a blind man's sensation and ideas; and by some account of such sensations in himself, which Blacklock gave to Spence in discoursing on the subject. Without detracting from the ingenuity of Spence's deductions, I am apt in the case of Blacklock, to ascribe much to the effect of a retentive and ready memory of that poetical language, in which, from his earliest infancy he delighted, and that apt appropriation of it, which an habitual acquaintance with the best poets had taught him. This I am sensible, by no means affords a complete solution of the difficulty; for though it may account for the use which he makes of poetical language, it throws no light on his early passion for reading poetry, and poetry of a kind too, which lies very much in the province of sight; (Thompson and Allen Ramsay were two of his favourite authors;) nor does it clearly trace the source of that pleasure, which such reading evidently conveyed to his mind. It is observed, and I think very truly, by Dr. Reid, that there is very little of the knowledge acquired by those who see, that may not be communicated to a man born blind; and he illustrates his remark by the example of the celebrated Saunderson. Another writer (Burke, in his *Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful*) seems disposed to extend a similar observation to some of those pleasures, of which the sense of sight is commonly understood to be the only channel; and he appeals, in proof of this doctrine, to the Poetry of Blacklock. 'Here,' says he, 'is a poet doubtless as much affected by his own



descriptions, as any that reads them can be ; and yet he is affected with this strong enthusiasm, by things of which he neither has, nor can possibly have any idea, further than that of a bare sound.' The same author mentions, as a confirmation of his doctrine, the scientific acquirements of Saunderson, which he seems to think explicable on the same principles with Blacklock's poetry. But in truth, there appears to be very little analogy between the two cases ; nor does the genius of Saunderson furnish by any means so curious a subject of philosophical disquisition, as that of Blacklock. The ideas of extension and figure, about which the speculations of the geometrician are employed, may be conveyed to the mind by the sense of touch, as well as by that of sight ; and (if we except the phenomena of colours,) the case is the same with all the subjects of our reasoning in natural philosophy. But of the pleasures which Poetry excites, so great a proportion arises from allusion to visible objects, and from descriptions of the beauty and sublimity of nature ; so much truth is there in the maxim *ut pictura poesis*, that the word imagination, which in its primary sense, has a direct reference to the eye, is employed to express that power of the mind, which is considered as peculiarly characteristic of poetical genius ; and therefore, whatever be the degree of pleasure, which a blind Poet receives from the exercise of his art, the pleasure must, in general, be perfectly different in kind from that which he imparts to his readers. Saunderson we are told, though blind, could lecture on the prismatic spectrum, and on the theory of the rainbow ;



but to his mind, the names of the different colours were merely significant of the relative arrangement of the spaces which they occupied, and produced as little effect on his imagination as the letters of the Alphabet, which he employed in his geometrical diagrams. By means of a retentive memory, it might have been possible for him to acquire a knowledge of the common poetical epithets appropriated to the different colours; it is even conceivable, that by long habits of poetical reading, he might have become capable of producing such a description of their order, in the spectrum, as is contained in the following lines of Thomson.

---

First, the flaming red  
Sprung vivid forth; the tawny orange next,  
And next delicious yellow, by whose side  
Fell, the kind beams of all-refreshing green;  
Then the pure blue, that swells Autumnal skies,  
Etherial played, and then of sadder hue,  
Emerged and deepened Indigo, as when  
The heavy-skirted evening droops with frost,  
While the last gleamings of refracted light,  
Died in the fainting violet away."

But, supposing all this possible, how different must have been the effect of the description on his mind from what it produced on that of Thomson? or what idea could he form of the rapture which the poet felt in recalling to his imagination the innumerable appearances in the earth and heavens, of which the philosophic principles he referred to, afford the explanation?



‘ Did ever Poet image aught so fair,  
Dreaming in whisp’ring groves by the hoarse brook;  
Or prophet, to whose rapture Heaven descends;  
Even now the setting Sun and shifting Clouds  
Seen, Greenwich, from thy lovely heights, declare  
How just, how beauteous, the refractive law.’

Yet, though it be evidently impossible that a description of this sort, relating entirely to the peculiar perceptions of sight, should convey to a blind man the same kind of pleasure which we receive from it, it may be easily imagined that the same words which in their ordinary acceptation express visible objects, may, by means of early associations, become to such a person, the vehicle of many other agreeable or disagreeable emotions. These associations will probably vary greatly in the case of different individuals, according to the circumstances of their education, and the peculiar bent of their genius. Blacklock’s associations in regard to colours, were (according to his own account) chiefly of the moral kind. But into this inquiry, which opens a wide field of speculation to the metaphysician, I do not mean to enter. I shall content myself with remarking, that in other arts, as well as those which address themselves to sight, the same distinction is to be found.

What may be termed the arithmetic and mathematics of Music, and of the scale, depend not on a musical ear, any more than the theory of vision depends on sight. In both cases, pleasure and feeling are easily distinguishable from knowledge and science; the first require, and cannot exist without an eye



for colour, and an ear for sound; the last are independent of either. It is indeed, the boast of genius to do much on scanty materials, to create and body forth the forms of things; to give character to what it has not known, and picture what it has not seen. The genius of Shakespeare has entered into the cabinets of Statesmen, and the palaces of Kings, and made them speak like Statesmen and like Kings. It has given manners as well as language to imaginary beings, which, though we cannot criticise like the other, every one intuitively owns to be true.

It has kindled the wizard's fire, and trimmed the fairy's glow-worm lamp; has moulded a Caliban's savage form, and spun the light down of an ariel's wing. But this imaginative power, how extensive and wonderful soever its range, had still some elements from which it could raise this world of fancy, some analogies from which its ideas could be drawn. To the blind no degree of genius can supply the want of these with regard to visible objects, nor teach them that entirely distinct species of perception which belongs to sight. 'Objects of sight and touch' says Berkely very justly, 'constitute two worlds, which, though nearly connected, bear no resemblance to one another.' In the case of Blacklock, we happen to be possessed of a piece of evidence more direct than any thing which a third person, however well acquainted with him individually, or however conversant with the subject in general, can produce with regard to his ideas on visible objects: I allude to the article blind in the Encyclopedia Britannica, published



at Edinburgh in the year 1783, which was written by him. In this little treatise, (which I will venture to recommend, not only on account of its peculiarity, as being the production of a blind man, but of its intrinsic merit,) there are no marks of any extraordinary conception of visible objects, nor any allusion to those mental images which ingenuity might suppose deducible from the descriptive passages, with which his poetry abounds. It contains chiefly reflections on the distresses and disadvantages of blindness, and the best means of alleviating them; directions for the education of the blind, and a description of various inventions for enabling them to attain and to practise several arts and sciences, from which their situation might seem to exclude them. The sympathy and active benevolence of Blacklock prompted him to this composition, as well as to a translation of M. Haüy's Account of the Charitable Institution for the Blind at Paris, which is annexed to the present edition of his Poems. 'To the blind,' (says this article in the Encyclopedia,) 'the visible world is totally annihilated; he is perfectly conscious of no space but that in which he stands, or to which his extremities can reach. All the various modes of delicate proportion, all the beautiful varieties of light and colours, whether exhibited in the works of Nature or Art, are to the blind irretrievably lost! Dependent for every thing, but mere existence, on the good offices of others; obnoxious to injury from every point, which they are neither capacitated to perceive, nor qualified to resist; they are, during the present state of being,



rather to be considered as prisoners at large, than citizens of nature.' In that part which relates to the education of the blind, one direction is rather singular, though it seems extremely proper.

The author strongly recommends to their parents and relations to accustom them to an early exertion of their own active powers, though at the risk of their personal safety. 'Parents and relations ought never to be too ready in offering their assistance to the blind in any office which they can perform, or in any acquisition which they can procure for themselves, whether they are prompted by amusement or necessity. Let a blind boy be permitted to walk through the neighbourhood without a guide, not only, though he should run some hazard, but even though he should suffer some pain. If he has a mechanical turn, let him not be denied the use of edged tools; for it is better that he should lose a little blood, or even break a bone, than be perpetually confined to the same place, debilitated in his frame, and depressed in his mind. Such a being can have no enjoyment but to feel his own weakness, and become his own tormentor; or to transfer to others, all the malignity and peevishness arising from the natural, adventitious, or imaginary evils which he feels. Scars, fractures, and dislocations in his body, are trivial misfortunes compared with imbecillity, timidity or fretfulness of mind. Besides the sensible and dreadful effects which inactivity must have in relaxing the nerves, and consequently in depressing the spirits, nothing can be more productive of jealousy, envy, peevishness



and every passion that corrodes the soul to agony, than a painful impression of dependence on others, and of our insufficiency to our own happiness. This impression, which even in its most improved state, will be too deeply felt by every blind man, is redoubled by that utter incapacity of action, which must result from the officious humanity of those who would anticipate or supply all his wants, who would prevent all his motions, who would do or procure every thing for him without his own interposition,

This direction was probably suggested from the author's own feeling of the want of that boldness and independence, which the means it recommends are calculated to produce; as the following description of low spirits might perhaps be more strongly painted from that languor to which his sensibility of mind, and delicate frame of body sometimes exposed him. 'We have more than once hinted, during the course of the article, that the blind, as liable to all the inconveniences of sedentary life, are peculiarly subjected to that disorder, which may be called *tædium vitæ*, or low spirits. This indisposition may be said to comprehend in it all the other diseases and evils of human life; because, by its immediate influence on the mind, it aggravates the weight and bitterness of every calamity to which we are obnoxious. In a private letter, we have heard it described as a formidable precipice in the regions of misery, between the awful gulphs of suicide on the one hand, and phrenzy on the other, into either of which, a gentle breeze according to the force of its impulse, and the line of its



direction, may irrecoverably plunge the unhappy victim; yet from both of which, he may providentially escape. Though the shades of the metaphor may perhaps be unnaturally deepened, yet those who have felt the force of the malady will not fail to represent it by the most dreadful images which its own feelings can suggest. Parents and Tutors, therefore, if they have the least pretence to conscience or humanity, cannot be too careful in observing and obviating the first symptoms of this impending plague.'

'If the limbs of your blind child or pupil, be tremulous; if he is apt to start, and easily susceptible of surprise; if he finds it difficult to sleep; if his slumbers when commenced are frequently interrupted, and attended with perturbation; if his ordinary exercise appear to him more terrible and more insuperable than usual; if his appetite become languid, and his digestion slow; if agreeable occurrences give him less pleasure, and adverse events more pain than they ought to inspire; this is the crisis of vigorous interposition.'

The imagination which the Muse of Terror indulges, while she sometimes suffers pain from the indulgence, may be traced in the cautions which he gives against allowing the minds of the blind to be impressed with frightful tales. 'Those philosophers who have attempted to break the alliance between darkness and spectres, were certainly inspired by laudable motives. But they must give us leave to assert, that there is a natural and essential connexion betwixt night and orcus.



‘Were we endued with senses to advertise us of every noxious object before its contiguity could render it formidable, our panicks would probably be less frequent and sensible than we really feel them. Darkness and silence, therefore, have something dreadful in them, because they supercede the vigilance of those senses which give us the earliest notice of things.

‘If you talk to a blind boy of invisible beings, let benevolence be an inseparable ingredient in their character. You may, if you please, tell him of departed spirits, anxious for the welfare of their surviving friends; of ministering Angels, who descend with pleasure from Heaven to execute the purposes of their Maker’s benignity; you may even regale his imagination with the sport of gambols and innocent frolics of fairies; but let him hear as seldom as possible, even in stories which he knows to be fabulous, of vindictive ghosts, vindictive fiends, or avenging furies. They seize and pre-occupy every avenue of terror which is open in the soul, nor are they easily dispossessed. Sooner should we hope to exorcise a ghost, or appease a fury, than to obliterate their images in a warm and susceptible imagination, where they have been habitually impressed, and where those feelings cannot be dissipated by external phenomena. If horrors of this kind should agitate the heart of a blind boy, (which may happen notwithstanding the most strenuous endeavours to prevent it,) the stories which he has heard will be most effectually discredited by ridicule. This however, must be cautiously applied, by gentle and delicate gradations.’



‘If he is inspired with terror by effects upon his senses, the causes of which he cannot investigate; indefatigable pains must be taken to explain their phenomena, and to confirm that explication whenever it can be done, by the testimony of his own senses, and his own experience. The exertion of his locomotive and mechanical powers, (the rights of which we have formerly endeavoured to assert) will sensibly contribute to dispel these terrors.’

If we do not assign to Blacklock any extraordinary, or what might be termed preternatural conception of visible objects, yet we may fairly claim for him a singular felicity of combination in his use of the expressions, by which those objects are distinguished. The following descriptive strokes, most of which, with a great many others, Mr. Spence has collected, are as finely drawn, and as justly coloured as sight could have made them.

‘Mild gleams the purple evening o’er the plain.’

‘Ye vales, which to the raptured eye,  
Disclosed the flowery pride of May;  
Ye circling hills, whose summits high,  
Blushed with the morning’s earliest ray.’

‘Let long-lived pansies, here their scents bestow;  
The violets languish, and the roses glow;  
In yellow glory let the crocus shine—  
Narcissus here his love-sick head recline;  
Here hyacinths in purple sweetness rise,  
And tulips tinged with beauty’s fairest dyes.’



‘On rising ground, the prospect to command,  
Untinged with smoke, where vernal breezes blow,  
In rural neatness let thy cottage stand;  
Here wave a wood, and there a river flow.’

‘Oft on the glassy stream, with raptured eyes,  
Surveys her form in mimic sweetness rise;  
Oft as the waters pleased reflect her face,  
Adjusts her locks, and heightens every grace.’

————— ‘Oft while the Sun  
Darts boundless glory through the expanse of  
Heaven,  
A gloom of congregated vapours rise;  
Than night more dreadful in his blackest shroud,  
And o’er the face of things incumbent hang,  
Portending tempest; till the source of day  
Again asserts the empire of the sky,  
And o’er the blotted scene of nature throws  
A keener splendour.’

‘O’er the burning lake  
Of blue sulphureous gleam.’

————— ‘All her snakes  
Shall rear their speckled crests aloft in air,  
With ceaseless horrid hiss; shall brandish quick  
Their forked tongues, or roll their kindling eyes  
With sanguine fiery glare.’

There is equal force and justness in his description of the terror of a guilty conscience.

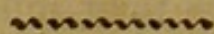
‘Cursed with unnumbered groundless fears,  
How pale yon shivering wretch appears;—



For him the day-light shines in vain,  
For him the fields no joys contain ;  
Nature's whole charms to him are lost,  
No more the woods their music boast ;—  
No more the meads their vernal bloom,  
No more the gales their rich perfume :  
Impending mists deform the sky,  
And beauty withers in his eye.  
In hopes his terror to ellude,  
By day he mingles with the crowd ;  
Yet finds his soul to fears a prey,  
In busy crowds, and open day !  
If night his lonely walk surprise,  
What horrid visions round him rise ;  
That blasted oak that meets his way,  
Shown by the meteor's sudden ray—  
The midnight murderer's known retreat,  
Felt Heaven's avengeful bolt of late.  
The clashing chain, the groan profound,  
Loud from yon ruined tower resound ,  
And now the spot he seems to tread,  
Where some self-slaughtered corse was laid ;  
He feels fixed earth beneath him bend,  
Deep murmurs from her caves ascend,  
Till all his soul, by fancy swayed,  
Sees livid phantoms crowd the shade ;  
While shrouded manes palely stare,  
And beckoning wish to breathe their care :  
Thus real woes from false he bears,  
And feels the death, the hell, he fears,



## A SOLILOQUY.



*OCCASIONED by the Author's escape from falling into a deep well, where he must have been irrecoverably lost, if a favourite Lap-dog had not, by the sound of its feet upon the board with which the well was partly covered, warned him of his danger.*



Where am I?—O Eternal Power of Heaven!  
Relieve me; or, amid the silent gloom,  
Can danger's cry approach no gen'rous mind,  
Prompt to redress the unhappy;—O my heart!  
What shall I do, or whether shall I turn?  
Will no kind hand, benevolent as Heaven,  
Save me involved in peril and in night.  
Erect with horror stands my bristling hair;  
My tongue forgets its motion, strength forsakes  
My trembling limbs; my voice impell'd in vain,  
No passage finds; cold, cold as death, my blood,  
Keen as the breath of winter, chills each vein;  
For on the verge, the awful verge of fate  
Scarce fix'd I stand; and one progressive step  
Had plunged me down, unfathomably deep,  
To gulfs impervious to the cheerful sun,  
And fragrant breeze; to that abhorr'd abode,  
Where silence and oblivion, sisters drear!  
With cruel death confed'rate empire holds  
In desolation and primeval gloom,



Ha! what unmans me thus? what, more than  
horror,

Relaxes every nerve, untunes my frame,  
And chills my inmost soul?—be still, my heart!  
Nor fluttering thus, in vain attempt to burst  
The barrier firm, by which thou art confined.  
Resume your functions, limbs! restrain those knees  
From smiting thus each other, rouse, my soul!  
Assert thy native dignity, and dare  
To brave this king of terrors; to confront  
His cloudy brow, and unrelenting frown,  
With steady scorn, in conscious triumph bold.  
Reason, that beam of uncreated day,  
That ray of Deity, by God's own breath  
Infused and kindled, Reason will dispel  
Those fancy'd terrors: Reason will instruct thee,  
That Death is Heav'n's kind interposing hand,  
To snatch thee timely from impending woe;  
From aggregated misery, whose pangs  
Can find no other period but the grave.

In Producing such passages as the above, the genius of the author must be acknowledged. Whatever idea or impression those objects of sight produced in his mind, how imperfect soever that idea, or how different soever from the true, still the impression would be felt by a mind susceptible and warm like Blacklock's, that could not have been so felt by one of a coarser and more sluggish mould. Even the memory that could treasure up the poetical attributes and expressions of such objects, must have been assisted and prompted by poetical feeling; and the very



catalogue of words which was thus ready at command, was an indication of that ardour of soul, which, from his infancy led him.—

——— ‘Where the Muses haunt—

Smit with the love of sacred song.’

As the unmeaning syllables which compose a name give to the lover or the friend emotions, which in others it were impossible they should excite, it was not on the whole surprising, that a learned foreigner, on considering Blacklock’s Poems relatively to his situation, should have broke out into the following panegyric, with which we shall not be much accused of partiality if we close this account.

‘Blacklock will appear to posterity a fable, as to us he is a prodigy. It will be thought a fiction, a paradox, that a man blind from his infancy, besides having made himself so much a master of various foreign languages, should be a great Poet in his own ; and without having hardly ever seen the light, should be so remarkably happy in description.’



#### AUTHORITIES.

ANDERSON’S Lives of the Poets...MACKENZIE’S  
Life of BLACKLOCK...SPENCE’S Life of BLACKLOCK.



*THE LIFE*  
*OF*  
**NICHOLAS SAUNDERSON,**  
**L. L. D. F. R. S.**

*And professor of Mathematics in the University of  
Cambridge.*



‘ Here Nature opens all her secret springs,  
And Heaven-born Science, plumes her eagle wings.’



THERE is no department of human knowledge,  
in which the blind have not distinguished themselves ;  
many of them have attained the highest academical  
honours, that their own, or foreign Universities could  
confer upon them. It is certainly a spectacle highly  
gratifying to the benevolent mind, to contemplate such



men, eliciting light from darkness; and to learn by what progressive steps they have been enabled to make their way through life in despite of the most discouraging obstacles, with no other guide but industry and genius, even to the very summit of science. Dr. Saunderson, the subject of the present essay was a striking proof of the justness of the above remarks.

This great man was born at Thurlston, in Yorkshire, in 1682; when he was but 12 months old, he lost not only his eye-sight, but even his very eye-balls, by the small pox, so that he could retain no more ideas of vision, than if he had been born blind. At an early age, however, being of very promising parts, he was sent to the free School at Penniston, and there laid the foundation of that knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, which he afterwards improved so far by his own application to the Classic Authors, as to hear the works of Euclid, Archimedes and Diophantes, read in the original Greek.

Having acquired a grammatical education, his father, who was in the Excise, instructed him in the common rules of arithmetic; and here it was that his excellent mathematical genius first appeared; for he very soon became able to work the common questions; to make very long calculations by the strength of memory, and to form new rules for himself, for the better resolving of such questions as are often proposed to learners as trials of skill. At the age of 18, our author was introduced to Richard West, Esq. of Underbank, who being a great lover of mathematics, and observing Saunderson's uncommon capacity, took the



trouble of instructing him in the principles of Algebra and Geometry, and gave him every encouragement in his power to the prosecution of these studies. Soon after this he became acquainted also with Dr. Nettleton, who took the same pains with him; and it was to these two gentlemen that Saunderson owed his first instruction in the mathematical science; they furnished him with books, and often read and explained them to him. But he soon surpassed his masters, and became fitter to teach, than to learn from them. He was now sent to a private academy at Attercliff, near Sheffield, where logic and metaphysics were chiefly taught; but these sciences not suiting his turn of mind, he soon left the academy. He lived for some time in the country without any instructor; but such was the vigour of his own mind that few instructions were necessary; he only required books and a reader. His father, besides the place he had in the Excise, possessed also a small property; but being burdened with a numerous family, and finding a difficulty in supporting him, his friends began to think of providing, both for his education and maintenance; and having remarked his clear and perspicuous manner of communicating his ideas, suggested the propriety of his attending the University of Cambridge as a teacher of mathematics, whither his own inclination strongly led him. Accordingly he went to Cambridge in 1707, being then 25 years of age, accompanied by Joshua Dunn, Fellow Commoner of Christ's College, and his fame in a short time filled the University. Though he was not acknowledged a member of the College, yet he was



treated with great attention and respect. He was allowed a chamber and had free access to the library. Mr. Whiston was at that time professor of mathematics, and as he read lectures in the way that Saunderson intended, it was to be expected that he would view his project as an invasion of his office. But being a good natured man, and a lover of learning, instead of meditating any opposition, the plan was no sooner mentioned to him than he freely gave his consent in behalf of so uncommon a genius. While thus employed in explaining the principles of the Newtonian Philosophy, he became acquainted with its illustrious author. He was also known to Halley, Cotes, Dr. Moore, and many other eminent Mathematicians.

Upon the removal of Mr. Whiston from his professorship, Saunderson's merit was thought so much superior to that of any other competitor that an extraordinary step was taken in his favour, to qualify him as the statutes require. The heads of the University applied to their Chancellor, the Duke of Somerset, who procured the Royal Mandate to confer on him the degree of A. M. in consequence of which, he was elected Lucasian professor of mathematics, in Novr. 1711. Sir Isaac Newton interesting himself much on the occasion. His Inauguration speech was composed in Classical Latin, and in the style of Cicero, with whose works he had been much conversant. From this time he applied himself closely to the reading of lectures, and gave up his whole time to his Pupils. He continued to reside among the gentlemen of Christ's College, till



the year 1723 ; when he took a house in Cambridge, and shortly afterwards married the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Dickens, Rector of Boxworth, in Cambridgeshire, by whom he had a son and a daughter. When George the II. in 1728, visited the University he requested to see professor Saunderson. In compliance with this desire, he waited on his Majesty in the Senate House, and was then by the King's command created Dr. of Laws. He was admitted a member of the Royal Society, in 1736.

Dr. Saunderson was naturally of a vigorous and healthy constitution ; but having confined himself to a sedentary life, he at length became scorbutic ; and in the spring of 1739, he complained of a numbness in his limbs, which ended in a mortification in his foot ; and unfortunately his blood was so vitiated by the scurvy, that assistance from Medicine was not to be expected. When informed that his death was approaching, he remained for a short time calm and silent ; but he soon recovered his former vivacity, and conversed with his accustomed ease. He died on the 19th April, 1739, aged 57 years, and was buried at his own request in the Chancel of Boxworth.

Dr. Reid, who was an intimate friend of Saunderson, in speaking of his scientific acquirements, observes, 'one who never saw the light, may be learned and knowing in every science, even in optics ; and may make discoveries in every branch of philosophy. He may understand as much as another man, not only of the order, distances, and motions of the heavenly bodies ; but of the nature of



light, and of the laws of the reflexion and refraction of its rays. He may understand distinctly how those laws produce the phenomena of the rainbow, the prism, the camera obscura, and the magic lanthren, and all the powers of the microscope and telescope; This is a fact sufficiently attested by experience.

Dr. Saunderson understood the projection of the sphere, and the common rules of perspective; and if he did, he must have understood all that I have mentioned. If there were any doubt of Dr. Saunderson's understanding these things, I could mention having heard him say in conversation, that he found great difficulty in understanding Dr. Halley's demonstration of that proposition—that the angles made by the circles of the sphere, are equal to the angles made by their representatives in the stereographic projection; but, said he, when I laid aside that demonstration, and considered the proposition in my own way, I saw clearly that it must be true. Another gentleman, of undoubted credit and judgement in these matters, who had part in this conversation, remembers it distinctly.

There was scarcely any part of the science on which he had not composed something; but he discovered no intention of publishing any thing till by the persuasion of his friends, he prepared his elements of Algebra for the press; which was published by subscription in two volumes, quarto, 1740.

He left many other writings, though none perhaps prepared for the press; among these were some valuable comments on Newton's Principia, which not only explains the more difficult parts, but often improves



upon the doctrines. These are published in Latin, at the end of his posthumous Treatise on Fluxions; a valuable work, published in octavo, 1756.

His manuscript Lectures too, on most parts of natural philosophy, might make a considerable volume, and prove an acceptable present to the public if printed.

Dr. Saunderson, as to his character, was a man of much wit and vivacity in conversation, and esteemed an excellent companion. He was endued with a great regard to truth, and was such an enemy to disguise, that he thought it his duty to speak his thoughts at all times with unrestrained freedom. Hence his sentiments on men and opinions, his friendship, or disregard, were expressed without reserve;—a sincerity which raised him many enemies. A blind man moving in the sphere of a mathematician, seems to be a phenomenon difficult to be accounted for, and has excited the admiration of every age in which it has appeared. Tully mentions it as a thing scarcely credible in his own master in philosophy, Diodotus, that he exercised himself in it with more assiduity after he became blind; and, what he thought next to impossible, to be done without sight, that he professed geometry, describing his diagrams so exactly to his scholars, that they could draw every line in its proper direction. St. Jerome relates a still more remarkable instance in Didymus of Alexandria; who, though blind from his infancy, and therefore ignorant of the very letters, not only learned logic, but geometry also, to a very great perfection, which seems most of all to require sight. But if we consider that the ideas of extended quantity, which are



the chief objects of mathematics, may as well be acquired by the sense of touch, as by that of sight, that a fixed and steady attention is the principal qualification for this study, and that the blind are, by necessity, more abstracted than others (for which reason it is said, that Democritus put out his eyes that he might think more intensely) we shall perhaps find reason to suppose that there is no branch of science so much adapted to their circumstances. At first Dr. Saunderson acquired most of his ideas by the sense of touch; and this, as is commonly the case with the blind, he enjoyed in great perfection. Yet he could not, as some are said to have done, distinguish colours by that sense; for after having made repeated trials, he used to say, it was pretending to impossibilities. But he could with great nicety and exactness observe the smallest degree of roughness, or defect of polish, in a surface. Thus, in a set of Roman medals, he distinguished the genuine from the false, though they had been counterfeited with such exactness as to deceive a connoisseur who had judged from the eye. By the sense of touch also, he distinguished the least variation; and he has been seen in a garden, when observations were making on the sun to take notice of every cloud that interrupted the observation, almost as justly as they could see it. He could also tell when any thing was held near his face, or when he passed by a tree at no great distance, merely by the different impulse of the air on his face. His ear was also equally exact; he could readily distinguish the fifth part of a note by the quickness of this sense; he could judge of the size of a room, and of his distance



from the wall. And if he ever walked over a pavement in courts or piazzas which reflected sound, and was afterwards conducted thither again, he could tell in what part of the walk he had stood, merely by the note it sounded. Dr. Saunderson had a peculiar method of performing arithmetical calculations, by an ingenious machine and method which has been called his 'Palpable Arithmetic,' and is particularly described in a piece prefixed to the first volume of his algebra. That he was able to make long and intricate calculations, both arithmetical and algebraical, is a thing as certain as it is wonderful. He had contrived for his own use a commodious notation for any large numbers which he could express on his abacus, or calculating table, and with which he could readily perform any arithmetical operation by the sense of touch only, for which reason it was called his palpable arithmetic.

His calculating table was a thin smooth board, a little more than a foot square, raised upon a small frame, so as to lie hollow, which board was divided into a great number of little squares, by lines intersecting one another perpendicularly, and parallel to the sides of the table, and the parallel ones only one tenth of an inch from each other, so that every square inch of the table was thus divided into one hundred little squares.

At every point of intersection, the board was perforated by small holes, capable of receiving a pin; for it was by the help of pins stuck up to the head through these holes, that he expressed his numbers. He used two sorts of pins, a large and a smaller sort, at least their heads were different, and might easily



be distinguished by touch. Of these pins he had a large quantity in two boxes, with their points cut off, which always stood ready before him when he calculated. The writer of that account describes particularly the whole process of using the machine, and concludes—  
‘He could place and displace his pins with incredible nimbleness and facility, much to the pleasure and surprise of all the beholders. He could even break off in the middle of a calculation, and resume it when he pleased, and could presently know the condition of it, by only drawing his fingers gently over the table.’

Saunderson’s method of calculation deserves particular notice, not merely because it is the production of a blind man, but because it is calculated to be useful to such of the blind as may make mathematics their study.

Many blind philosophers of great eminence have derived advantages from Saunderson’s invention. It has enabled them to make out their long and difficult calculations, which they perhaps never would have been able to accomplish, without its assistance. Among those I may mention the names of Grenville, Moyes, and Ward. For a more particular description of this curious contrivance, the reader is referred to the following letter, from Mr. Diderot to a lady:—

‘This Saunderson, madam, is an author deprived of sight, with whom it may not be foreign to our purpose to amuse you. They relate prodigies of him; and of these prodigies there is not one, which his progress in the Belles Letters and his mathematical



attainments do not render credible. The same instrument served him for algebraical calculations, and for the construction of rectilineal figures. You would not perhaps be sorry that I should give you an explication of it, if you thought your mind previously qualified to understand it, and you shall soon perceive that it pre-supposes no intellectual preparations, of which you are not already mistress; and that it would be extremely useful to you if you should ever be seized with the inclination of making long calculations by touch.' (*See Transactions of the French Academy*).

Of all the surprising phenomena, that have in different ages, appeared among the human species, there is not one more difficult to be accounted for, than that of a blind man's excelling in the most difficult and sublime parts of the mathematics. It seems indeed, almost impossible, and had not the present age afforded us the illustrious example of professor Saunderson, we might, perhaps, have looked upon the instances of this kind, related by authors, as fictions; or, at least, that they had greatly magnified the truth. The most remarkable of these instances, mentioned by Historians, is that of Didymus, of Alexandria. The case of this extraordinary person, is similar to that of our Author, who, when twelve months old, was deprived by the small pox, not only of his sight, but his eyes also, for they came away in abscess. 'A sense so little enjoyed, adds Mr. Colson, was soon forgot; he retained no more idea of light and colours, than if he had been born blind:—

From a person thus unfortunately deprived of that



sense which seems absolutely necessary in acquiring mathematical learning, it must surely have appeared absurd to expect any great proficiency in that branch of science. But this instance should teach us not to look on every thing above our comprehension as impossible, and restrain us from peremptorily charging authors of credit with relating falsehoods, merely because something may excel what we may vainly think, the bounds of human probability. Mr. Saunderson, in mathematical learning, was equal to any of his time, and in the address of a teacher, perhaps superior to all. Whatever pieces therefore, the world may be favoured with from so excellent a master, cannot fail of meeting with a kind reception; and his work on the method of fluxions, though far from being a complete system of the fluxionary calculus, will prove of the utmost advantage to students in this branch of science. That perspecuity—that simple analysis and elegant construction, for which Dr. Saunderson was so remarkable, and so justly celebrated, appear through this whole treatise. The consummate master, and finished teacher, are here fully displayed in a judicious choice of examples, and the conspicuous method of solving and applying them.

What the Doctor has given us, (says a learned writer very justly) upon Mr. Cotes' Logometria, is particularly valuable, as by his intimate acquaintance with that extraordinary person, he may be presumed to have understood his writings better than any one at that time living, (Dr. Smith only excepted) to whose superior genius and faithful care, the world is



so much indebted for the improvement, as well as the preservation of Mr. Cotes' Works. But we are much mistaken if the latter part of this treatise, we mean his explanation of the chief propositions of Sir Isaac Newton's Principia, does not prove as valuable as what he has given us on the writings of Mr. Cotes. Every person who has attempted the arduous study of Sir Isaac's Principia, must be sufficiently acquainted with the difficulties of fully comprehending the demonstrations in that illustrious author. Dr. Saunderson has removed many of these difficulties, and thereby rendered the study of the Principia much pleasanter and easier, than it was before.

We have already observed, that this treatise is not a complete system of the Fluxionary Calculus; its readers, must therefore, be previously acquainted with the elementary parts of Fluxions, or assisted *viva voce*, by a master. With either of these helps, he will find it one of the most useful treatises, that has hitherto appeared on the subject.

---

AUTHORITIES.

HUTTON's Mathematical Dictionary.....NICHOLSON's Philosophical Journal...REID's Inquiry into the Human Mind...London Monthly Critical Review.



THE LIFE  
OF  
LEONARD EULER,

*Professor of Mathematics in the Royal Academy of  
St. Petersburg, and Member of the Royal Societies  
of London, Berlin, Paris, Vienna, and Stockholm.*



'To him the motion of each orb was known,  
That wheels around the Sun's refulgent throne;  
He saw the Moon thro' Heav'n's blue concave glide,  
And into motion charm the expanding tide,  
While earth impetuous round her axis rolls—  
Exalts her watery zone and sinks the poles.'



Among those eminent Philosophers, who by  
their lives and writings, have rendered so much ser-  
vice to mankind, is Leonard Euler—a man whose  
cultivated mind and high intellectual attainments,  
and above all his deep and unaffected piety, have



rendered him the ornament of his country, and will transmit his name to posterity, not only as one of the greatest men, but also as one of the best the world has ever yet produced.

LEONARD EULER was the son of a Clergyman in the neighbourhood of Basil, and was born on the 15th of April, 1707. His natural turn for mathematics soon appeared from the eagerness and facility, with which he became master of the elements under the instruction of his Father, by whom he was sent to the University of Basil at an early age. There, his abilities and his application were so distinguished, that he attracted the particular notice of John Bernoulli. That excellent mathematician seemed to look forward to the youth's future achievements in science, while his own kind care strengthened the powers by which they were to be accomplished. In order to superintend his studies, which far outstripped the usual routine of the public lectures, he gave him a private lesson regularly once a week, when they conversed together on the acquisitions which the pupil had been making since their last interview, considered whatever difficulties might have occurred in his progress, and arranged the reading and exercises for the ensuing week. Under such eminent advantages, the capacity of Euler did not fail to make rapid improvements; and in his seventeenth year, the degree of Master of Arts was conferred on him. On this occasion, he received high applause for his probationary discourse, the subject of which was a comparison between the Cartesian and Newtonian systems.



His father having all along intended him for his successor, enjoined him now to relinquish his mathematical studies, and to prepare himself by those of theology, and general erudition for the ministerial functions ;—after some time, however, had been consumed, this plan was given up. His father, a man of learning and liberality, abandoned his own views for those to which the inclination and talents of his son were so powerfully directed ; persuaded that in thwarting the propensities of genius there is a sort of impiety against nature, and that there would be real injustice to mankind, in smothering those abilities which were evidently destined to extend the boundaries of science. Leonard was permitted, therefore, to resume his favourite pursuits ; and at the age of nineteen, transmitting two Dissertations to the Academy of Sciences at Paris—one on the masting of ships, and the other on the velocity of sound ; he commenced that splendid career, which continued for so long a period, the admiration and glory of Europe.

About the same time he stood candidate for a vacant professorship in the University of Basil ; but having lost the election, he resolved, in consequence of this disappointment to leave his native country ; and in 1727, he set out for Petersburg, where his friends, the young Bernoullis, had settled about two years before, and he flattered himself with prospects of literary preferment, under the patronage of Catharine the I. Those prospects, however, were not immediately realised, nor was it till after he had been frequently and long disappointed, that he obtained any settlement.



His first appears to have been the chair of natural philosophy; and when Daniel Bernoulli removed from Petersburg, Euler succeeded him as professor of the mathematics. In this situation he remained many years, engaged in the most laborious researches, enriching the academical collections of the continent with papers of the highest value, and producing almost daily improvements in the various branches of physical, and more particularly analytical science. In 1741, he complied with a pressing invitation from Frederic the great, and resided at Berlin till 1766. Throughout this period he continued the same literary labours, directed by the same wonderful sagacity and comprehension of intellect. As he advanced with his own discoveries and inventions, the field of knowledge seemed to widen before his view, and new subjects still multiplied on him for farther speculation. The toils of intense study, with him only seemed to invigorate his future exertions. Nor did the energy of Euler's powers give way, even when the organs of the body were overpowered; for in the year 1735, having completed in three days certain astronomical calculations, which the academy called for in haste, but which several mathematicians of eminence had declared could not be performed within a shorter period than some months; the intense application threw him into a fever, in which he lost the sight of one eye. Shortly after his return to Petersburg, he became totally blind. It was in this situation that he dictated to his servant, a tailor's apprentice, who was absolutely devoid of mathematical knowledge,



his elements of algebra; which by their intrinsic merit, in point of perspicuity and method, and the unhappy circumstances under which they were composed, have equally excited applause and astonishment. This work, though purely elementary, discovers the palpable characteristics of an inventive genius;—and it is here alone we meet with a complete theory of the analysis of Diophantus. About this time Euler was honoured by the Academy of Sciences at Paris, with the place of one of the foreign members of that learned body; and after this, the academical prize was adjudged to three of his memoirs, concerning the inequalities in the motions of the planets. The two prize questions proposed by the same Academy for 1770 and 1772, were designed to obtain from the labours of Astronomers a more perfect theory of the Moon. Euler, assisted by his eldest son, was a competitor for these prizes, and obtained them both. In this last memoir, he reserved for farther considerations several inequalities of the moon's motion, which he could not determine in his first theory, on account of the complicated calculations in which the method he then employed had engaged him. He had the courage afterwards to review his whole theory, with the assistance of his son, and Messrs. Krafft and Lexell, and pursue his researches until he had constituted the new tables, which appeared, together with the great work in 1772. Instead of confining himself, as before, to the fruitless integration of three differential equations of the second degree, which are furnished by mathematical principles, he reduced them to



the three ordinates which determine the place of the Moon ; he divided into classes all the inequalities of that planet, as far as they depend, either on the elongation of the Sun and Moon, or upon the eccentricity, or the parallax, or the inclination of the lunar orbit. All these means of investigation, employed with such art and dexterity as could only be expected from an analytical genius of the first order, were attended with the greatest success ; and it is impossible to observe, without admiration, such immense calculations on the one hand, and on the other the ingenious methods employed by this great man to abridge them, and to facilitate their application to the real motion of the Moon. But this admiration will become astonishment, when we consider at what period, and under what circumstances all this was effectuated by Euler. It was when he was totally blind, and consequently obliged to arrange all his computations by the sole powers of his memory and his genius. It was when he was embarrassed in his domestic circumstances by a dreadful fire, that had consumed a great part of his substance, and forced him to quit a ruined house, of which every corner was known to him by habit, which in some measure supplied the place of sight. It was in these circumstances that Euler composed a work which, alone, was sufficient to render his name immortal. The heroic patience and tranquillity of mind which he displayed here, needs no description ; and he derived them, not only from the love of science, but from the power of religion. His philosophy was too genuine, and sublime to stop its analysis



at mechanical causes; it led him to that divine philosophy of religion which ennobles human nature, and can alone form a habit of true magnanimity and patience in suffering.

Some time after this, the famous Wentzell, by couching the cataract, restored Euler's sight; but the satisfaction and joy that this successful operation produced, were of short duration. Some instances of negligence on the part of his surgeons, and his own impatience to use an organ, whose cure was not completely finished, deprived him of his sight a second time; and this relapse was accompanied with tormenting pain. He, however, with the assistance of his sons, and of Messrs. Krafft and Lexell, continued his labours; neither the loss of his sight nor the infirmities of an advanced age, could damp the ardour of his genius. He had engaged to furnish the academy of Petersburg with as many memoirs as would be sufficient to complete its acts for 20 years after his death. For the space of 7 years he transmitted to the academy, by Mr. Golswin, above 270 memoirs, which were revised and completed by his son. Such of these memoirs as were of ancient date, were separated from the rest, and form a collection that was published in the year 1783, under the title of *Analytical Works*. Euler's knowledge was more universal than could be well expected in one, who had pursued with such unremitting ardour mathematics and astronomy as his favourite studies. He had made a very considerable progress in medical, botanical, and chemical science. What was still more extraordinary, he was an excellent



scholar, and possessed what is generally called erudition, in a very high degree. He had read with attention and taste, the most eminent writers of ancient Rome; the civil and literary history of all ages and all nations was familiar to him; and foreigners who were only acquainted with his works, were astonished to find in the conversation of a man, whose long life seemed solely occupied in mathematical and physical discoveries, such an extensive acquaintance with the most interesting branches of literature. In this respect, no doubt, he was much indebted to a very uncommon memory, which seemed to retain every idea that was conveyed to it, either from reading or from meditation. He could repeat the *Æneid* of Virgil from the beginning to the end, without hesitation, and indicate the first and last line of every page of the edition he used. Several attacks of a vertigo, in the beginning of September 1783, which did not prevent his calculating the motions of the ærostatical globes, were nevertheless, the forerunners of his mild and happy passage from this scene to a better. While he was amusing himself at tea with one of his grandchildren, he was struck with an apoplexy, which terminated his illustrious career at the age of 76. His constitution was uncommonly strong and vigorous: his health was good, and the evening of his long life was calm and serene, sweetened by the fame that follows genius, the public esteem and respect that are never withheld from exemplary virtue, and several domestic comforts which he was capable of feeling, and therefore deserved to enjoy.



In men devoted to study, we are not to look for those strong complicated passions, which are contracted amidst the vicissitudes and tumult of public life. To delineate the character of Euler, requires no contrasts of colouring. Sweetness of disposition, moderation in the passions, simplicity of manners, were his leading features. Susceptible of domestic affections, he was open to all their amiable impressions, and was remarkably fond of children. His manners were simple, without being singular, and seemed to flow naturally from a heart that could dispense with those habits, by which many must be trained to artificial mildness, and with the forms that are often necessary for concealment. Nor did the equability and calmness of his temper indicate a defect of energy, but the serenity of a soul that overlooked the frivolous provocations, the petulant caprices, and jarring humours of ordinary mortals.

Possessing a mind of such wonderful comprehension, and dispositions so admirably formed to virtue and to happiness, Euler found no difficulty in being a Christian; accordingly 'his faith was unfeigned,' and his love 'was that of a pure and undefiled heart.' The advocates for the truth of revealed religion, therefore, may rejoice to add to the bright catalogue which already claims a Bacon, a Newton, a Locke, a Boyle, and a Hale, the illustrious name of Euler. These early lessons of religion and virtue, which had been instilled into his infant mind, by his pious father, was never departed from. Amidst his academic studies, he embraced every opportunity of improving, both by



reading and meditation. It was gratifying indeed, says one of his Biographers, to see the good man surrounded by his amiable family in their devotional exercises.—There the Philosopher gave way to the Christian, and prayer and praise generally concluded the day. When no longer able to peruse the sacred volumes, on account of his loss of sight, one of his children read the chapter and he explained it to them, and made such remarks as the nature of the subject required. On these occasions he would, by the most persuasive eloquence, impress on their minds the Divine Precepts which are contained in the Inspired Writings.—Such was the life of Euler. But on this subject we must permit one of his learned and grateful Pupils (M. Fuss in his Eulogy of his Preceptor) to sum up the character of his venerable master. His piety was rational and sincere; his devotion was fervent; he was fully persuaded of the truths of Christianity; felt its importance to the dignity and happiness of human nature, and looked upon its detractors and opposers as the most pernicious enemies of man.

Euler was beloved and admired by every one of rank or talents, in the different countries in which he resided. Prince William of Prussia, while on a visit at St. Petersburg, usually spent two or three hours every day in conversation with him. Catharine the First with that munificence, for which she was so justly distinguished, settled a pension on Euler, as a reward for the services he had rendered to the Russian Academy; and be it told to her honour, when Euler resigned the situation in the St. Petersburg Academy,



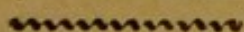
and left Russia in order to settle at Berlin, it was regularly paid, although the two countries were then in open hostilities. Frederic the great, was no less generous in rewarding his merit, for on this occasion, besides a genteel salary which he allowed this Philosopher, he made a present to him of a rich farm in Brandenburg.

The following anecdote, taken from M. Fuss's life of Euler, which took place about this period, it is presumed will not be intrusive here; it shows the high respect, that not only the first Princess in Europe entertained of the virtues and talents of this great man; but the soldier amidst the havoc of war when he found he had set his unhallowed foot on the lands of Euler, which he deemed sacred, restrained his War-dogs, and like Alexander when he entered Thebes, amidst the general conflagration of the City, who called to his soldiers to spare the house of Pindar. 'The Russian forces having in 1760, penetrated into the marches of Brandenburg, plundered a farm of Euler's near Charlottenburg; but General Tottleben had not come to make war on the sciences. Being informed of the loss which Euler sustained, he hastened to repair it, by ordering payment beyond the real value of the property, and having communicated to the Empress Elizabeth, an account of this involuntary disrespect, she was pleased to add a gratuity of four thousand florins to an indemnification already more than sufficient.'

His death was considered as a public loss, even in the country which he inhabited. The Academy



of Petersburg went into deep mourning for him, and voted a marble bust of him, at their own expences, to be placed in their Assembly Hall. An honour still more distinguished had already been conferred on him, by that learned body, in his life-time.— In an allegorical painting, a figure of Geometry is represented leaning on a table, exhibiting mathematical calculations, and the characters inscribed by order of the Academy, are the formulæ of his new theory of the Moon. Thus, a country which at the beginning of the 17th century, was considered as scarcely emerged out of barbarism, is become the instructor of the most enlightened nations of Europe, in doing honour to the lives of great men, embalming their memories, and setting those nations an example, which some of them may blush to reflect, that they have had neither the virtue to propose, nor to imitate.



#### AUTHORITIES,

EULER's Life prefixed to the first Volume of his Algebra, London 1810...EULER's Letters to a German Princess, 2 vols...Philosophical Magazine...Aikins' General Biography.



*THE LIFE*  
*OF*  
**JOHN METCALF.**

*Commonly called BLIND JACK of Knaresborough.*



• The fell disease deprived him of his sight,  
And left him to grope his way in endless night. •



We almost invariably find that Nature, in withholding from man the benefit of one sense, compensates the deficiency by the superior perfection in which she bestows others. The extraordinary particulars related in the following pages strikingly exemplify this observation, and shew to what a degree the power of habit and a good understanding are capable of overcoming impediments apparently insurmountable. For instance, who would expect to find a man totally blind from his infancy, superintending the building of bridges and the construction of high roads; an occupa-



tion for which his defect would seem to have wholly disqualified him. These, however, were undertakings that Metcalf successfully executed; and that, with many singular adventures in which he was engaged, cannot fail to excite no small degree of astonishment and admiration.

JOHN METCALF was born in 1717, at Knaresborough, in Yorkshire. At the age of four years, his parents, who were labouring people put him to School, where he continued two years, when he was seized with the small pox, which deprived him of his sight in spite of all the means that were employed for its preservation. About six months after his recovery, he was able to go from his father's house to the end of the street, and to return without a guide; and in about 3 years he could find his way alone to any part of Knaresborough. About this period he began to associate with boys of his own age, among whom he acted a distinguished part in the juvenile pranks of taking bird's nests, and robbing orchards. As his father kept horses, he learned to ride, and soon became a good horseman—a gallop being his favourite pace. At the age of thirteen he was taught Music, in which he made great proficiency, though the cry of a hound or a harrier was more congenial to his taste than the sound of an instrument. He kept hounds of his own, and frequently hunted with Mr Woodburn of Knaresborough, who kept a pack, and was always very desirous of Metcalf's company in the chase. When about fourteen years old, his activity and the success with which his enterprizes were usually attended,



led him to imagine that he might undertake any thing without danger, and greatly consoled him for the want of sight; but he was taught to regret that defect by a severe wound he received in consequence of a fall into a gravel-pit, while making his retreat from a Plumb-tree, in which he had been surprised by the owner.

About this period he learned to swim, and soon became so very expert, that his companions did not chuse to come near him in the water, it being his custom to seize, plunge them to the bottom, and swim over them by way of diversion. In this year two men being drowned in the deeps of the river Nedd, Metcalf was employed to seek for their bodies, and succeeded in bringing up one of them.

A friend of his, named Barker, having carried two packs of yarn to wash at that river, they were swept away by a sudden swelling of the current, and carried through the arches of the bridge which stands on a rock. A little below there is a piece of still water, supposed to be about twenty one feet in depth; as soon as the yarn came to this place it sunk. Metcalf promised his friend to recover the yarn, but the latter smiled at the supposed absurdity of the attempt. He however, procured some long cart ropes, fixed a hook at one end, and leaving the other to be held by some persons on the high bridge, he descended, and by degrees recovered the whole of the yarn.

He continued to practise on the Violin, till he was able to play country dances. During the winter season he performed as a waiter at Knaresborough, with three others; he likewise attended the assemblies



which were held every fortnight, and frequented many other places where there was public dancing. Notwithstanding this application, he found opportunity for playing his neighbours a number of mischievous tricks, and for a long time escaped suspicion. At length, however, his expertness became known, and when any arch trick had been played, it was always the first inquiry where Metcalf had been at that time.

Though he was fully engaged, he still retained his fondness for hunting, and also began to keep game Cocks. Whenever he went to a Cock-pit, it was his custom to place himself on the lowest seat, near some friend who was a good judge, and who, by certain motions, enabled him to bet, hedge, &c.

In 1732, he was invited to Harrowgate, to play at the assembly, as successor to a poor old man, who, borne down by the weight of one hundred years, began to play too slow for country dances. Here he was well received by the visiting nobility and gentry. In this employment he passed his evenings, and the mornings he spent in cocking, hunting, and coursing. About this period, also, he bought a horse and often ran him for small plates; and his engagements increasing, he took a partner who was likewise a good performer.

In summer he often played at bowls, and singular as it may seem, was frequently the winner; cards likewise began to engage his attention, and he generally won the majority of the games. But these achievements were far from being the limits of his ambition or capacity, for he now began to attend the



aces at York, and other places ; at the race ground he commonly rode in among the crowd, and was often successful in his bets, in which he was, however, assisted by several gentlemen to whom he was known.

Having once matched one of his horses to run three miles for a considerable wager, and the parties agreeing each to ride his own horse, they set up posts at certain distances on the Forrest Moor, describing a circle of one mile, having consequently to go three times round the course, under the idea that Metcalf would be unable to keep the course—great odds were laid against him. His ingenuity furnished him with an expedient in this dilemma. He procured some bells, and placing a man with one of them at each post, was enabled by the ringing to judge when to turn. By this contrivance, and the superior speed of his horse, he came in winner, amidst the applause of all present, except those who had betted against him. At different times he bought horses to sell again, which he often did with a large profit, so accurate was his judgement.

In 1738, Metcalf attained the age of twenty-one; he was extremely robust, and six feet one inch and a half in height. He, about this time acquired considerable celebrity as a pugilist, from the following circumstance. ‘A friend of his being insulted in a Public-house, by a man, who from his ferocious temper and great strength, was the general dread of the neighbourhood, Metcalf bestowed on him such discipline as soon extorted a cry of mercy.’

Returning one day on foot from Harrowgate, he



had proceeded about a mile, when he was overtaken by a Knaresborough man on horseback, who proposed for two shillings' worth of punch to let him ride in turn, dividing the distances equally. Metcalf agreed; on condition that he should have the first ride, to which his townsman assented on these terms; that he should ride a little beyond Poppleton field, where, on his right hand he would see a gate, to which he should fasten the horse. Metcalf however, rode forward to Knaresborough, which was seventeen miles from the place where he left his fellow traveller. The latter was greatly enraged at being obliged to walk so far, but Metcalf pleading in excuse that he never saw the gate, the man found it his interest to join in the laugh.

He was now in the prime of life, and possessed a peculiar archness of disposition, with an uncommon flow of spirits and an unparalleled contempt of danger; and though his conduct was long marked by a variety of mischievous tricks, yet, he afterwards planned and brought to perfection several schemes, both of private and public utility.

When the Harrowgate season was over, Metcalf always remained a few days, and passed his evenings at one, or other of the different Inns. At the Royal Oak, now the Granby, he attracted the notice of Miss Benson, the landlady's daughter, whose constant attention and kindness soon inspired him with a reciprocal affection. Knowing, however, that her mother would oppose their union, various successful devices were employed to conceal their mutual partiality, and frequent meetings. An event however, occurred, which



obliged Metcalf to quit, not only the object of his attachment, but likewise that part of the country.

Among Metcalf's acquaintances were two young men, whose sister lived with them as house-keeper. One evening in her usual jocular way, she apprised Metcalf of her intention of paying him a visit in the night, desiring him to leave his door unlocked. Knowing the mirthful propensity of this female, he was inclined to consider this as a joke, but on the other hand thinking it possible that a real assignation might be intended, and being too gallant to disappoint a lady, he told her he would obey her orders. The lady was punctual to her appointment, and the consequence of her imprudence was evident in a few months. She entreated Metcalf to marry her; but she having made the first advances, he did not feel his conscience interested, and refused. Her only resource was to apply to the parish, which finding she had done, he with some difficulty obtained an interview with Miss Benson, proceeded to Whitby, and went on board an alien ship bound to London. After an absence of seven months, he returned to Knaresborough, where he found the woman who had been the cause of his journey, comfortably situated and not inclined to trouble him. During his absence, a Mr. Dickenson had paid his addresses to Miss Benson, and now urged his suit with such ardour, that the banns were published, and the wedding-day appointed, to the no small mortification of Metcalf, who thought himself secure of her affection. Though he loved her tenderly, his pride prevented him from manifesting his feelings, or attempting to prevent the match.



On the day preceeding that on which the nuptials were to be celebrated, Metcalf riding past the Royal Oak, was accosted with, 'one wants to speak with you.' He immediately turned towards the stables of the Oak, and there to his joy and surprise, he found the object of his love, who had sent her mother's servant to call him. After some explanation, an elopement was resolved upon, which Metcalf with the assistance of a friend effected that night, and the next morning they were united. The confusion of his rival who had provided an entertainment for two hundred people, may easily be conceived.

Mrs. Benson being much enraged at her daughter's conduct, refused either to see her or give up her clothes; nor was she reconciled to her till she was delivered of her second child, on which occasion she stood sponsor to it, and presented Metcalf with 20 Guineas. He now purchased a house at Knaresborough, and continued to play at Harrowgate during the season. He likewise set up a four wheeled chaise and a one horse chair, for public accommodation, which were the first of the kind kept there. These vehicles he kept two summers; but the Inn-keepers beginning to run chaises, he relinquished that scheme, and with it, racing and hunting. He then bought horses and went to the coast for fish, which he took to Leeds and Manchester, and was so indefatigable that he would frequently walk two days and a night with little or no rest. But the profits of this business being but small and the fatigue excessive, he soon abandoned that likewise.



At the commencement of the rebellion, in 1745, he exchanged his situation as violin player, at Harrowgate, for the profession of arms. This singular event was brought about in the following manner:—William Thornton, esq. of Thornville, having resolved to raise a company at his own expence, asked Metcalf, who was well known to him, whether he would join the company about to be raised, and whether he knew of any spirited fellows likely to make good soldiers. Upon his replying in the affirmative, he was appointed assistant to a sergeant; and in two days raised 144 men, out of whom the Captain drafted 64, the number of privates he wanted.

With this company, among whom was Metcalf as musician, Captain Thornton joined the army under General Wade. In the first battle in which they were engaged, twenty of the men, the Lieutenant and Ensign were made prisoners, and the Captain himself very narrowly escaped.

Metcalf, after a variety of adventures rejoined his patron and was always in the field during the different engagements which succeeded. After the battle of Culloden, he returned to his family at Knaresborough.

Being again at liberty to choose his occupation, he attended Harrowgate as usual. During his Scotch expedition, he had become acquainted with various articles manufactured in that country, and judging that he might dispose of some of them to advantage in England, he repaired in the spring to Scotland, and furnished himself with a variety of cotton and worsted articles, for which he found a ready sale in his native



country. Among a thousand articles, he knew what each cost him, from a particular mode of marking them. He also dealt in horses, directing his choice by feeling the animal, and engaged pretty deeply in the contraband trade—the profits of which, were then much more considerable than the risk.

In 1751, he commenced a new employment—he set up a Stage Waggon, betwixt York and Knaresborough, being the first on that road, and drove it himself, twice a week in Summer, and once in Winter. This business, with the occasional conveyance of army baggage employed his attention till the period of his first contracting for the making of roads, which suiting him better, he relinquished every other pursuit. During his leisure hours, he had studied Mensuration in a way peculiar to himself, and when certain of the girth or length of any piece of Timber, he was able accurately to reduce its contents to feet and inches, and could bring the dimensions of any building into yards or feet. The first piece of road he made was about three miles of that between Fearnby and Minskip the materials for the whole were to be procured from one gravel-pit: he therefore provided deal-boards, and erected a temporary house at the pit; took a dozen horses to the place; fixed racks and mangers, and hired a house for his men at Minskip. He often walked from Knaresborough in the morning, with four or five stones of Meal on his shoulders, and joined his men by six o’Clock. He completed the road much sooner than was expected, to the entire satisfaction of the surveyor and trustees.



Soon after this, he contracted for building a bridge at Borough-bridge, which he compleated with credit to his abilities. The business of making roads, and building and repairing bridges, in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Cheshire, he continued with great success, until the year 1792, when he returned to his native county. In the summer of 1788, he lost his wife in the 61st year of her age, and the 40th of their union, leaving four children. She was interred in the church-yard of Stockport, in Cheshire, where she resided.

After some unsuccessful speculations in the Cotton trade, Metcalf returned to Yorkshire, and for want of other engagements, he bought hay to sell again—measuring the stacks with his arms, and having learned the height, he could readily tell what number of square yards, were contained in a stack of any value, between one and five hundred pounds. Sometimes he bought a little wood, standing, and if he could get the girth and height, would calculate the solid contents. In addition to this brief history of the life of this singular character, the reader will not be displeased to find the following anecdotes, which are of a nature too extraordinary to be omitted.

‘Metcalf had learned to walk and ride very readily through all the streets of York; and being once in that City, as he was passing the George-inn, the landlord called to him, and informed him that a gentleman in the house wanted a guide to Harrowgate, adding, ‘I know you can do as well as any one.’ To this proposal Metcalf agreed, upon condition, that



his situation should be kept secret from the gentleman, who might otherwise be afraid to trust him. The stranger was soon ready and they set off on horse-back, Metcalf taking the lead. When they came to Allerton Mauleverer, the gentleman inquired whose large house that was on the right, to which Metcalf replied without the least hesitation. A little further the road is crossed by that from Wetherby to Borough-bridge, and runs along by the lofty brick wall of Allerton Park. A road led out of the Park opposite to the gate upon the Knaresborough road, which Metcalf was afraid of missing; but perceiving the current of wind that came through the Park gate, he readily turned his horse towards the opposite one; here he found some difficulty in opening the gate, in consequence, as he imagined of some alteration that had been made in the hanging of it, as he had not been that way for several months. Therefore, backing his horse he exclaimed, 'confound thee, thou always goest to the heel of the gate instead of the head.' The gentleman observed then, his horse was rather awkward, but that his own mare was good at coming up to a gate, on which Metcalf cheerfully permitted him to perform that office. Passing through Knaresborough they entered the forrest, which was then uninclosed, nor was there yet any turnpike road upon it. Having proceeded a little way the gentleman observed a light, and asked what it was. Metcalf took it for granted that his companion had seen what is called a *Will-o'-the-Wisp*, which frequently appears in a low and swampy spot, near the road; but fearful of betraying himself,



he did not ask in what direction the light lay—to divert his attention from this object, he asked him if he did not see two lights, one to the right, and one to the left. The stranger replied that he saw but one to the right—‘well then sir,’ says Metcalf, ‘that is Harrowgate.’ Having arrived at their journey’s end, they stopped at the house, now called the Granby, where Metcalf, being well acquainted with the place, led both the horses into the stable and then went into the house, where he found his fellow traveller comfortably seated over a tankard of negus, in which he pledged his guide. Metcalf took it very readily from him the first time, but the second he was rather wide of his mark. He therefore withdrew, leaving the landlord to explain what his companion was yet ignorant of. The latter hinted to the landlord his suspicion, that his guide must have taken a great quantity of spirits since their arrival, upon which the landlord inquired his reason for entertaining such an opinion, ‘I judged so,’ replied the traveller, ‘from the appearance of his eyes.’—‘eyes! bless you sir!’ do you not know that he is blind? What do you mean by that?—‘I mean sir, that he cannot see.’—‘Blind! gracious God!’—‘yes sir, as blind as a stone,————’ The stranger desired Metcalf to be called, and upon his confirming the landlord’s account.—‘Had I known that,’ said he, ‘I would not have ventured with you for a hundred pounds.’—And I sir, said Metcalf ‘would not have lost my way for a thousand.’ The services of the evening were rewarded with two Guineas, and a plentiful entertainment the next day by the gentleman,



who considered this circumstance as the most extraordinary he had ever met with.'

'Metcalf happend once to be at Scriven, at the house of one Green, an Inn-keeper, where two persons had a dispute concerning some Sheep, which one of them had put into the penfold. The owner of the Sheep, a townsman of Metcalf's, appeared to be illtreated by the other parties, who wished to take an unfair advantage. Metcalf perceiving that they were not likely to agree about the damages, departed. It being about midnight, he resolved to perform a good turn for his friend before he went home. The penfold being walled round, he climed over, and laying hold of the Sheep one after the other, he threw them over the wall. The difficulty of the undertaking increased as the number diminished, as they were not so easily caught; but not deterred by that circumstance, he compleated the business. On the return of day when the penfold was found untenanted, though the door was fast locked, a considerable degree of surprise was excited, and various conjectures were formed relative to the rogues who had liberated the Sheep; but Metcalf passed unsuspected, and enjoyed the joke in silence.'

'Passing once through Hallifax, he stopped at an inn called the Broad Stone. The landlord's son and some others, who frequented Harrowgate, having heard of Metcalf's exploits, expressed a wish to play at cards with him—he consented, and a pack was sent for, which he requested permission to examine, but as the landlord was his friend, he could rely on him to



prevent any deception. They began, and Metcalf beat four of them in turn, playing for liquor only—not satisfied with this, some of the company proposed playing for money, and at Shilling Whist, Metcalf won fifteen shillings. The losing party then proposed playing double or quit, but he declined playing more than Half Guinea Points. At length yielding to their importunity, he engaged for Guineas, and being favoured by fortune, he won ten, and a shilling for liquor each game. The loser taking up the cards went out, and soon returned with eight guineas more, which soon followed the other ten.’

‘Among the numerous roads which Metcalf contracted to make was part of the Manchester road, from Blackmoor to Standish foot. As it was not marked out, the Surveyor, contrary to expectation, took it over deep marshes, out of which, it was the opinion of the trustees, that it would be necessary to dig the earth till they came to a solid bottom. This plan appeared to Metcalf extremely tedious and expensive, and liable to other disadvantages. He therefore argued the point privately with the Surveyor, and several other gentlemen; but they were all immoveable in their former opinion. At their next meeting Metcalf attended, and addressed them in the following manner. ‘Gentlemen I propose to make the road over the marshes after my own plan, and if it does not answer I will be at the expense of making it over again after your’s.’ To this proposal they assented—having engaged to complete nine miles in ten months, he began in six different parts, having nearly four hundred men



employed. One of the places was peat, and Standish Common, which was a deep bog, and over which it was thought impracticable to make any road. Here he cast it fourteen yards wide, and raised it in a circular form. The water, which in many places run across the road, he carried off by drains; but found the greatest difficulty in conveying stones to the spot on account of the softness of the ground. Those who passed that way to Huddersfield market, were not sparing of their censure of the undertaking, and even doubted whether it would ever be completed—having however, levelled the piece to the end, he ordered his men to collect beather or ling, and bind it in round bundles which they could span with their hands. These bundles were placed close together, and another row laid over them, upon which, they were well pressed down, and covered with stone and gravel. This piece being about half a mile in length when completed, was so remarkably fine, that any person might have gone over in winter unshod without being wet; and though other parts of the road soon wanted repairing, this needed none for twelve years.'

'Dr. Bew speaking of Metcalf, says, with the assistance only of a long staff, I have several times met this man traversing the road, ascending precipices, exploring valleys, and investigating their several extents, forms, and situations, so as to answer his designs in the best manner. The plans which he designs, and the estimates he makes, are done in a method peculiar to himself; and which he cannot well convey the meaning of to others. His abilities in this respect



are nevertheless, so great, that he finds constant employment. Most of the roads over the Peak in Derbyshire, have been altered by his directions; particularly those in the vicinity of Buxton, and he is at this time constructing a new one betwixt Wilmslow and Conyleton, with a view to open a communication to the great London road, without being obliged to pass over the mountains.'

These particulars, concerning this extraordinary man and useful member of society, are taken from a narrative published by himself, since his return to his native county. He there fixed his residence at Stopport, near Wetherby, with a daughter and son-in-law who kept his house, happy in the enjoyment of the fruits of his industry, as his advanced age prevented him from engaging in the more active occupations, to which he had been accustomed. He died in the year 1802.



#### AUTHORITIES.

The Life of METCALF, Liverpool edition, 1802...  
Eccentric Mirror, vol. the 2nd... Transactions of the  
Manchester Philosophical Society.



*THE LIFE*  
*OF*  
**JOHN STANLEY,**

*Bachelor in Music, including a few particulars of*

**JOSEPH STRONG.**

~~~~~  
‘For Music’s voice the icy bosom warms,
Strings the lax nerve, and fires the weak to arms.’

~~~~~  
The English, (it is said) have no National Music ; but yet, they are by no means unacquainted with the principles of that delightful science. Many of her composers, as well as performers, have been men of acknowledged talents ; and their compositions would bear comparison with any of the productions of the first masters of either the German or Italian Schools. John Stanley, whose life we are next to consider, was a prodigy in his day ; as a composer,



few could equal him, and as a performer, he had perhaps no superior. Such was the opinion of two most distinguished foreigners at that time in England, (Handel and Guzzini) men, whose profound knowledge of the art, qualified them to judge of the merits of Mr. Stanley's performances.

John Stanley was born in 1713. At two year's old, he totally lost his sight by falling on a Marble Hearth with a China Bason in his hand. At the age of seven he first began to learn Music, as an art that was likely to amuse him, but without his friends, supposing it possible for him, circumstanced as he was, to make it his Profession. His first master was Reading, a scholar of Dr. Blow's, and Organist of Hackney. But his father finding that he not only received great pleasure from Music, but had made a rapid progress, placed him with Dr. Green, under whom, he studied with great diligence, and a success that was astonishing. At eleven years of age, he obtained the place of Organist of All-hallows, Bread-street; and in 1726, at the age of thirteen, was elected Organist of St. Andrews, Holborn, in preference to a great number of Candidates. In 1734, the benchers of the honourable society of the Inner Temple, elected him one of their Organists. These two places he retained till the time of his death. Few professors have spent a more active life in every branch of his art, than this extraordinary musician; having been not only a most neat, pleasing, and accurate performer—but a natural and agreeable composer, and an intelligent instructor. He was the conductor and soul of



the Swan and Castle concerts in the city, as long as they existed. Upon the death of Handel, he and Mr. Smith undertook to superintend the performance of oratorios during Lent; and after Mr. Smith retired, he carried them on in conjunction with Mr. Linley, till within two years of his death, in 1786. This ingenious and worthy professor, whose blindness excited the pity, and his performance, the admiration of the public for so many years, will be long lamented by his surviving friends—for they have lost in him, exclusive of his musical talents, a most intelligent and agreeable companion, who contributed to the pleasures of society, as much by his conversation in private, as by his professional merit in public. He was succeeded in his office, as master of the King's band, by Sir William Parsons. The following additional particulars of this great man's life were given to the public a few years after his death, by a gentleman, on whose veracity the reader may place implicit confidence.

Dr. Alcock, who had been a pupil of Stanley's, speaks of his scientific knowledge in the most exalted terms, and adds, that most of the Musicians contrived methods to get acquainted with him, as they found their advantage in it: it was common, just as the service of St. Andrew's Church, or the Temple was ended, to see 40 or 50 Organists at the Altar, waiting to hear his last voluntary, and even Mr. Handel himself, I have frequently seen at both of those places. In short, it must be confessed, that his extempore voluntaries were inimitable, and his taste in composition wonderful. I was his apprentice, (continues the



Doctor) and I remember the first year I went to him, his occasionally playing (for his amusement only,) at Billiards, Mississipie, Shuffle-board, and Skittles, at which games, he constantly beat his competitors. To avoid prolixity, I shall only mention, his shewing me the way through the private streets of Westminster, the intricate passages of the City, and the adjacent Villages, both on horseback, and on foot, places, at which, I had never been before; his playing, very neatly and correctly all Corelli's and Geminiani's, 12 Solos, on the Violin. He had so correct an ear, that he never forgot the voice of any person he had once heard speak; I myself, have divers times been a witness of it; and in April 1779, as he and I were going to Pall Mall, to the late Dr. Boyce's Auction, a gentleman met us who had been in Jamaica 20 years, and in a feigned voice, said, 'how do you do Mr. Stanley?'—when he, pausing a little, said, 'God bless me Mr. Smith, how long have you been in England?'—If twenty people were seated at a table near him, he would address them all in regular order, without their situations being previously announced to him. Riding on horseback was one of his favourite exercises, and towards the conclusion of his life, when he lived on Epping Forrest, and wished to give his friends an airing, he would often take them the pleasantest road, and point out the most agreeable prospects. He played at Whist, with great readiness and judgement; each card was marked at the corner with the point of a needle; but those marks were so delicately fine, as scarcely to be seen by any person, not



previously apprised of it. His hand was generally the first arranged, and it was not uncommon for him to complain to the party, that they were tedious in sorting the cards. He could also tell the precise time by a watch; tell the number of persons in a room upon his entering it; direct his voice to each person in particular, even to strangers, after they had once spoken; miss any person absent, and tell who that person was. In a word, his conceptions of youth, beauty, symmetry, and shape, were, in a person of his condition, truly wonderful attainments. So delicate and susceptible was his ear, that he was able to accompany any lesson with a thorough bass, though he had never heard it before; thus anticipating the harmony before the chords were sounded, and accompanying it in a manner suitable to its nature.

---

## JOSEPH STRONG.

---

The propensity of persons who have had the misfortune to be denied the blessing of sight to cultivate the science of Music, is notorious to every person of the least observation. With this propensity is often combined an extraordinary genius for mechanics, but few have possessed both in a greater degree than Mr. Joseph Strong.

He was a native of Carlisle, and was blind from



his birth; notwithstanding this disadvantage, he displayed even in his infancy astonishing skill in mechanics. He attached himself to the study of Music, and was a good performer on the Organ. The following circumstances afford a striking instance of his ingenuity and perseverance, by means of which he contrived to produce every thing he thought worth possessing. At the age of 15. he one afternoon concealed himself in the Cathedral of Carlisle, during the time of Divine Service. When the congregation had retired, and the gates were shut, he proceeded to the Organ loft, and examined every part of the Instrument. He was thus occupied till about midnight, when, having satisfied himself respecting the general construction, he began to try the tone of the different stops, and the proportion they bore to each other. This experiment, however, could not be concluded in so silent a manner as the business which had before engaged his attention. The neighbourhood was alarmed; various were the conjectures, as to the cause of the Nocturnal Music; at length some persons mustered courage sufficient to go and see what was the matter, and Joseph was found playing the Organ. Next day he was sent for by the Dean, who, after reprimanding him for the method he had taken to gratify his curiosity, gave him permission to play whenever he pleased.

He now set about making himself a Chamber Organ, which he completed without any assistance whatever. This Instrument he sold to a merchant, and it is now in the possession of a gentleman in Dublin,



who preserves it as a curiosity. Soon afterwards he made another, on which, he used to play both for amusement and devotion.

At the age of 20, he could make himself almost every article of wearing-apparel, and all his household furniture, (with but few exceptions) was of his own manufacture; besides these, he constructed various pieces of machinery, and among the rest a model of a loom, with a figure representing a man working on it. The first pair of shoes he made was for the purpose of walking from Carlisle to London, to visit Mr. Stanley, the celebrated blind Organist of the Temple Church. This visit he actually paid, and was highly gratified with the jaunt.

Though he indulged his fancy in the manner above stated, yet these amusements did not prevent him from following with great assiduity the business of a Diaper Weaver, at which he was accounted a good workman.

Till within a few months of his death, he was a constant attendant at the Cathedral, but not being able to accompany the choir in chaunting the psalms, he composed several hymns which corresponded with the Music, and which he substituted as an act of private Devotion during the performance of that part of the public service. It is not known whether any person was ever attentive enough to copy these pious effusions, which were certainly respectable, from the motive by which they were dictated, and for the obtaining of which, he afforded ample opportunity, as they generally made a part of his musical performance before strangers, and indeed, that part in which he



seemed to take the greatest pleasure. Mr. Strong was married at the age of 25, and had several children. He died at Carlisle, in March 1798, in his 66th year.



AUTHORITIES.

Dr. ALCOCK's Memoirs...Eccentric Mirror, vol.  
the 2nd...REE's Encyclopædia.



*THE LIFE*  
OF  
**DR. HENRY MOYES.**

~~~~~  
‘When but a stripling, with fond alarms
His bosom danced to Nature’s boundless charms;
On him fair Science dawned in happier hour,
And waken’d into bloom, young Fancy’s flower.’

~~~~~  
Among the many illustrious characters, whose names adorn the pages of British Biography, Dr. Henry Moyes claims our particular attention. His virtues, his genius, and his scientific acquirements, have been the theme and admiration of every country which he has visited.

This ingenious Philosopher was a native of Scotland, and born in 1750. We have nothing particular respecting the history of his family. It appears that when three years old, he was deprived of sight by the small-pox. We have no information respecting him from this period, till the time of his leaving Col-



lege. He commenced, at Edinburgh, a series of lectures on the theory and practice of Music, but not meeting with that encouragement which he expected, he relinquished this design. He next turned his attention to a subject which was more congenial to his feelings—natural and experimental philosophy presented an extensive field, for the exercise of his talents. He was the first blind man who had proposed to lecture on Chemistry; as a lecturer he acquired great reputation; his address was easy and pleasing, his language correct, and he performed his experiments in a manner which always gave great pleasure to his auditors. He left Scotland in 1779, and travelled into England, where he was well received. His audience was generally composed of the most respectable people of the towns through which he passed; but being of a restless disposition and fond of travelling, he in 1785, visited America. In the summer of that year he made a tour of the Union, and conversed with such men as were distinguished, either for their learning or love of science; but he found a great difference between the transatlantic English and those of the Mother country. The following paragraph respecting him, appeared in one of the American newspapers of that day. ‘The celebrated Dr. Moyes, though blind, delivered a lecture upon optics, delineated the properties of light and shade, and gave an astonishing illustration of the power of touch. A highly polished plane of steel was presented to him, with a stroke of an etching tool so minutely engraved on it, that it was invisible to the naked eye, and only discoverable



with a powerful magnifying glass—with his fingers he discovered the extent, and measured the length of the line. This gentleman informed me, that being overturned in a Stage Coach, one dark rainy evening in England, and the carriage and four horses thrown into a ditch, the passengers and driver with two eyes a-piece, were obliged to apply to him, who had no eyes, for assistance, in extricating the horses. As for me, said he, after I had recovered from the astonishment of the fall, and discovered that I had escaped unhurt, I was quite at home in the dark ditch. The inversion of the order of things was amusing. I, that was obliged to be led about like a child in the glaring sun, was now directing eight persons to pull here and haul there, with all the dexterity and activity of a Man-of-war's Boatswain.'

On his return from America, he took a house in Edinburgh, where he resided for some time, beloved and admired, not only by his countrymen, but also by strangers, who resorted to that ancient Metropolis. But he had not yet finished his travels; before his American expedition he had formed the design of coming over to Ireland, and when he had now returned, he determined to carry his favourite project into execution, and accordingly in 1790, he crossed the channel, and arrived in Belfast. He visited all the principal towns in the island; he was every where received with that respect which was due to his great merit. He remained a few months in Dublin, where he was visited by some of the most respectable individuals in that Metropolis. Among



his Irish friends was the ingenious Mr. Kirwen of Dublin, a name well known in the scientific world. Between these two great men a friendship commenced which only ended with their lives. Dr. Moyes was highly gratified with his journey through Ireland; the hospitable manner in which he was every where received, and the friendship he experienced, were the theme of his eulogiums on that people. But indeed, not only Dr. Moyes, but every stranger who has travelled through Ireland, must acknowledge that there is more of that true politeness, affability, and generosity to be met with among the people of Ireland, than in any other country in Europe. He now took up his residence at Manchester, and there determined to spend the remainder of his life. He was here in his native element, or to use his own words, 'quite at home.' In one of the most enlightened neighbourhoods in the Empire, surrounded by a circle of chosen friends—distinguished by their taste, their talents, and their love of science; and with access to the numerous and well selected Libraries, it was no wonder that these advantages induced Dr. Moyes to prefer Manchester to any other place he had been in. He was elected a member of the Manchester Philosophical Society, and enriched its collection by several valuable papers on Chemistry, as well as the other branches of Physical Science. The following particulars of our Philosopher's character, comes from the classic pen of Dr. Bew.

'Dr. Henry Moyes, who occasionally read lectures on Philosophical Chemistry at Manchester, lost



his sight by the small-pox. in early infancy. He never recollected to have seen; but the first traces of memory, I have, (says he) are in some confused ideas of the solar system. He had the good fortune to be born in a country where learning of every kind is highly cultivated, and to be brought up in a family devoted to learning. Possessed of native genius, and ardent in his applications, he made rapid advances in various departments of erudition, and not only acquired the fundamental principles of Mechanics, Music, and the Languages, but likewise entered deeply into the investigation of the profounder Sciences, and displayed an acute and general knowledge of Geometry, Optics, Algebra, Astronomy, Chemistry, and in short, of most of the branches of the Newtonian Philosophy: Mechanical exercises were the favourite employments of his infant years. At a very early age, he made himself acquainted with the use of edged tools so perfectly, that notwithstanding his entire blindness, he was able to make little wind-mills; and even constructed a loom with his own hands, which still show the marks of wounds he received in the execution of these juvenile exploits. By a most agreeable intimacy and frequent intercourse, which I enjoyed with this accomplished blind gentleman, whilst he resided at Manchester, I had an opportunity of repeatedly observing the peculiar manner in which he arranged his ideas, and acquired his information. Whenever he was introduced into company, I remarked that he continued some time silent. The sound directed him to judge of the dimensions of the room, and the dif-



ferent voices, of the number of persons that were present; his distinctions in these respects were very accurate, and his memory so retentive, that he seldom was mistaken. I have known him instantly recognize a person on first hearing him speak, though more than two years had elapsed since the time of their last meeting. He determined pretty nearly the stature of those he was speaking with, by the directions of their voices; and he made tolerable conjectures respecting their temper and dispositions, by the manner in which they conducted their conversation. It must be observed that this gentleman's eyes were not totally insensible to intense light. The rays refracted through a prism, when sufficiently vivid, produced certain distinguishable effects on them. The red gave him a disagreeable sensation, which he compared to the touch of a saw; as the colours declined in violence, the harshness lessened, until the green afforded a sensation that was highly pleasing to him, and which he described as conveying an idea similar to what he felt in running his hand over polished surfaces. Polished surfaces, meandering streams, and gentle declivities, were the figures by which he expressed his ideas of beauty; rugged rocks, irregular points, and boisterous elements, furnished him with expressions for terror and disgust. He excelled in the charms of conversation; was happy in his allusions to visual objects; and discoursed on the nature, composition, and beauty of colours, with pertinence and precision.

Dr. Moyes was a striking instance of the power



the human soul possesses, of finding resources of satisfaction, even under the most rigorous calamities. Though involved in ever-during darkness, and excluded from the charming views of silent, or animated nature; though dependent upon an undertaking for the means of his subsistence, the success of which was very precarious; in short, though destitute of other support than his genius, and under the mercenary support of a person whose integrity he suspected; still Dr. Moyes was generally chearful and apparently happy. Indeed it must afford much pleasure to the feeling heart to observe this hilarity of temper prevail almost universally with the blind. Though cut off from the chearful ways of men and the contemplation of the Human face Divine—they have this consolation, they are exempt from the discernment, and contagious influence of those painful emotions of the soul, that are visible on the countenance, and which hypocrisy itself cannot conceal. This disposition likewise, may be considered as an internal evidence of the native work of the human mind, that thus supports its dignity and chearfulness under one of the severest calamities that can possibly befall us.'

This good man, after a life of 57 years, spent in learned labours and inglorious ease, paid the debt of Nature at Duncaster, 10th August, 1807. As he never had entered into the married state, he was enabled by prudence and œconomy to amass a considerable sum, which he bequeathed to his brother. In his manner of living, he was abstemious. He was entirely unacquainted with the use of ardent spirits,



or fermented liquors. He had a natural dislike to animal food of every description ; consequently his meals were plain and simple. He was very partial to a Sea-weed, well known by the name of Dulse, this he would boil, and dress up with a little butter, which, with a crust of bread, and a draught of spring-water, was the only luxury in which he indulged. Well might Dr. Moyes say with Goldsmith's hermit—

‘No flocks that range the valley free,  
To slaughter I condemn,  
Taught by that power which pities me,  
I learn to pity them ;  
But from the mountain's grassy side,  
A guiltless feast I bring ;  
A scrip with herbs and fruit supplied,  
And water from the spring.’



#### AUTHORITIES.

Transactions of the Manchester Philosophical Society... Encyclopædia Britannica... Select Anecdotes vol. the 2nd.



SKETCH  
OF  
DR. CLANCY,

*A considerable Dramatic Poet, and Coteremporary of  
Dean Swift.*



‘His Comic vein, had every charm to please—  
’Twas Nature’s dictates, charm’d with Nature’s ease.’



In 1737, DOCTOR CLANCY lost his sight by a  
cold, which rendered him incapable of attending to  
his profession, as a Physician. As the Doctor had  
paid his addresses to the Muses in his earlier days, he  
was advised by some friends to launch out amongst  
the adventurous rovers of the pen; and, as he thought  
the theatre at this time was open to all, and influenced  
by none, his first attempt was in the Dramatic line.  
Flushed with the hope of immediate fame, as well as  
gain, he composed a Comedy in a short time, and  
thought, good easy man, when he had wound up



the plot of his piece, that all his labour was at an end: he found to his cost, however, that every avenue to the theatre in those days, as well as in our own, was blocked up by a set of dramatic undertakers, who were ready at any price, to work by the pound, perch, or yard; and that it was as difficult to get a sight of the manager, as it would be to get a sight of the grand Lama. The Doctor having detailed a number of the difficulties he was doomed to encounter in his efforts to get his piece upon the stage, relates the following circumstance, which I shall give in his own words. 'On my return to Dublin, I brought the Play to Doctor Helsham, and conscious of his insufficiency in matters so foreign to his way of life, I requested him, as he was very familiar with Dean Swift, to put the Comedy in his hands, as I judged that his approbation, or dislike, after reading, would at once determine the fate of the performance. 'Not I, indeed,' said Dr. Helsham; 'have you a mind that I should go faster down his stairs than I went up? shall I subject myself to be laughed at, or perhaps ill-treated? Not I, indeed; I do not care to bring his tongue upon me. Go to Dr. Grattan, the Dean will probably hear from him what he would not from me.' I went to Dr. Grattan, and solicited his assistance the same way. 'Who, I?' said Dr. Grattan. 'Not I, by any means.' What have I to do with Plays? I know nothing of writing books; I should have a fine time of it, to bring such a piece of stuff before the Dean, and have it thrown in my face, or be called a blockhead for my pains; I should be glad



to serve you, but you must find somebody else to befriend you on this occasion.' Dr. Grattan's brother, minister of St. Andrew's, who happened to be present, was pleased to say, that he would find an opportunity of laying the book on the Dean's table; and, if it was good, he would be apt to inquire how it came there. The gentleman accordingly did so, and there it lay for some time, without the Author's hearing one word about it. Swift read it, and not knowing how the Play came there, asked all his friends which of them had brought it; and none of those to whom it was known would venture to tell, as he had not declared his opinion of it. One day, as Dr. Helsham saw it on his table, he took it up to look at it, and asked the Dean what it was. The Dean smiled, and told him, it was a villain well painted; and that whoever had written the piece, conveyed a good moral. Dr. Helsham, who saw that he had nothing to fear, told him the Author, and what he knew of him. 'Tell him,' said the Dean, 'that in a few days, I will pay him a visit.' He then went into his closet, and wrote the following letter, which Dr. Helsham brought with the packet, mentioned in the postscript.

---

*TO DOCTOR CLANCY.*

SIR,

Some friend of mine lent me a Comedy, which I was told, was written by you: I read it carefully, and with much pleasure, on account, both of the characters and the moral. I have no interest with the people of



the Play-house, else I would gladly recommend it to them. I send you a small present, in such gold as will not give you trouble to change; for I much pity your loss of sight, which, if it pleased God to let you enjoy, your other talents might have been your honest support, and have eased you of your present confinement.

I am Sir, your well-wishing friend  
and humble servant,  
JONATHAN SWIFT.

*Deanry-house, Christmas-day, 1737.*

P. S. I know not who lent me the Play; if it came from you, I will send it back to-morrow. This letter and the packet, are sealed with the head of Socrates. The packet contained five pounds, in small pieces of gold, of different kinds, of which, the largest did not exceed five shillings. 'A little time after,' says Dr. Clancy, 'I sent him a parcel of tickets—he kept but one, which he said he had paid for; and afterwards sent me two four pound pieces for more.' Thus ends the correspondence between the Dean and this Poet. I have not been able to collect any further information concerning the life of Dr. Clancy; and therefore conclude with the above particulars.

~~~~~  
AUTHORITY.

Swift's Miscellaneous Works, vol. 1st.

A FEW PARTICULARS OF
THE LIFE
OF
DR. NICHOLAS BACON.

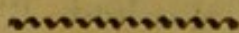
~~~~~  
'Men by whom impartial laws were given.'

~~~~~  
Dr. NICHOLAS BACON, a blind gentleman, descended from the same family with the celebrated Lord Verulam, was in the city of Brussels with high approbation created Doctor of Laws.

He was deprived of sight at nine years of age, by an arrow from a cross-bow, whilst he was attempting to shoot it. When he had recovered his health, which had suffered by the shock, he pursued the same plan of education, in which he had been engaged; and having heard that one *Nicasius de Vourde*, born blind, who lived towards the end of the 15th century, after having distinguished himself by his studies at the University of Louvain, took his degree as D. D. in that of Cologne, he resolved to make the same attempt;

but the public, cursed with prejudices for which the meanest sensitive nature might blush, prejudices equally beneath the brutality and ignorance of the lowest animal instinct, treated his intention with ridicule; even the professors themselves were not far from being of the same sentiment; for they admitted him into their schools, rather from an impression, that it might amuse him, than become of any use to him. He had the good fortune, however, contrary to their expectations, to obtain the first places among his con-disciples. It was then said that such rapid advances might be made in the preliminary branches of his education, but would soon be effectually checked by studies of a more profound nature. This, it seems was repeated from school to school, through the whole climax of his pursuits; and when in the course of academical learning, it became necessary to study Poetry, it was the general voice that all was over, and that at length he had reached his *Ne plus ultra*.

But here, he likewise disproved their prejudices, and taught them the immense difference between blindness of soul, and blindness of body. After continuing his studies in learning and philosophy for two years more, he applied himself to law, took his degree in that science, commenced pleading consellor, or advocate in the council of Brabant, and has had the pleasure of terminating almost every suit in which he has been engaged, to the satisfaction of his clients.



AUTHORITY...Encyclopædia. Britannica.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF
WILLIAM KENNEDY,

The famous blind Mechanic of TANDERAGEE.



‘Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom’d caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.’



The privation of sight is perhaps more easily endured, and less prejudicial, than that of most of the other senses. Poets, the foremost in renown, have been incapable of the perception of external objects. The two finest heroic Poems, (the Iliad, and Paradise Lost) are the immortal Productions of the blind. The eyes of Homer and Milton ‘rolled in vain, and found no dawn:’ yet in the forceful expression of the latter, were their minds ‘inly irradiated, and they have sung of things invisible to mortal sight.’ The contemplation, however, of abstract ideas by the blind, which depend not on vision, is by no means extraordinary, nor of those objects that relate to the

other senses ; for the privation of one sense quickens the perception of the rest, while sensibility of intellect and strength of natural reason, appertain to the blind as well as to those who are blest in the full perfection of the senses. It remains for me to record the powers of another of the blind, who, though he has no claim to the genius of poesy, nor has ever expatiated in the regions of philosophy ; yet, has he by the delicacy of touch, arrived at a most unexampled perfection in the execution of various pieces of mechanism, which, in others, would require all the aid of sight.

The Subject of this short narrative, is Wm. Kennedy of Tanderagee, in the County of Armagh, who has been blind from his infancy. The best account of his extraordinary progress in mechanics, is to be found in his own simple narrative, which the author of this article procured from his dictation. ‘I was born near Banbridge, in the County of Down, in the year 1768, and lost my sight at the age of four years. Having no other amusement, (being deprived of such as children generally have,) my mind turned itself to mechanical pursuits ; and I shortly became projector and workman for all the children in the neighbourhood. As I increased in years, my desire for some kind of employment that might render me not burthensome, though blind, induced me to think of music ; at the age of thirteen, I was sent to Armagh, to learn to play the fiddle ; my lodging happened to be at the house of a Cabinet-maker ; this was a fortunate circumstance for me, as I there got such a knowledge of the tools, and manner of working, as has been use-

ful to me ever since: though these things engaged my mind, and occupied a great part of my time; yet, I made as decent a progress in music, as any other of Mr. Moorehead's scholars, except one. After living a year and a quarter there, I returned home, where I made, and got tools, so as to enable me to construct different pieces of house-hold furniture.

Not being satisfied with the occupation of Cabinet-maker, I purchased an old set of Irish Bagpipes, and without instruction, it was with difficulty that I put them into playing order. I soon, however, became so well acquainted with the mechanical part of them, that instruments were brought to me from every part of the neighbourhood, to be repaired. I found so many defects in this instrument, that I began to consider whether there might not be a better plan of it than any I had yet met with; and from my early instruction in music, and continual study of the instrument, (for indeed I slept but little,) in nine months time, (having my tools to make,) I produced the first new set. I then began to Clock and Watch-making, and soon found out a Clock-maker in Banbridge, who had a desire to play on the Pipes, and we mutually instructed each other. From this time, I increased in musical and mechanical knowledge, but made no more Pipes, though I repaired many, until the year 1793, when I married, and my necessities induced me to use all my industry for the maintenance of my wife and increasing family; my employment for 12 years, was making and repairing wind and stringed instruments of music. I also, constructed Clocks, both common and

musical, and sometimes recurred to my first employment of a Cabinet-maker. I also made Linen Looms, with their different tackling. My principal employment, however, is the construction of the Irish Bagpipes, of which, I have made thirty sets in the little town I live in, within these eight years past.' Thus ends the simple sketch of the life of Wm. Kennedy, in his own unadorned style. His modesty however, has induced him to suppress several particulars, very much to his credit, as one of the most ingenious improver's of the Irish Bagpipes. This imperfect national instrument, (as it is a national one,) deserves, together with the harp, the peculiar cultivation of those who feel the musical strains of their own island; whether melancholy or gay; whether amorous or martial, its modulation is, in general, delightful. We are all acquainted with the sympathetic effect of national music on the Swiss, when engaged in foreign warfare, far from his native mountains; one air in particular, has been known to occasion an incurable desire to return to his country.

The effect of the Bagpipes in rallying Frazer's regiment at Quebec, and the victory gained by general Wolfe, over the French, has been recorded in the anecdotes of that battle. The inspiring airs of the wounded piper, in the glorious victory of Vimiera, is a fact too recent to require repetition;—would, that the Scotch general, Dalrymple, had felt the electric inspiration of the Highland Piper, and his pibroch.

Pennant derives the Irish Pipes from a period of very remote antiquity; and the observation of that

most indefatigable antiquary, is confirmed by the early testimony of Aristides Quintilianus. The compass of the Highland Bagpipes, is confined to nine notes, while that of the Irish extends to more than two octaves. The modesty of our blind mechanic, as I have said before, has prevented him from enlarging on several points, which I shall here beg leave to notice, illustrative of his ingenuity as an improver of this instrument. In this respect, indeed, he deserves the character of a discoverer, as his additions to the Irish Pipes will do away many of their imperfections; and he has the great merit of adapting them with simplicity; for the management of the instrument is nearly as easy as formerly; to the chaunter he has added keys, by which some flats and sharps, not capable of being before expressed on the instrument, are now produced with ease. He has also added E in alt. being one note above the original compass of the instrument. Two additional notes are given by him to the Organ-stop, and some of its notes are now capable of being varied from naturals to sharps, according to the key on which the tune is played.

The basses or drones, as they are commonly called, were formerly only in correct tune, when playing on some particular keys, and are now constructed, so that their notes can be varied, as the key varies on which the tune is played. There is also another alteration worthy of notice; by the addition of two large keys, managed with the wrist, a part of the basses, or all of them, can be stopped or opened at pleasure. The particulars of these most ingenious alterations would re-

quire terms too technical to be introduced here. In short, this blind mechanic, at the time this account was written, was unequalled, in elegance of workmanship, and perfection of scale, in one of our favourite national instruments. From a rude block of ebony, a fragment of an elephant's tooth, and a piece of silver; having first formed his lathe and his tools, he shapes and bores the complicated tubes, graduates the ventage, adapts the keys, and forms the instrument of perfect external finish and beauty, 'that discourses most eloquent music,' capable of expressing the finest movements in melody, and by no means deficient in harmony; and all this by the exquisite sensibility of touch, for he is stone blind, and quite incapable of distinguishing the black colours of ebony from the white of ivory. Under poverty therefore, and physical privation of the most overwhelming kind, he has gradually brought his mechanical powers to this pitch of comparative perfection! What an incentive to perseverance under difficulties, much less insuperable! It is hoped that the readers of this article, will be induced to inquire into the actual authenticity of the statement, and be led to encourage such extraordinary application and ingenuity.



AUTHORITY...Belfast Monthly Magazine, vol. 1st

THE LIFE
OF
HENRY THE MINSTREL,
COMMONLY CALLED
BLIND HARRY.

~~~~~  
\* What time in God, and Freedom's holy cause,  
Wallace and Bruce opposed a tyrant's laws.

~~~~~  
HENRY, the MINSTREL, commonly called BLIND HARRY was an ancient Scottish author, distinguished by no particular sir-name, but well known as the composer of an historical poem, reciting the achievements of Sir William Wallace. This Poem, continued for several centuries to be in great repute, but afterwards sunk into neglect, until very lately, that it has been released from its obscurity, by a very neat and correct edition published at Perth, under the inspection and patronage of the Earl of Buchan. It is difficult to ascertain the precise time in which this

poet lived, or when he wrote his history, as the two authors who mention him, speak somewhat differently. Dempster, who wrote in the beginning of the 16th century, says, that he lived in the year 1361; but Major, who was born in the year 1446, says, that he composed his book during the time of his infancy, which we must suppose to have been a few years posterior to 1446; for if it had been composed that very year, the circumstance would probably have been mentioned. As little can we suppose from Mr. Dempster's words, that Harry was born in 1361; for though he says that he lived in that year, we must naturally imagine, rather, that he was come to the years of maturity, or began to distinguish himself in the world, than that he was only born at that time. The author of the Dissertation on his life, prefixed to the new edition of the Poem, endeavours to reconcile matters in the following manner. 'It is not indeed, impossible that he might be born in or about that year, (1361.) In the time of Major's infancy, he might be about 83 years of age—in that case, it may be supposed that it was the work of his old age, to collect and put in order the detached pieces of his history of Wallace, which he had probably composed in those parts of the country, where the incidents were said to have happened.'

We are entirely ignorant of the family, from which Harry was descended; though, from his writings we should be led to suppose that he had received a liberal education. In these, he discovers some knowledge in Divinity, Classical History, and Astronomy, as well

as of the languages. In one place, he boasts of his celibacy, which seems to indicate his having engaged himself in some of the religious orders of that age. From what Major says further of him, we may suppose his profession to be that of a travelling bard; though it does not appear that he was skilled in music, or had any other profession than that just mentioned. His being blind from his birth, indeed, makes this not improbable; though, even this circumstance is not inconsistent with the supposition of his being a religious mendicant. 'The particulars, (says Major) which he heard related by the vulgar, he wrote in the vulgar verse, in which he excelled. By reciting his histories before princes and great men, he gained his food and raiment, of which he was worthy.' It is thus probable that he would be a frequent visitor at the Scottish court; and would be made welcome by those great families, who would boast of any alliance with the hero himself, or took pleasure in hearing his exploits, or those of his companions.

With regard to the authenticity of his histories, Major informs us only, that 'he does not believe every thing he finds in such writings;' but from other testimonies, it appears, that he consulted the very best authorities which could at that time be had. Though, according to the most early account of Harry, it appears to have been at least 56 years after the death of Wallace, that Harry was born; yet, he is said to have consulted with several of the descendants of those who had been the companions of that hero, while he achieved his most celebrated exploits, and who were

still capable of ascertaining the veracity of what he published. The principal of these were Wallace of Craigie, and Liddie of that Ilk; who, he says, persuaded him to omit in his history a circumstance which he ought to have inserted. Besides these he consulted with the principal people of the kingdom; and he utterly disclaims the idea of having adhered entirely to any un-written tradition, or having been promised any reward for what he wrote.

His chief authority, according to his own account, was a Latin history of the exploits of Sir William, written partly by Mr. John Blair, and partly by Mr. Thomas Gray, who had been the companions of the hero himself. Harry's account of these two authors is to the following purpose. 'They became acquainted with Wallace, when the latter was only about 16 years of age, and at that time a student in the school of Dundee; and their acquaintance continued till his death, which happened in his 29th year. Mr. John Blair went from the schools in Scotland, to Paris, where he studied for some time, and received Priest's Orders. He returned to Scotland in 1296, where he joined William Wallace, who was bravely defending the liberties of his country. Mr. Thomas Gray, who was a parson of Liberton, joined Wallace at the same time. They were men of great wisdom and integrity, zealous for the freedom of Scotland, and were present with Wallace, and assistants to him, in most of his military enterprizes. They were also his spiritual counsellors, and administered to him Godly comfort. The history written by these two clergymen was at-

tested by William Sinclair, Bishop of Dunkeld, who had himself been witness to many of Wallace's actions. The Bishop, (if he had lived longer) was to have sent these books to Rome, for the purpose of obtaining the sanction of the Pope's authority.'

The book which Harry thus appeals to, as his principal authority, is now lost, so that we have no opportunity of comparing it with what he has written. The character given by Dempster of Harry, however, is more favourable, than that by Major. He tells us that 'he was blind from his birth; a man of singular and happy genius, he was indeed another Homer. He did great honour to his native country, and raised it above what was common to it in his age. He wrote in the vernacular verse, an elaborate and grand work, in ten books, of the deeds of William Wallace.' In this account there is a mistake, for the Poem contains eleven or twelve books; but Dempster, who wrote in a foreign country, and had not a printed copy of Harry's works by him when he wrote his eulogium, is excusable in a mistake of this kind.

With regard to his poetical merit, it must undoubtedly rank very far below that of Homer; whom, indeed, he scarcely resembles in any other respect, than that he went about as Homer is said to have done, reciting the exploits of the heroes of his country, and that he was blind. In this last circumstance, however, he was still worse than Homer; for Harry was born blind, but Homer became blind after he was advanced in years. The reader will be able to judge how far Harry is entitled to a comparison.

with Homer, from the Poem I refer to.(1) It is a description of the last mournful interview between Wallace and his Wife, which bears a striking resemblance to the parting of Hector and Andromache, in the Iliad of Homer. Hence, Harry even supposing his genius to have been equal to that of Homer, must have lain under great disadvantages, and these are very evident in his works. The descriptive parts are evidently deficient. However, I think the following description of a winter-day has some claim to Poetic merit.

‘ Cold Winter now his hoary aspect shews,
Frost-bound the globe, whilst Boreas fiercely blows;
Sweeping the snow along the rising hills,
Which every glen and slanting hollow fills:
Cold grew the beams of the far distant sun,
And day was finish’d ere ’twas well begun—
Long, dark, and hateful, was the gloomy night,
Uncomfortable to each banished wight,
Who durst not trust a roof to hide his head,
But sculks from hill to hill with cautious dread.’

This passage is followed by another of equal merit.

Valiant Wallace stood,
In shining arms, few were his men, but good;
Not one to seven—now past their power to fly,
Resolved to cut their way, or bravely die:
The hardy chief unsheathed his conqu’ring sword,
Besought the aid of Heaven, then gave the word:
Fiercely he met his bold attacking foes,
And quick as lightning dealt his fatal blows;

With horrid din the tempered edges clash,
On coats of steel whence hasty sparkles flash;
But massy armour and defensive shield,
Must to the nervous arm of Wallace yield,
Like a swoln current rushing from a hill,
Which does with wreck the lower vallies fill:
Thus through the martial press he made a lane,
Who durst oppose—no sooner did, than slain:
Forty of which, unfortunately bold,
With gaping wounds upon the earth lay cold;
Thrice five there fell, of Scotsmen, brave and true,
For great the loss, when good men were so few!
Of rising ground, they had two miles in length,
Before they could arrive at any strength;—
Good hope they had, for day was nigh expired,
But to their grief, ill-fated Faudon tired:
Wallace was loth to leave him on the way,
Lest to approaching foes he'd fall a prey—
Urg'd him to exert his strength with words of love,
But all in vain, no further would he move.
The chief enraged, his sword with fury drew,
And at one stroke the lagging traitor slew:
Backward, a lifeless, headless lump he lay,
While the tynned head babbled its life away.
Just was the act, he was a villain found,
Useful in this, his blood would stop the hound.
Sure proof of falsehood, short way had they gone,
In prime of years, strong muscles clad each bone—
Him thus dispatched, Wallace his followers cheers,
Then sprung the mountain, swift as bounding deers.

The allusions taken principally from the way in which Nature effects those senses, of which he was possessed. Thus, speaking of the month of March, he calls it the month of right digestion, from the supposed fermentation then begun in the earth. Of April, he says that the earth is then able, or has obtained the power of producing its different vegetables; and of this productive power, he appears to have been more sensible, than of the effects which commonly strike us most sensibly. 'By the working of Nature,' (says he) 'the fields are again clothed, and the woods acquire their worthy weed of green. May brings along with it great celestial gladness. The heavenly hues appear upon the tender green.' In another place he describes the Deity of some river, whom he calls, Nymphæus, 'building his bower with oil and balm, filled with sweet odours.' By reason of these disadvantages, he seldom makes use of similies, with which Homer abounds so much; and few miraculous interpositions are to be found in his poems, though, the prophecies of Thomas Lermont, commonly called the Rhymer; and a Prophetic Dream of Wallace himself, are introduced, as well as the Ghost of Faudon, a traitor, who had joined Wallace, and whom the latter, in a fit of passion killed. The circumstances were these, Wallace with a few brave followers was pursued from St. John's town, by the English, who had sent out their blood-hounds to scour the country in quest of the flying patriots.

They at last reached Gaskall, where they determined to stop for the night; after partaking of some

refreshment, their attention is awakened by the sound of a horn. Wallace sends one of his men to inquire into the cause of the alarm, but he not returning, he sends another upon the same errand, his lengthened absence increases the agitation of Wallace's mind, and he dispatches all his followers successively in search of their fellows.

—————Thus he was left alone.

The awful sound increased still more and more;
Louder and louder swell'd the dreadful war,
Which makes him tremble, who ne'er shook }
before ;

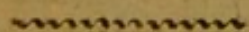
But soon his dauntless soul he did collect,
Then sword in hand, with daring front erect—
Moved to the gate. When to his aw'd surprize,
The frightful Faudon stood before his eyes,
Holding his bloody head in his right hand !
Soon Wallace drew across and made a stand.
At him the apparition threw its head,
Which Wallace caught up by the hair, with speed;
Then threw it back : but dreadful was his fright ;
For well he knew it was some hellish sprite, (flew,
Which mock'd his sword. Straight up the stairs he
And soon himself out of a window, threw ;
Thence up the river hastily he ran,
Never so frightened since he was a man.
Backward he turn'd his eyes from whence he came,
And thought he saw the tower in a flame,
While on the top did frightful Faudon stand,
With a prodigious rafter in his hand.

But, whether vested with compacted air,
In Faudon's shapes some dæmon did appear,
Or if the lingering soul expelled with pain,
Strove to re-animate the corpse again ;
Leave we to those, who with unwearied eye,
Explore the latent depths of dark philosophy.

The same inextinguishable thirst of blood, which Homer ascribes to his hero, Achilles, is ascribed to Wallace; though, in all probability, the mind of Wallace was too much enlightened to admit of such sentiments. A vast degree of courage and personal strength is ascribed to him, by means of which, the exploits of the whole army are in effect transferred to a single person. As long as he is invested with the command, the Scots are victorious, and irresistible; when deprived of it, they are enslaved and undone. Among the many lively descriptions which we meet with in this Poem of Wallace's heroism, and *amor patriæ*, the battle of Biggar (2) affords one of the happiest examples of the kind.

After struggling for some time against an inveterate and powerful faction; disdaining to feign submission, he is taken by treachery, and dies a martyr to the freedom of his country. The Poem, on the whole, is valuable, on account of our being able to trace, by its means, the progress which the English language had made at that time in Scotland; the manners of the Scots in that age, as the favourite dress green, which at that time, was the taste of the inhabitants of Scotland, &c. With regard to the authenticity of his relations, it is impossible to suppose any

other thing, than that they are partly true, and partly false. The general thread of the story, may, undoubtedly be looked upon to be genuine, though embellished with poetical fictions and exaggerations; and his constant appeals to the book already mentioned, though it is now lost, must be looked upon as a strong testimony in its favour: for we cannot suppose that at the time he lived, when we may say that the transactions which he relates, were recent, he would have had the confidence to appeal to a book which had not been generally known to have an existence—and its being now lost can never be any argument against it, when we consider the difficulty there was of preserving books before the invention of Printing; the confusions in which Scotland was frequently involved, and that the exploits of Wallace, who must be supposed to have been a kind of rival to the great Bruce, could not be so agreeable to the court as those of the more successful hero; and therefore the history of them might be suffered to fall into oblivion, though written in elegant Latin, while a most ridiculous poem in that language, on the battle of Bannockburn, has been preserved to this day.



AUTHORITIES.

Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. 18, Edinburgh, 1797...BLIND HARRY'S Life of Wallace, a Poem, Perth edition...WARTON'S History of the English Poetry, vol. the 1st...Miss PORTER'S Scottish Chiefs vol. the 1st.

NOTE (1.)

The parting of WALLACE and his WIFE,

'Twas now the time when all to rest repair,
 And weary wretches laid aside each care,
 When with fond arms the fair Fidelia prest,
 Her panting hero to her snowy breast;
 With grief she found the rising tears bedew
 His manly face, and heard the sighs he drew:
 With frequent sobs, her heaving bosom rose,
 And caught the dear infection of his woes.
 On her pale cheeks does livid paleness rise,
 And Sorrow speaks in silence from her eyes!
 Then with a groan, thus he, 'long I've supprest
 The struggling passion in my labouring breast;
 But now all sad restraints at last give way—
 Fierce Sorrow bids me speak, and I obey;
 Behold our native country drowned in tears,
 Around one general face of woe appears:
 In vain, we're blest with kind indulgent skies,
 And suns in vain with genial ardour rise.
 In vain, a yellow harvest crowns the plain,
 And nodding boughs their golden load sustain.—
 The Peasant comfortless repining stands,
 And sees his harvest reaped by other's hands,
 See the fierce soldier rages o'er the land,
 The flames wide spreading from the hostile band;
 Those shining spires which lately pierc'd the sky,
 Now equal with the ground in ruins lie—
 Oh! dire and curst effects of slavery!
 Yet, once I nobly durst assert her right,
 Bold in her cause, and dauntless in each fight;

But now the useless sword is laid aside,
And my once faithful helm long been untried :
But now the tyrant's power we dare restrain,
And Liberty shall rear her head again—
With fell revenge another war prepare ;
Bend the long un-strung bow, and launch the rusty
spear.

But various cares solicitate my breast,
Invade my heart, and rob my soul of rest ;
While to my drooping mind's prophetic eyes,
A thousand griefs in fatal prospect rise ;—
Methinks I view the cruel raging foes
End that dear life to finish all my woes.
Methinks I see that sacred blood now spilt,
To fill up Hesilrig's black scene of guilt ;
And now to save thee from the coming blow,
And shield thee from the malice of the foe ;
I have prepared, of youth a chosen band,
Ready to march where'er thou shalt command.
Some well built tower, a hospitable seat,
Shall prove from War's alarms, a safe retreat ;
There, nor the Battle's voice shall wound thine ear,
Nor the fierce spoiler, black with guilt appear—
There may thy constant prayers bless my sword,
And waft thy kindest wishes to thy Lord ;
Till circling time bring back the happy day,
When Scotland shall be free from English sway ;
Till her extended plains be called her own,
And yet a Scottish King ascend a Scottish throne.
He said, and ceas'd, nor groan'd, but deep suppress'd,
Each rising passion, in his manly breast ;

But fiercer grief, her tender heart assailed,
 She wept, and the frail woman all at once prevail'd.
 And wilt thou then, she said, and wilt thou go,
 Where thunders call thee, and where battle's

glow,

And leave me here exposed to every foe.

See Hesilrig with lustful rage appears,
 Derides my passion, and insults my fears—

With hasty steps he comes to be possessed,

Or stab his poinard in my hated breast ;

In vain, with piteous shrieks I fill the air,

And stung with sorrow my bare bosom tear,

When he that should revenge me is not near.

Hast thou forgotten how his ruthless sword,

In my dear brother's blood has deep been gored?—

Fired with bright glory's charms both met the foe,

And sunk beneath the mighty warrior's blow ;

'Tis true that fighting for their country's right,

They glorious died, nor recreant left the fight.

But say, in vain, is all this flow of tears,

Fantastic passion a weak woman's fears ;

No Hesilrig untainted with my kindred's stain,

No friends destroyed, and no brother's slain,

Yet, with her Wallace, let his consort go,

Join with his ills sad partnership of woe !

Or if propitious Heaven shall deign to smile,

With faithful love reward my hero's toil.

What though, my tender nerves refuse to bend,

The twanging yew, and the fleet dart to send ;

Round thy distinguished tent, yet will I stay,

And wait impatient, the decisive day,

When Freedom on thy helm shall crested stand,
Nor Fortune linger with her doubtful hand.
But canst thou, thou wilt say, endure alarms,
Hear war's rough voice and th' hoarse sound of arms,
When the big drum and sprightly pipe prepare,
In dreadful harmony to speak the war;
Then shall thy breast with trembling heaving rise,
And female sorrow gather in thine eyes:
But let the War's rude shock assault my ears—
The woman, Wallace, shall throw off her fears.
On this weak breast shall love new force impress,
Nor let that doubt repel my happiness.
But whether can I go, or where retreat,
From following vengeance and impending fate;
Even should I go where dreary caves forlorn;
Horrid with night exclude the joyous morn,
And lonely hermits never cease to mourn;
Yet would keen Hesilrig find out the place,
And in my ruin finish all my race;
What tho' the bounding vessel waft me o'er,
To lands remote, and some far distant shore;
What tho' extended tracts of land and sea,
Divide the War, and my dear Lord from me;
The Wife of Wallace can't be long concealed,
But soon by babbling fame shall stand revealed;
Then take me with thee whate'er chance betide,
Firm to thy cause, and honest I'll abide:
Nor let me mourn alone, when I am left,
Of thee, and every joy with thee bereft!
She said, and wept, nor yet his sorrows rise,
But awful grief sits decent in his eyes:

'Cease, cease!' he cry'd, 'nor urge a vain relief,
 Nor by thy ling'ring doubts increase my grief.
 Now if kind Heaven shall bless my enterprise,
 Nor Fate look on me with her envious eyes;
 In flowing ease shall end her hated strife,
 And joy conduct us to the verge of life;
 But if just Heaven shall otherwise ordain,
 'Tis Heav'n that wills it, why should we complain?'
 Thus while the faithful pair their grief exprest,
 And sooth'd the passions in each other's breast;
 The beauteous morn disclosed its early ray,
 And the grey east shone with the future day.
 The hero rose, and with becoming art,
 Feigns a false joy, at the same time his heart
 Was filled with grief, which touched each tender }
 part :

Then to the fields he went with sorrow fraught,
 While thousand woes surcharg'd each rising thought
 With patriot groans he fills the morning air,
 And spreading both his hands to Heaven, this was
 his Prayer—

Hear me, kind Heaven! if still my feet have trod,
 In virtuous paths, nor devious from my God:
 Since first with floods of tears and constant Prayer,
 My weeping parents gave me to thy care.
 When round my head the guardian angels flew,
 And conscious Heaven approved my little vow;
 That if propitious fate encreased my span,
 And lengthened tender child-hood out to man;
 My country's foes should always feel my might,
 Nor my sword sparkle in another's fight;

Thence soon commenced my woes and hateful strife,
With war embroiled my tender years of life—
Oft has the soldier, under my command,
From slavery base redeemed his native land ;
But now oppressed with foes we droop again,
And panting Liberty forsakes the reign ;—
Yet bold in Virtue's cause, we nobly dare,
To raise the sleeping embers of the war :
No impious itch of empire fires our mind,
Nor are our hearts to these base thoughts inclined :
But our fierce breasts glow with a holy rage,
Thine are the fields we fight and thine the war we
wage :

But if alas ! some unforeseen offence,
Lies latent in the book of Providence,
For which the trembling Scots shall shameful fly,
And leave the field to the fierce enemy ;
Then let me die, preventing all my foes,
And close these eyes, nor see my country's woes.

NOTE (2.)

The Battle of BIGGAR

Now Biggar's plains with armed men are crown'd,
And shining Lances glitter all around ;
The sounding horn and clarions all conspire
To raise the soldier's breast, and kindle up his fire ;
The hero tired of Lanerk's luckless land—
Swift now to Biggar leads his conqu'ring band ;
Each heaving breast with thirst of vengeance glows,
And in their tow'ring hopes already slay their foes.

The careful warrior on a rising ground,
Encamped and saw the dreadful foes around,
Stretched out in wide array along the plain,
And his heart biggens with the glorious scene.
But now the morning in fair beams arrayed,
Rose on the dark and chased the nightly shade ;
Each eager soldier seized his ready shield,
Draws the fierce blade and strides along the field :
In blackening wings extend from left to right,
Condense the war and gather to the fight !
Thick beats each heart, waiting the least command,
And Death stands lingering in the lifted hand.
Wallace then threw around his skilful eyes,
And saw with joy their eager passions rise ;
' To-day, my friends, to-day let's boldly dare,
Each doubtful hazard of the uncertain war ;
Let our fierce swords be deeply drenched in gore,
And then our toils and labour shall be o'er :
See round our heads the guardian angels stand,
And guide the javelin in each eager hand !
To Edward shall they bear the flying dart,
And with the pointed javelin pierce his heart—
Let glorious Liberty each soul inspire,
Raise every heart and rouse the Warrior's fire.'
He said, _____
And kindling into fury rose each breast,
With love of virtue all at once possest—
Eager they thicken on the mountain's brow,
And hang impendant on the plain below ;
The foe surprised, look up and see from far,
The progress of the swift descending war.

They run, they fly, in ranks together close,
And in a steely circle meet their coming foes;
But now the Scottish heroes bend their way,
Where in his tent the royal monarch lay;—
There rose the battle—there the warriors tend,
A thousand deaths on thousand wings ascend;
Swords, spears, and shields, in mix'd confusion glow
The field is swept, and lessens at each blow;
Wallace's helm distinguished from afar,
Tempests the field, and floats amid the war:—
Imperious Death attends upon his sword,
And certain Conquest waits her destined Lord;
Fierce in another quarter, Kent employs,
The wrathful spear, nor fewer foes destroys.
Where'er he conqu'ring turns, recedes the foe,
And thickened troops fly open to his blow;
His bounding courser thundering o'er the plain,
Bears his fierce, rapid Lord o'er hills of slain!
Scarce can the weak retreating Scots withstand,
The mighty sweep of the invader's hand.
Wallace beheld his fainting squadron yield,
And various slaughter spread along the field;
Furious he hastes and heaves his orbed shield;
Resolved in arms to meet his enemy,
Before his spear, they run, they rush, they fly;
And now in equal battle meet the foes—
Long lasts the combat, and resound their blows;
Their dreadful faulchions brandishing on high,
In wary circles heighten to the sky:
With furious ire they run the fields around,
And keen on Death explore each secret wound;

They heave, they pant, they beat in every vein
While death sits idle on the crimson plain.
Long in suspense th' uncertain battle hung,
And Fortune, fickle Goddess doubted long,
On whom she should the laurel wreath bestow,
Whom raise as Conqueror, whom depress as Foe !
At last the hero tired with forc'd delay,
At his full stretch rose, and with mighty sway, }
Bore from the foe his shield's defence away :
Now high in air the shiny sword he rear'd,
Ponderous with fate, the brilliant sword appear'd.
Descending fully it stopped his stifled breath,
Giddy he turns around and reels in death.
The stringy nerves are wrapped around in gore,
And rushing blood distained his armour o'er :
Now all is death and wounds, the crimson plain,
Floats round in blood, and groans beneath its slain ;
Promiscuous crowds one common ruin share,
And Death alone employs the wasteful war ;
They trembling fly, by conqu'ring Scots oppress,
And the broad ranks of battle lie defaced :
A false usurper sinks in every foe,
And Liberty returns with every blow !
Before their prince, the mangled subject's die,
The slaughter swells and groans ascend the sky :
The king beholds with sad astonished eyes,
The havoc of the various battle rise :
Unable to sustain, fain would he stay,
And yet again retrieve the vanquished day.
At last behind his back he throws the shield,
Spurs on his rapid steed—forsakes the field ;

The Scots pursue and follow fast behind,
The rattling noise swells dreadful in the wind ;
With grief Longcastle saw the foul retreat,
Restrained their flight, and durst prolong their fate;
' Whence do our hearts this coward terror know ?
Defeat ne'er stained our conquering arms till now :
Stay, recreant stay, nor thus ignobly fly,
But bravely conquer, or yet bravely die.'
Scarce had he spoke, when quivering all with fear,
' Scaped from the foe, two fugie friends appear :
' Stop, stop ! they cry'd, your hasty flight restrain,
And with sweet vengeance meet your foes again :
Opprest with wine the Scottish heroes lie,
And feel the soft effects of luxury ;—
With ease we may return again, and spread
The crimson plain around with heaps of dead ;'
Longcastle took the word, and led them on,
Resolved to fight, with ardent haste they run.
The Scottish watchmen from afar descried,
The rallying foe, and quick to Wallace cried ;
He seized his horn and gave the signal sound.
The summoned soldiers gather fast around ;
A fiercer fury kindles in their eyes,
And once again their mad'ning passions rise ;
So Triton, when at Neptune's high command,
He heaves the swelling surge above the land ;
When with full breath he bids the tempest roar,
And dash the sounding billows to the shore :
His angry waves the wrinkled Seas deform,
They rise—they roar—and blacken to a storm ;

A marish now does either host divide,
Eager they view and frown from either side ;
But the fierce Duke unable to restrain,
His rising passion, gave it the full rein ;
And first encouraging his troops around,
He spurs his thundering steed, and dares the faith-
less ground.

All plunge at once, resound the assaulted skies,
And thousands sink doomed ne'er again to rise ;
The thundering coursers roar, and neigh aloud,
And then with foamy rage o'erlay the crowd ;
While those who struggling with the miry tide,
And with strong sinews gain the further side ;
Though landed, only meet a change of death,
By the fierce Scots deprived of fleeting breath.
But now Longcastle gained the drier land,
And plunging stood upon the shoaly strand ;
Graham soon perceiv'd, and hast'ning aim'd a blow,
And with his sword received the rising foe ;—
Back sinks the found'ring courser down again,
O'erlays his Lord, he tumbles 'mid the slain.
Thus Edward the important day has lost,
And to his Kingdom leads his remnant host ;
While the glad nation smiles in Liberty,
And send their humble thanks to Heaven with joy.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF
J O H N,
THE
BLIND KING OF BOHEMIA,

*Who was Slain in the Memorable Battle of CRESSY,
26th of August, 1346.*

‘ The Prince succeeds, and on her brazen prow,
The Noble Edward raised his princely brow ;
In sable arms he marched, while o’er his head,
Bohemia’s triple plume its glories shed ;—
Soft as the new-formed wreath of Alpine snow,
White as the feath’ry surge that foamed below ;
The sword that widowed France on Cressy’s day,
Again to conquest cuts its wonted way.’

SWIFT says, that 'blindness is an inducement to courage, because it hides from us the danger which is before us.' How far the Dean may be right in his opinion, I shall not pretend to judge, but that blind men now possess this virtue, (if a virtue it may be called) as much as any of their predecessors, may be easily seen from the following anecdotes.

Many of them have braved all the dangers of the field, in some of the greatest battles that ever were fought in Europe, viz. the siege of Constantinople, by the Venetians, the battle of Falkirk, and the memorable battle of Cressy. This engagement commenced at three o'Clock in the afternoon, and continued till night put an end to the carnage. The greater part of the nobility of France and Germany, fell in the contest. Among the slain, were two Kings, James of Majorca, and John of Bohemia, The death of the latter, was attended by some remarkable circumstances. He had for a long time been blind. Anxious to know how the battle went, he commanded his attendants to lead him forward; for this purpose, he was placed between two of them, and their bridles were tied to his, so that in the heat of the action they might not be separated, and next morning, they were all three found dead together. Barnes, in his life of Edward the III. gives a more particular account than any other Historian I have met with: I will give it in his own words.

'Marquess Charles elect emperor, resisted the prince with great courage; but his banner being beaten to the ground, his men slain about him, and himself wounded in three places of his body, though not without much difficulty, turned his horse and rode out of the field, having cast away his coat-armour, that he might not be known. Meanwhile, his father, John, King of Bohemia, who was son to the noble Emperor, Henry of Luxemburgh, although blind with age, when he understood how the day was like to go, asked of his Captains, 'what was become of the Lord Charles, his Son;' they told him, 'they knew not, but that they supposed him somewhere in the heat of Action.' Then the good old King, resolving, by no means, to disgrace his former Victories, and cancel the glory of his youth by a degenerate old age, said unto them, 'Gentlemen, you are my men, my companions and friends in this expedition. I only now desire this last piece of service from you, that you would bring me forward so near to these Englishmen, that I may deal among them one good stroak with my sword.' They all said, they would obey him to the death, and lest by any extremity they should be separated from him, they all with one consent, tied the reins of their horses one to another, and so attended their royal Master into Battle.'

There this valiant old hero had his desire, and came boldly up to the Prince of Wales, and gave more than one, or four, or five good stroaks, and fought courageously, as also did all his Lords, and others about him; but they engaged themselves so far, that

there they were all slain, and next day found dead about the body of their King, and their horses bridles tied together. Then were the Arms of that Noble King, (being the Ostrich Feathers, with the motto *ICH DIED* signifying *I serve*) taken and worn by the Prince of Wales, in whose memory they have been ever since called the Prince's Arms, being also from that time worn by his successors, Princes of Wales, eldest sons of the Kings of England.'

AUTHORITIES.

BARNES's Life of Edward the 3rd...HUME's England. vol. the 2nd.

ANECDOTE
OF
JOHN GONELLI,

The Blind Sculptor.

~~~~~

‘From theme to theme my wandering muse retire,  
And the dumb shew of breathing rocks admire!  
Where the smooth chizzel all its force has shewn,  
And softened into flesh the rugged stone.’

~~~~~

The following anecdote respecting JOHN GONELLI, surnamed the Blind of Cambassi, from the place of his birth in Tuscany, is taken from the Article Blind, in the Edinburgh Encyclopædia. ‘He was a Scholar of Pietro Iacca, and discovered genius, but lost his sight at the age of 20. The statue of Cosmo, 1st. Grand Duke of Tuscany, was performed by him after he became blind, and he had equal success in various other works of the same nature.

He died at Rome under the Pontificate of Urban the VIII. We read also of a celebrated blind Sculptor, who took the likeness of the Duke of Bracciano in a dark cellar, by means of moulding the Face with wax; and made a Marble statue of King Charles the 1st. of England, with great elegance and justness.’

~~~~~

AUTHORITY...Edinburgh Encyclopædia.



## MECHANICAL BLINDNESS.

---

It has often been contended that the Dumb are less happy than the Blind. However this may be, certain it is, that privation of sight does not cramp the mental powers. The following instance of the mechanical genius of Blind Macguire, is no less wonderful than true. 'The late family tailor of Mr. M'Donald of Clanronald, in Invernesshire, lost his sight 15 years before his death, yet, he still continued to work for the family as before, not indeed with the same expedition, but with equal correctness. It is well known how difficult it is to make a Tartan Dress, because every stripe and colour, (of which there are many) must fit each other with mathematical exactness: hence it is, that very few tailors, who enjoy their sight, are capable of executing that task. Blind Macguire having received orders to make for Mr. M'Donald, (his Master's Brother, who was lately returned from India,) a complete suit of Tartan, within a given time, proceeded to work without delay. It so happened, that this gentleman passed at a late hour, at night, through the room where the blind tailor was working, and hearing some low singing, he asked, 'Who's



there,' to which the poor blind tailor answered, 'I am here, working at your honour's Hose!!' 'How,' said he, forgetting that Macguire was blind. 'Can you work without a candle!' 'O! please your honour,' rejoined the tailor, 'midnight darkness is the same to me as noon-day.' It was said that Macguire could, by the sense of touch, distinguish all the colours of the Tartan.

---

AUTHORITY...Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society.



A SHORT ACCOUNT

OF

J O H N G O W E R,

*One of our most ancient English Poets, cotemporary  
with Chaucer, and his intimate Friend.*



'But age has rusted what the Poet writ;  
Worne out his language, and obscured his wit:  
In vain he jests in his unpolished strain,  
And tries to make his readers laugh in vain.



Of what family, or in what county this Poet was born, is uncertain. He studied the Law, and was sometime a member of the Society of Lincoln's Inn, where his acquaintance with Chaucer began. Some have asserted that he was a Judge, but this is by no means certain. In the first year of Henry the 4th. he became blind, a misfortune which he laments in one of his Latin Poems. He died in the year 1402, and was buried in Saint Mary Overie; which Church he had rebuilt chiefly at his own expense, so that he must have lived



in affluent circumstances. His tomb was magnificently and curiously ornamented. It still remains, but hath been repaired in latter times: From the collar of S. S. round the neck of his effigies, which lies upon the tomb, it is conjectured that he had been knighted. As to his character as a man it is impossible, at this distance of time, to say any thing with certainty. With regard to his Poetical talents, he was certainly admired at the time when he wrote, though a modern reader may find it difficult to discover much harmony or genius in any of his compositions. He wrote first *Speculum Meditantis*, in French in ten books. There are two copies of this in the Bodleian library—2 *Vox-clamantis*, in Latin verse, in seven books, preserved also in the Bodleian library, and in that of All-souls. It is a chronicle of the insurrection of the commons in the reign of Richard the 2nd. The first Edition of *Confessio Amantis*, was printed at Westminster, by Caxton in 1493; and the second and third Edition was printed in London, in the years 1532, and 1554. It is a sort of practical system of morality, interspersed with a variety of moral tales, 4to. *Devege Henrico*, 4to. printed in Chaucer's Works. There are likewise several historical tracts, in M. S. written by our Author, which are to be found in different libraries; also some short poems printed in Chaucer's Works.



## AUTHORITIES.

Encyclopædia Britannica... Warton's History of the English Poetry.



AN ACCOUNT  
OF  
NATHANIEL PRICE,  
THE BLIND BOOKBINDER.

---

NATHANIEL PRICE, late Bookseller of Norwich, who on quitting business in that city, exported goods to a considerable amount from London to America, and on his voyage thither, lost his sight in consequence of a severe cold. After much distress and fatigue, he at length arrived in his native country, after an absence of nearly five years.

This remarkable man makes every part of his dress, from the shoes on his feet, to the hat on his head. He has since his loss of sight followed the employment of a Bookbinder, and bound several books in the first style: and is indeed, the first instance of a blind man being capable of binding books, that I have ever heard of. As a proof of his abilities, there is a quarto Bible elegantly bound by him, which is now in the Marquis of Blandford's library, Sion-hill, in Oxfordshire. Strange, as this may appear to those unacquainted with the extraordinary genius possessed by many of the blind, this account has been credited by several respectable people, with whom the Author is acquainted, and on whose veracity the reader may place implicit confidence.



*THE LIFE*  
*OF*  
**TURLAGH CAROLAN,**  
The celebrated  
*Irish Poet and Musician.*

~~~~~  
'Then happy Bard! awake thy fire—
Awake the heart-string of thy lyre:—
Invoke thy muse. Thy muse appears;
But robed in sorrow, bathed in tears.
No blithesome tale, alas! she tells;—
No glories of the 'hall of shells:'
No joy she whispers to the lays—
No note of love, no note of praise.'

~~~~~

CAROLAN was one of the last, and most celebrated of the Irish Bards, whose compositions have been as much admired for their extraordinary variety, as for their exquisite melody; he is said to have composed upwards of four hundred pieces. This account however, is perhaps exaggerated, but be this as it may, our



National Music has been greatly enriched by his productions: but it was not only in the composition of Music that he distinguished himself; his Poetry is also fine, for he wrote according to Nature, and to use the language of an ingenious author. 'His compositions are like the dreams of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul.' I am sorry to say that we know but little of the history of this extraordinary genius. It appears that he spent his life as an itinerant Musician, and was made welcome at the houses of the great, and there with the tales of other days enlivened the convivial hours. It reflects no great credit on the times in which Carolan lived, that he was suffered to live in poverty, and die in obscurity; but it has too frequently been the lot of great geniuses to meet with neglect while living, and when dead to be lamented, and admired; as if mankind knew not their value until they were gone, and posterity were willing to compensate for the injuries they had experienced through life, by erecting to their memories splendid monuments. A trifle bestowed on them while living, and starving in an empty garret, would have rendered them more essential service than all the sums lavished on the decorations of Westminster-Abbey, to which they are insensible.

This celebrated Poet and Musician, was born in the year 1670, in the village of Nobber, in the County of Westmeath, on the lands of Carolan's town, which were wrested from his ancestors, by the family of the Nugents, on their arrival in this Kingdom. His Father was a poor farmer, the humble proprietor of a few



acres, which yielded him a scanty subsistence. Of his Mother, nothing is known. The cabbin, in which our Bard was born, is still pointed out to the inquisitive traveller. As it is in a ruinous state, it must soon become a prey to all-devouring time; yet the spot on which it stands may perhaps be visited at a future day, with as much true devotion, by the lovers of National Music, as are Stratford and Benfield, by the admirers of Shakespeare and Pope.

The small-pox deprived him of his sight, at so early a period of his life, that he retained no recollection of colours. Thus was 'knowledge at one entrance quite shut out,' before he had taken even a cursory view of Nature. From this misfortune he felt no uneasiness; 'my eyes,' he used to say, 'are transplanted to my ears.' His musical talents were soon discovered, and his friends determined to cultivate them. About the age of twelve, a proper master was engaged to instruct him in the practice of the Harp; but though fond of that instrument, he never struck it with a master's hand. Genius and diligence are seldom united, and it is practice alone, which can perfect us in any art. Yet his Harp was rarely unstrung, but in general, he used it only to assist him in composition; his fingers wandered through the strings in quest of melody. When young Carolan became enamoured of Miss Bridget Cruise, of Cruisetown, in the County of Longford, his Harp now, like the lute of Anacreon, would only sound of love. Though this lady did not give him her hand, yet, it is supposed she did not deny him her heart, or perhaps, as a brother Poet says.—



‘Like Phœbus thus acquiring unsought praise,  
He snatched at love, and filled his arms with bays.’

The song which bears her name is considered his master-piece, it came warm from his heart while his genius was in full vigour. A very extraordinary instance of the effects of Carolan’s passion for this lady is related by Mr. O’Connor. He went once on a pilgrimage to St. Patrick’s Purgatory, a cave in an island in Loughdearg, in the County of Donegall. On his return to shore, he met several Pilgrims waiting the arrival of the boat that conveyed him. In assisting some of these devout travellers to get on board, he chanced to take a lady’s hand, and instantly exclaimed, ‘by the head of my Gossip, this is the hand of Bridget Cruise.’ His sense of feeling had not deceived him. It was the hand of her whom he had once adored. ‘I had this anecdote from his own mouth,’ says the person by whom it is recorded; ‘and in terms which gave me a strong impression of the emotions which he felt on meeting the object of his early affections. Carolan at this time was about the middle of his earthly career.’

Our Bard solaced himself for the loss of Miss Cruise in the arms of Mary Maguire, a young lady of good family in the County of Fermanagh. Miss Maguire proved a proud and extravagant dame; but she was the wife of his choice; he loved her tenderly, and lived harmoniously with her. It is probable that on his marriage, he fixed his residence on a small farm near Moss-hill, in the County of Leitrim. Here he built a neat little house, where he gave



every friend a kind and hearty welcome. Hospitality consumed the produce of his little farm; he ate, drank, and was merry, and improvidently left to-morrow to provide for itself. This sometimes occasioned embarrassments in his domestic affairs, but he had no friend to remind him, that nothing can supply the want of prudence, and that negligence and irregularity long continued, will make knowledge and wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.

At what period of his life Carolan became an itinerant Musician, is not known, nor is it consistently told whether he was urged to this change in his manner of living by want, or induced by his fondness for music. By some of his biographers it has been imputed to an early disappointment in love: however this may be, he continued during the remainder of his life to travel through the country in this character, mounted on a good horse, attended by a domestic, on another, who carried his Harp. Wherever he went, the gates of the nobility and gentry were thrown open to him; he was received with respect, and a distinguished place assigned him at the table.

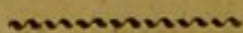
On his return from one of those excursions, he was asked by one of his friends whether he had visited Colonel Archdall? 'No,' replied the Bard emphatically, 'but I visited a Prince;' thus intimating the hospitable reception this gentleman had given him. But he had not more reason to extoll the hospitality of Colonel Archdall, than that of Mr. Jones of Moneyglass, in the County of Antrim; nor was he deficient in gratitude for the civilities he received du-



ring his stay in that mansion: he has enshrined his hospitable character in one of his best Planxties. Of this, the air alone is now to be had; the words are forgotten since the well known English version, written by Arthur Dawson, Esq. which may be looked upon as one of the best convivial drinking songs extant; and is also admirably adapted to the original air of Carolan. It is in every body's hand, and therefore needless to be quoted here.

It was during his peregrinations that Carolan composed all those airs, which are still the delight of his countrymen. He thought the tribute of a song due to every house in which he was entertained, and he never failed to pay it, choosing for his subject either the head of the family, or one of the loveliest of its branches.

The subject of one of his favourite and most admired compositions, was a sister of a Mr. Nugent. She lived with one of her sisters, near Belanagar, in the county of Roscommon, at the time she inspired the Bard, and he endeavoured to do justice to her merits, in the song now well known by the name of Gracey Nugent. As it may gratify some of my readers, I shall here insert a translation.



### SONG—GRACEY NUGENT.



With delight I will sing of the maid,  
Who, in beauty and wit doth excell;



My Gracey the fairest shall lead,  
And from beauties shall bear off the bell.

Beside her, by day and by night,  
No care and no sorrow I'll know ;  
But I'll think on her form with delight,  
And her ringlets that beautifully flow.

Her neck to the swan's I'll compare,  
Her face to the brightness of day ;  
And is he not blest who shall share  
In the beauties her bosom display.

Your wit is uncommonly drest,  
Your eyes shed a lustre most rare ;  
But what I like, and all like the best,  
Is that bosom which shines thro' your hair.

'Tis thus the fair maid I commend,  
Whose words are than music more sweet ;  
No bliss can on woman attend,  
But with thee dearest Gracey we meet.

Your beauties should still be my song,  
But my glass I devote now to thee ;  
May the health that I wish thee, be long,  
And if sick, be it love-sick for me.

The following incident gave birth to the piece called Carolan's devotion. A Miss Fetherston of the County of Longford, on her way to Church, in Granard, one Sunday accidentally met with the Bard, when the following conversation, as related by a friend of both parties, took place.—



Miss Fetherston. Your servant Mr. Carolan.

Carolan. I thank you. Who speaks to me?

Miss F. It is I, sir, one Miss Fetherston.

Car. I have heard of you Madam—a young lady of great beauty and much wit. The loss of one sense prevents me from beholding your beauty, and I believe it is a happy circumstance for me, as it has made many captives. But your wit madam, I dread it.

Miss F. Had I wit, Mr. Carolan, this is not a day for displaying any; it should give place to the duty of Prayer. I apprehend that in complying with this duty, you go one way and I go another. I wish I could prevail on you to quit your way for mine.

Car. Should I go your way, Madam, I dread you yourself would be the chief object of my devotion.

Miss F. And what if I should go your way Carolan?

Car. I have already declared the sense of my danger in being near you. I well know that the power which some men have of making female converts to their religion, can have no effect in regard to you Madam. Your own inherent powers would conquer every thing. In a Church or in a Mass-house you would draw all the devotion to yourself; and so Madam, in my own defence I must now take my flight.

Miss F. Hold Carolan, we must not part so abruptly; as I have been long charmed with your compositions in music, I could wish to see you in our house, and that your visit would be as speedy as possible.

Car. Could you, Madam, suspend the music of your wit, I should obey your commands-cheerfully.



Miss F. Away with your mockery of wit and danger. In listening to your notes, the danger will be on my side. Come speedily however.

Car. To please you Madam, is the utmost I can expect; and on the terms I proposed, I will wait on you.

Miss F. You will assuredly be welcome, but pray for me where you are going.

Car. Could I withdraw my devotion from yourself, I would obey; but I will make the best effort I can—adieu.

The event justified his fears; instead of praying for Miss Fetherston, he neglected his religious duties to compose a song on her. In it he complains with more gallantry, than piety, that the Mass is no longer his devotion, but that now his devotion is she. The air of this song is reckoned among one of the best of his musical compositions.

It is remarkable that in his gayest mood, and even when his genius was the most inspired by the flowing bowl, he never could compose a Planxty for a Miss Brett, in the County of Sligo, whose father's house he frequented, and where he always met with a reception, due to his taste and endowments. One day after an unsuccessful attempt to compose something in a sprightly strain for this lady, he threw aside his Harp in a mixture of rage and grief, and addressing himself in Irish, to her mother—'Madam said he,' I have often from my great respect to your family, attempted a Planxty in order to celebrate your daughter's perfections, but to no purpose. Some evil



genius hovers over me. There is not a string in my Harp that does not vibrate a melancholy sound, when I set about this task. I fear she is not doomed to remain long amongst us ; ' may be ' added he emphatically, ' she will not survive twelve months.' The event verified his melancholy prediction. The truth of this anecdote has been attested by several of the family.

From a neglect in his education, Carolan at an early period of life, contracted a fondness for spirituous liquors, which never forsook him ; but inordinate gratifications carry their punishment with them ; nor was Carolan exempt from this general imposition. His physicians assured him that unless he corrected this habit, a scurvy, which was the consequence of his intemperance, would soon put an end to his mortal career. He obeyed, though with reluctance, and seriously resolved upon never again tasting the forbidden cup. The town of Boyle, in the County of Roscommon, was at that time his principal place of residence. There, while under this severe regimen, he walked, or rather wandered about. His usual gaiety forsook him. No sallies of a lively imagination broke out. Every moment was marked with a dejection of spirits, bordering on the deepest melancholy, and his favourite Harp, lay in an obscure corner of his habitation, neglected and unstrung. Passing by a grocer's shop in the town, after a six weeks quarantine, he was tempted to step in, undetermined whether to yield to the impulse of the moment, or adhere to his late resolution. ' Well my dear friend ' said he, to the



young man who stood behind the counter, 'you see I am a man of constancy; for six long weeks I have abstained from whiskey, was there ever such an instance of self-denial?' 'But a thought strikes me—you will surely not refuse the favour I am about to solicit. Bring me a measure of my favourite liquor, that I may smell it, and I assure you I will not put it within my lips.' The lad complied with his request, and no sooner did the fumes ascend into his brain, than every latent spark within him was re-kindled: his countenance glowed with unusual brightness, and he poured out the expressions of a heart newly animated, in wild, but Poetic expressions over the bowl, to which he owed his inspiration. At length, to the great peril of his health, and contrary to the advice of his medical friends, he once more drank the prohibited beverage, renewing the draught until his spirits had fully resumed their former tone.

He immediately set about composing that much admired song, which goes by the name of CAROLAN'S RECEIPT. For sprightliness of sentiment and harmony of numbers, it stands unrivalled in the list of our best drinking songs. He commenced the words and began to modulate the air in the evening, at Boyle, and before the following morning, he sung and played this noble effusion of his imagination, in Mr. Stafford's parlour, at Elphin.



CAROLAN'S RECEIPT.

---

When by sickness, or sorrow assailed,  
To the mansion of Stafford I hied ;  
His advice or his cordial ne'er failed,  
To relieve me, nor e'er was denied.

At midnight our glasses went round,  
In the morning a cup he would send ;  
By the force of his wit he had found,  
That my life did on drinking depend.

With the spirit of Whiskey inspired,  
By my Harp e'en the power is confest ;  
'Tis then that my genius is fired !—  
'Tis then I sing sweetest and best.

Ye friends and ye neighbours draw near,  
Attend to the close of my song ;—  
Remember if life you hold dear,  
That drinking your life will prolong.

Yet, notwithstanding his inordinate passion for spirituous liquors, it is but justice to mention that he seldom drank to excess ; besides that, he seemed to think that the spirits of whiskey assisted him in his musical compositions ; and therefore in his latter days, he never composed without having a bottle of it beside him.

To deny Carolan his favourite beverage, was a certain method of rousing his satire. Residing for sometime in the house of a parsimonious lady, he



happened one day as he sat playing on his Harp, to hear the butler unlock the cellar door. He instantly arose, and following the man, requested a cup of beer; but the fellow thrust him rudely out of the cellar, declaring he would give him nothing but by his Mistress's order. In a rage the insulted Bard composed the following epigram.—

‘What a pity hell’s-gates are not kept by O’Flinn,  
So surly a dog would let no-body in.’

The fame of Carolan as a musician having reached the ears of an eminent Italian music master, in Dublin, he put his abilities to a severe test, the result of which convinced him, how well founded had been the report of his musical talents. The method he made use of was as follows. He singled out an elegant piece of music in the Italian stile; but here, and there, he either altered or mutilated the piece, in such a manner, however, that no one but a real judge could detect the alterations.

Carolan bestowed the deepest attention on the performer while he was playing it, not knowing it was intended as a trial of his skill; and that the critical moment was now at hand, which was to determine his reputation for ever. He declared it to be an excellent piece of music; but, to the astonishment of all present, said very humorously in his own language, ‘here and there, it limps and stumbles.’

He was requested to rectify the errors, which he accordingly did. In this state the piece was sent from Connaught to Dublin, and the Italian no sooner saw



the amendment, than he pronounced Carolan to be a true musical genius.

Another anecdote of the kind is also recorded of him. In the beginning of the 17th century, Lord Mayo brought from Dublin, a celebrated Italian performer, to spend sometime with him at his seat in the country. Carolan, who at that time was on a visit at his Lordship's, found himself greatly neglected, and complained of it one day in the presence of the foreigner. 'When you play in as masterly a manner as he does,' replied his Lordship, 'you shall not be overlooked.' Carolan wagered with the musician, who is said to have been the famous Geminianni, that though he was a total stranger to Italian music; yet, he would follow him in any piece he played, and that he himself would play a voluntary, in which the Italian could not follow him. The proposal was acceded to, and Carolan was victorious.

But Carolan's muse was not always employed in extolling the great, in praising beauty, or in heightening the mirth of a convivial hour; it was sometimes devoted to the service of his God. He has frequently assisted with his voice and his Harp, at the ELEVATION of the Host; and has composed several pieces of Church music, which are deemed excellent. 'On Easter-day,' says a person who resided all his life in that part of the country; 'I heard him play a piece of his sacred music at Mass;' he called it GLORIA IN EXCELSIS, and he sung that hymn in Irish. While he played at the Lord's prayer he stopped, and after the Priest ended



it he sung again, and played a piece which he denominated the RESURRECTION.

The enthusiasm of his devotion affected the whole Congregation. This enthusiasm was very much increased by an idea he had conceived, that he was inspired during the composition of these devotional pieces.

The period was now approaching when Carolan's feelings were to receive a violent shock. In the year 1733, the wife of his bosom was torn from him by the hand of Death. This melancholy event threw a gloom over his mind, that was never after entirely dissipated. As soon as the transports of his grief had a little subsided, he composed A MONODY to her memory, now known by the name of MARY MAGUIRE, of which I subjoin a translation.

---

MONODY ON THE DEATH OF  
*Mary Maguire.*

---

Were mine the choice of intellectual fame,  
Of skilfull song and eloquence divine,  
Painting's sweet power, Philosophy's pure flame,  
And Homer's lyre, and Ossian's Harp were mine;  
The splendid arts of Erin, Greece and Rome,  
In Mary lost would lose their wonted grace—  
All would I give to snatch her from the tomb,  
Again to fold her in my fond embrace.



Desponding, sick, exhausted with my grief,  
Awhile the founts of sorrow cease to flow—  
In vain I rest, nor sleep brings no relief—  
Cheerless, companionless, I wake to woe!  
Nor birth nor beauty shall again allure,  
Nor fortune win me to another bride;  
Alone I'll wander, and alone endure,  
Till death restore me to my dear one's side.

Once every thought and every scene was gay,  
Friends, mirth, and music, all my soul employ'd;  
Now doomed to mourn my last sad years away!  
My life a solitude, my heart a void—  
Alas, the change! to change again no more,  
For every comfort is with Mary fled,  
And ceaseless anguish shall her loss deplore,  
Till age and sorrow join me with the dead.

Adieu! each gift of Nature and of Art,  
That erst adorned me in life's earliest prime,  
The cloudless temper and the social heart—  
The soul ethereal, and the flight sublime;  
Thy loss, my Mary chased them from my breast!  
Thy sweetness cheers, thy judgement aids no  
more;  
The Muse deserts a heart with grief opprest—  
And lost is every joy that charmed before.

Carolan did not long continue in this vale of sorrow after the death of his beloved wife. While on a visit at the house of a Mrs. M'Dermott, of Alderford in the County of Roscommon, he died in March 1738,



in the 68th year of his age. He was interred in the parish church of Kilronan, in the diocese of Ardagh ; but no memorial exists of the spot in which he was laid. His grave was, and perhaps is still known to a few of his admirers, and some of the neighbouring peasants ; and his scull was long distinguished from those of others, which were promiscuously scattered through the church-yard, by a perforation in the forehead, through which a small piece of ribbon is drawn.

He had seven children by his wife—six daughters and one son. His son who had studied music, went to London, where he taught the Irish Harp ; before his departure, he published in the year 1747, a collection of his father's Music, omitting through mercenary motives, some of his best pieces. It was republished in Dublin, by John Lee, in 1780.

It is much to be wished that a complete collection of the musical compositions of this interesting character, had been given to the public. Many, it is to be feared are now irrecoverably lost. Many others are in danger of experiencing the same fate, unless preserved by the *National Spirit*, which after being so long curbed and repressed, is now appearing to revive. To this wish might also be added another, of having a more complete and authentic history of his life, than can at present be collected from the imperfect and sometimes contradictory accounts, that have been handed down, mostly by oral tradition. I shall here subjoin a character of the Bard, from the elegant pen of Mr. O'Connor.



‘Very few have I known who had a more vigorous mind, but a mind undisciplined, through the defect, or rather the absence of cultivation. Absolutely the child of Nature, he was governed by the indulgencies, and at times by the caprices of that mother. His imagination, ever on the wing, was eccentric in its Poetic flight; yet, as far as that faculty can be employed in the Harmonic Art, it was steady and collected. In the variety of his musical numbers, he knew how to make a selection, and was seldom content with mediocrity—so happy, so elevated was he in some of his compositions, that he excited the wonder, and obtained the approbation of a great master who never saw him; ‘I mean Geminiani.’

‘He outstripped his predecessors in the three species of composition used among the Irish; but he never omitted giving due praise to several of his countrymen, who excelled before him in his Art. The Italian compositions he preferred to all others; Vivaldi charmed him; and with Corelli he was enraptured. He spoke elegantly in his *Maternal language*, but advanced in years before he learned English; he delivered himself but indifferently in that language, and yet he did not like to be corrected in his solecisms. It need not be concealed that he indulged himself in the use of spirituous liquors. This habit, he thought, or affected to think, added strength to the flights of his genius; but, in justice, it must be observed that he seldom was surprised by intoxication.

‘Constitutionally pious, he never omitted daily Prayer, and fondly imagined himself inspired, when



he composed some pieces of Church Music. This idea contributed to his devotion and thanksgiving; and, in this respect, his enthusiasm was harmless, and perhaps useful. Gay by nature, and cheerful from habit, he was a pleasing member of society; and his habits, and his morality, procured him esteem and friends every where.'

Carolan, seems to have been born to render the termination of his order memorable and brilliant. If we reflect on the disadvantages under which he laboured; born blind, with slender opportunities of acquiring ideas; the inhabitant of a country desolated by a civil War; the flames of which had scarcely subsided, and to add to this, his own propensity to idleness and dissipation, we cannot but be astonished at the prodigious powers of his mind. He has occasionally tried almost every stile in music;—the Elegiac, the Festive, the Amorous, and Sacred; and has so much excelled in each, that we scarcely know to which of them his genius is best adapted. His first composition was Amorous and Plaintive—called, 'BRIDGET CRUISE,' addressed to a lady, to whom he was tenderly attached without the hope of success. He is said to have dedicated fifteen pieces to her—the first was originally imperfect, or the copy procured of it so corrupt, that a bass could not be adapted to it.

His last tune was inscribed to his Physician, Dr. Stafford. He composed the FAIRY QUEEN, ROSE DILLON, and other of his SERIOUS PIECES, early in life; but after having established a reputation, and addicted himself too much to festive



company, and the bottle: he dedicated his time to the composition of his Planxties, which required no labour or assiduity. We may form some idea of the fertility of his genius, from this circumstance, that one Harper who attended the Belfast meeting, and who had never seen him, or was taught directly by any person who had an opportunity of copying from him, had acquired upwards of an hundred of his tunes, which he said constituted but a very inconsiderable part of the real number.

As Carolan never taught any itinerant pupils, except his own son, (who had no musical genius) and as we have never heard that any of his pieces were committed to writing, until several years after his death, when young Carolan, under the patronage of Dr. Delany, edited a small volume; we need not wonder if nine tenths of the whole be irreparably lost.

In Carolan's Concerto, and in his Madame Cole, the practitioner will perceive evident imitations of Correlli, in which the exuberant fancy of that admired composer, is happily copied. As an additional proof of his poetic talents, I give the following song, translated by Miss Brooke.

---

### SONG—MABLE KELLY.

(*By Carolan.*)

---

The youth whom favouring Heavens decree  
To join his fate, my fair! with thee;  
And see that lovely head of thine,  
With fondness on his arm recline:



No thought but joy can fill his mind,  
Nor any care can entrance find;  
Nor sickness hurt, nor terror shake,  
And Death will spare him for thy sake.

For the bright flowing of thy hair,  
That decks a face so heavenly fair;  
And a fair form to match that face,  
The rival of the Cygnet's grace.

When with calm dignity she moves,  
Where the clear stream her hue improves;  
Where she her snowy bosom laves,  
And floats majestic, on the waves.

Grace gave thy form, in beauty gay,  
And ranged thy teeth in bright array;  
All tongues with joy thy praises tell,  
And love delights with thee to dwell.

To thee harmonious powers belong,  
That add to verse the charms of song;  
Soft melody with numbers join,  
And make the Poet half divine.

As when the softly blushing rose,  
Close by some neighbouring lilly grows;  
Such is the glow thy cheeks diffuse,  
And such their bright and blended hues!

The timid lustre of thine eye,  
With Nature's purest tints can vie;  
With the sweet Blue-bell's azure gem,  
That droops upon its modest stem!



The Poets of Ierni's plains,  
To thee devote their choicest strains ;  
And oft their Harps for thee are strung,  
And oft thy matchless charms are sung.

The voice that binds the listening soul,  
That can the wildest rage control ;  
Bid the fierce Crane its powers obey,  
And charm him from his finny prey.

Nor doubt I, of its wonderful art ;  
Nor hear with unimpassioned heart—  
Thy health, thy beauties ever dear,  
Oft crown my glass with sweetest cheer !

Since the famed Fair of ancient days,  
Whom Bards and Worlds conspired to praise ;  
Not one like thee has since appeared,  
Like thee, to every heart endeared.

How blest the Bard, O lovely maid !  
To find thee in thy charms arrayed !—  
Thy pearly teeth, thy flowing hair,  
Thy neck, beyond the cygnet, fair.

As when the simple birds, at night,  
Fly round the torch's fatal light—  
Wild, and with extacy elate,  
Unconscious of approaching fate.

So the soft splendours of thy face,  
And thy fair form's, enchanting grace ;



Allure to death unwary love,  
And thousands the bright ruin prove.

Even he whose hapless eyes no ray  
Admit from beauty's cheering day ;  
Yet, though he cannot see the light,  
He feels it warm, and knows it bright.

In beauty, talents, taste refined,  
And all the graces of the mind,  
In all, unmatched thy charms remain,  
Nor meet a rival on the plain.

Thy slender foot, thine azure eye,  
Thy smiling lip, of scarlet dye ;—  
Thy tapering hand so soft and fair,  
The bright redundance of thy hair.

O blest be the auspicious day,  
That gave them to thy Poet's lay ;  
O'er rival Bards to lift his name,  
Inspire his verse and swell his fame.

Carolan says, ' Mr. Ritson seems from the description we have of him, to be a genuine representative of the ancient Bards. '

Miss Brooke in speaking of his descriptive Poetry, makes the following remark. ' It is generally believed that Carolan, (as his Biographer tells us) remembered no impression of colours ;' but I cannot acquiesce in this opinion ; I think it must have been formed without sufficient grounds, for how was it possible that his description could be thus glowing without the



clearest recollection, and the most animated ideas of every beauty that sight can convey to the mind.

‘ Even he, whose hapless eyes no ray  
Admit from beauty’s cheering day ;  
Yet, though he cannot see the light,  
He feels it warm, and knows it bright.’

Every reader of taste or feeling, she proceeds to observe, must surely be struck with the beauty of this passage. Can any thing be more elegant, or more pathetic, than the manner in which Carolan alludes to his want of sight ! but indeed, his little pieces abound in all the riches of natural genius.

I have in another part of this essay, given Mr. Walker’s translation of the beautiful song of GRACEY NUGENT. I shall here for the amusement of my readers, subjoin a literal translation of the same, by the ingenious Miss Brooke, to whom the Irish Nation is much indebted, for her elegant translations of original Irish Poetry.

~~~~~

MISS BROOKE’S
LITERAL TRANSLATION OF
Gracey Nugent.

—

‘ I will sing with rapture of the blossom of whiteness, Gracey, the young and beautiful woman, who

bore away the palm of excellence in sweet manners and accomplishments, from all the fair ones of the Provinces.

Whoever enjoys her constant society, no apprehension of any ill can assail him. The Queen of soft and winning mind, and manners, with her fair branching tresses flowing in ringlets.

Her side like Alabaster, and her neck like the Swan, and her countenance like the sun in Summer; how blest is it for him, who is promised, as riches, to be united to her, the branch of fair curling tendrils.

Sweet and pleasant is your lovely conversation; bright and sparkling your blue eyes! and every day do I hear all tongues declare your praises, and how gracefully your bright tresses wave down your neck.

I say to the maid of youthful mildness, that her voice and her converse are sweeter than the songs of birds! there is no delight or charm that imagination can conceive, but what is ever attendant on Gracey.

Her teeth arranged in beautiful order, and her locks flowing in soft waving curls! but though it delights me to sing of thy charms; I must quit my theme; with a sincere heart I fill to thy health.

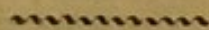
Though Carolan died universally lamented, he would have died unsung, had not the humble muse of M'Cabe poured a few elegiac strains over his cold remains. This faithful friend composed the following short Elegy on his death, which is evidently the effusion of unfeigned grief, unadorned with meretricious ornaments; it is the picture of a mind torn with anguish · with which I shall conclude his memoirs.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF

C A R O L A N.

I came with Friendship's face to glad my heart,
But sad and sorrowful my steps depart ;
In my friend's stead, a spot of earth is shown,
And on his grave my woe-struck eyes are thrown !
No more to their distracted sight remained,
But the cold clay that all they loved contained ;—
And there his last and narrow bed was made,
And the drear tomb-stone for its covering laid.
Alas ! for this my aged heart is wrung,
Grief choaks my voice, and trembles on my tongue ;
Lonely and desolate I mourn the dead,
The friend with whom my every comfort fled !
There is no anguish can with this compare ;
No pains, diseases, suffering, or despair,
Like that I feel, while such a loss I mourn,
My heart's companion from its fondness torn !
Oh ! insupportable, distracting grief,
Wo that through life, can never hope relief.
Sweet singing Harp, thy melody is o'er,
Sweet Friendship's voice, I hear thy sound no more ;
My bliss—my wealth of Poetry is fled,
And every joy, with him I loved is dead :—

Alas ! what wonder, (while my heart drops blood
Upon the woes that drain its vital flood)—
If maddening grief no longer can be borne,
And frenzy fill the breast with anguish torn.



AUTHORITIES.

WALKER'S Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards,
vol. 2nd...Miss BROOK'S relics of Irish Poetry, Dub-
lin edition 1802, 4to...Introduction to Bunting's Irish
music, Belfast, 1807...Belfast Magazine, vol. 3rd.

AN ACCOUNT
OF
CASPAR CRUMBHORN,

A celebrated Musician of the Sixteenth Century.

~~~~~  
' Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast ;  
Rend the rough rocks, and bend the knotted oak.'

~~~~~  
If we look into former periods, we shall find illustrious and pregnant examples, how amply Nature has capacitated the blind to excel both in the scientific and practical departments of music. In the sixteenth century, when the progress, both in melody and harmony, was rapid and conspicuous in almost every country in Europe ; flourished CASPAR CRUMBHORN, blind from the third year of his age ; yet, he composed several pieces in many parts, with so much success, and performed both upon the Flute and Violin, so exquisitely, that he was distinguished by Augustus, elector of Saxony. But preferring his native Selesia to every other country, he returned thither,

and was appointed Organist of the church of St. Peter, and Paul, in the city of Lignitz, where he likewise had often the direction of the Musical College, and died the 11th of June, 1621.

The writers of the Article Blind in the Encyclopædia Britannica, speaking of our Musician, and the blind in general, makes the following remark; which though, it may be considered somewhat severe, is not altogether out of character.

To these might be added Martini Pesenti, of Venice, a composer of Vocal and Instrumental Music, almost of all kinds, though blind from his nativity; with other examples equally worthy of public attention. But if vulgar prejudice is capable of blushing at its own contemptible character, or of yielding to conviction, those already quoted are more than sufficient to show the musical jugglers of our time, who are generally as absolute strangers to learning and taste, as to virtue, that their art is no monopoly, with which those alone who see are invested by the irreversible decree of Heaven.



AUTHORITIES.

- SIR JOHN HAWKINS'S History of Music, vol. 4...
DR. BURNEY'S History of Music, vol. 3.

AN INTERESTING ACCOUNT

OF

S A M S O N,

The Blind Hero of Israel.



‘O ! what is strength without a double share
Of Wisdom ? vast, unwieldy, burdensome ;
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtilties, not made to rule,
But to subserve where Wisdom bears command.’



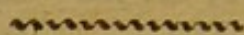
Of all the books, which are at present in use, there is not one, in my opinion, to which the mind can turn, either for amusement or instruction, like the Bible. Laying aside for a moment its Divine authority, and viewing it as a common history, it presents to the reader a fund of the most valuable information. But this is not its only claim to our regard ; it rests not on human authority, for in the words of one of the acutest masters (Locke,) in the great science of human understanding, as well as in Christian philosophy.—‘It has God for its author, Salvation for its end, and Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.’

The character of the divinely inspired Hero, which I am now about to consider, is taken from that Sacred Book, and will not, I hope, be thought obtrusive here.

SAMSON flourished, according to the best commentators, about 2848, A. M. He was a Nazarite of the tribe of Dan. We are informed by the sacred Historian, that he was endued with uncommon strength, and that the seat of that strength was in his hair. The Philistines were at that time a powerful and warlike nation, and held the Israelites in bondage; but Sampson, by his heroic achievements, soon taught his own, and his country's enemies to fear and respect him. He made frequent incursions into the country of the Philistines, laid waste their fields and desolated their cities. At length this illustrious Patriot and Bulwark of his country, was betrayed by a perfidious harlot, who while he was asleep, cut off his hair, and delivered him into the hands of his enemies; who treated him with every species of cruelty and insult. And to complete their barbarous work, they put out his eyes, and made him use that strength which had been so nobly employed in the defence of his country, in grinding at a Mill. Milton in describing Samson's situation, makes his hero break out into the following SOLILOQUY, which for pathos and sublime sentiments cannot be surpassed in ours or any other language :—

A SOLILOQUY

On the putting out of his Eyes.



‘ Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze,
I grind in brazen fetters under task
With this Heaven-gifted strength!—
O glorious strength, put to the labour of a beast;
Debased lower than bondslave! promise was
That I should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver:
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.
But chief of all!—
O loss of sight, of thee I must complain!
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon or beggary, or decrepit age!—
Light, the prime work of God, to me’s extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eas’d;
Inferior to the vilest now become,
Of man or worm—the vilest here excel me;
They creep, yet see; I dark in light exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half:
O dark, dark, dark! amid the blaze of noon;

Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day !—
O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be light, and light was over all ;
Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree ?
The Sun to me is dark
And silent as the Moon,
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true,
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part ; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd,
So obvious, and so easy to be quench'd ?
And not as feeling through all parts diffus'd,
That she might look at will through ev'ry pore ;
Then had I not been thus exil'd from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And bury'd ; but yet more miserable !
Myself, my sepulchre, a moving grave
Bury'd, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life ;—
Life in captivity
Amongst inhuman foes.'

In this state of degradation, and every day exposed to some new method of torture, he continued for some time. At length his hair began to grow again, and his strength to return with it. On a day which had been appointed by the Philistines, as a festival to their God, (Dagon) for delivering them from the power of Samson, he was ordered to come to the feast to play, and show his strength before the lords and the people. The theatre or building in which this exhibition was to take place, was supported by two main pillars,(1) and between these was Samson placed, in order that they might have a distinct view of his movements. Being almost exhausted with fatigue, he requested the lad who held him by the hand, to permit him to lean on the pillars;—

‘ That to the arched roof gave main support.—
He unsuspecting led him; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head, awhile inclined,
And eyes fast-fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,
Or some great matter in his mind revolved:
This finished, straining all his nerves, he bowed.
As with the force of winds and waters pent,
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsions to and fro,
He tugg’d, he shook, till down they came & drew
The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath;—
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors and priests,
The choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this, but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.

Samson with these inmixed inevitably
Pulled down the same destruction on himself;
'The vulgar only 'scaped who stood without.'



AUTHORITIES.

Judges, chaps. 13, 14, 15, & 16...BROWN'S Dictionary of the Bible...WOOD'S Dictionary of the Bible...MILTON'S Works, vol. 2nd.



NOTE TO SAMSON.

(1)Milton has finely accounted for this dreadful catastrophe, and obviated the common objection. It is commonly asked how so great a building, containing so many thousands of people, could rest on two pillars so nearly placed together; and to this it is answered, that instances are not wanting of far more large and capacious buildings than this, supported only by one pillar or pin, or hinge, though many thousands of people did sit in it together. *See Poole's Annotations.*

Mr. Thyer further adds, that Dr. Shaw in his travels, observing on the eastern method of building, says, 'that the place where they exhibit their diversions at this day, is an advanced cloister, made in form of a large pent-house, supported only by one or

two contiguous pillars in front, or else at the centre, and supposing that in the house of Dagon there was a cloistered structure of this kind, the pulling down the front, or centre pillars only which supported it, would be attended with the like catastrophe.' See *Shaw's Travels*, page 283.

THE BITER BIT,

AN INTERESTING ANECDOTE.

~~~~~  
'Gold too oft with magic art  
Subdues each nobler impulse of the heart!'

~~~~~

Blind persons being less subject to distractions from the number of objects which the sense of seeing presents to us at one, and the same time, must have the senses of hearing, smelling, and feeling, more fine and exquisite. This we find confirmed by several facts, and we may add that the habit of exercising one sense in default of another, makes the former in some sort more intelligent.

It is said of a person born blind at Puisieux, in the province of Gatinois, in France, that he judged of the proximity of fire by the degree of heat; the fullness of vessels by the noise of decanted liquors, as they fell; and the nearness of bodies by the action of the air on his face. He had made very exact balances of his arms, and almost infallible compasses of his fingers. The varieties in the polish of bodies were dis-

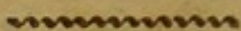
tinguished by him with greater facility, and a greater degree of accuracy than the sound of the voice, the variations of which, he was also very expert in defining. He judged of beauty by feeling, and made pronunciation and the tone of voice a part of this judgement. He was very sure of the exact spot, where a voice or noise came from. It is reported that he once had a quarrel with his brother, whose eye-sight was of no advantage to him in avoiding his blows—vexed at his taunts, and at something he took to be ill-usage, he laid hold of the first object at hand, threw it at him, struck him in the middle of the forehead, and knocked him down. This adventure and some others, caused him to be cited before the Lieutenant of the Police, at Paris, where he then lived. The external signs of power that effect others in so sensible a manner, make no impression on the blind. He appeared before the magistrate, as before his equal; his menaces did not in the least intimidate him. ‘What will you do to me?’ said he, to the magistrate. ‘I will cast you,’ answered the magistrate, into a dungeon. ‘Ah! good sir,’ said the blind man, I have been in one these five and twenty years past! It may be perhaps thought that one born blind has no idea of vision. Of this we may judge by the answer of the same blind person, when asked, what are eyes? ‘Eyes,’ said he, are an organ, on which the air has the effect my stick has on my hand. This is so true, ‘added he,’ that, when I place my hand between your eyes and an object, my hand is present, but the object is absent to you. The same thing happens to

me when I seek for a thing with my stick, and meet with another thing. He defined a looking-glass to be a machine that gives things a relief, far from themselves, if placed conveniently, relatively to them. Just as my hand, 'added he,' which I need not place near an object in order to feel it. How many renowned Philosophers, 'says a modern author,' have shewn less subtilty in endeavouring to prove the truth of notions, which have been equally false?

Some blind men are signal for a peculiar sagacity. One of this sort who was possessed of two hundred Guineas, hid them in a corner of his garden; but a neighbour who had taken notice of what he was about, dug them up and took them away with him. The blind man not finding his money, suspected who the thief might be. What should he do to have his money again? He went to his neighbour, and said that he came to him for advice; that he had four hundred Guineas, the half of which he had hidden in a safe place, and that he was thinking with himself, whether he should deposite the rest in the same place. The neighbour advised him to do so, and conveyed back in all haste the two hundred Guineas, in hopes of being soon master of four hundred. But the blind man having found his money, secured it effectually; and calling upon his neighbour, told him, 'that the blind saw clearer than he did who had two eyes.'

On a very dark night, a blind man was seen walking the streets with a light in his hand, and a large bottle-full of some liquor on his back. Some one going along, knowing him, and surprised at the light. 'What

a simpleton thou art,' said he. 'What want hast thou for a light? are not day and night the same to thee?' 'It is not for myself that I carry the light,' answered the blind man; 'It is rather that such boobies as you should not jostle against me, and break my bottle.'



AUTHORITY....The Universal Magazine for 1768.

THE LIFE
OF
FRANCISCUS SALINAS,

▲ Celebrated Musician of the University of Salimanea.



‘ From what blest spring did he derive his art
To soothe our cares, and thus command the heart !
How did the seeds lie quickening in his brain ?
How were they born without a parent’s pain ?—
He did but think and Music did arise,
Dilating joy, as light o’erspreads the skies ;
From an immortal source, like that it came ;
But light we know—this wonder wants a name !
What art thou ? From what causes dost thou spring,
O Music ! thou Divine mysterious thing !’



FRANCISCUS SALINAS, a native of Burgos in Spain, was blind from his infancy, having, as he says, sucked in that calamity with the infected milk of his nurse. His parents soon perceiving that the study of Music might be pursued by him in spite of this misfortune, had him taught very early to sing, and play upon the Organ. It was by mere accident that he acquired

any knowledge in the learned languages; for while he was a boy, a young woman, celebrated for her knowledge in the Latin tongue, and who was going to take the veil, having a great desire to learn to play on the Organ, came to his father's house, and, in return for the lessons which she received from Salinas, in Music, taught him Latin. After this he was so eager to pursue the study of Literature, that he prevailed on his parents to send him to Salamanca; where, during some years, he applied himself closely to the study of the Greek, Language, Philosophy, and the Arts in general. But being unable to support himself longer in that University, he was introduced in the King's Palace to Peter Sarmentus, Archbishop of Compostella, who received, and treated him very kindly, and who being soon after created Cardinal, carried Salinas with him to Rome. Here he had not only an opportunity of conversing with the learned, but of consulting ancient Manuscripts, particularly those on Music, in the Greek Language, which have been since collected and published by Meibomius and Dr. Wallis. In these studies he spent thirty years; when the death of his patrons, Cardinal Carpenis, Cardinal Burgos, and the Viceroy of Naples, by whom, he says, 'he was more beloved than enriched, determined him to return to Spain, and pass the remainder of his days in humble obscurity: but, on his arrival at Salamanca, he was appointed public professor of Music, and read lectures in that University, both on the theory and practice of the Art.

However, by his long study of Boethe as well

as the ancient Greek theorists, his Doctrines seem to have been chiefly speculative, and confined to calculation of ratios ; divisions of the monochord ; systems of temperament, and the musical pedantry of the times, without bestowing a single thought upon harmony, modulation, or even melody ; except such as the ecclesiastical modes and species of octave supplied.

However, the treatise upon Music written by Salinas, is not only scarce, but, on many accounts, valuable ; as it is written with clearness, by a practical Musician, who satisfactorily explains several parts of ancient Music, which, though of little use to the modern, will at least gratify the curious ; and though he treats of sects and subtilities, concerning which, the present students either in the theory or practice of the art, are not much interested ; yet, as the curiosity of some inquirers is boundless, and as the Doctrines now exploded or contemned, are here collected into a point, those who fancy they can be amused or instructed by the perusal of such discussions, will think themselves in possession of a great literary treasure, when they are so fortunate as to find this work. The first book containing 28 chapters, is merely speculative, treating of nothing but the different methods of calculating the ratios of sound and of arithmetical, geometrical, and harmonical proportion.

Second, definitions of sound, intervals, concords, perfect and imperfect, and discords ; greater and less tone and semitone ; the diesis, apotome, limma and comma ; twenty-nine chapters, in one of which, he takes up the gauntlet in defence of the fourth being

a concord, which practical Musicians had but lately began to rank among discords.

Third treats of the three genera diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic, such as were used by the ancients; for the moderns have no chromatic strictly ancient, nor enharmonic of any kind. He says nothing of the major or minor modes or keys in present use, which are more the business of a modern Musician than the chromatic or enharmonic of the ancient Greeks and Romans. It is in this book that the Author has incurred the displeasure of the Abbe Roussier, by treating of the different methods of correcting false consonances and intervals, by temperament.

Fourth chiefly treats of the different species of diapason and octave; of the hexacords, said to have been invented by Guido, and of their correspondence and connexion with the tetrachords of the Greeks. Of the ancient's mode of tones of Aristoxenus and Ptolemy, of the doctrines of Pythagoras, Aristoxenus, and Boethe, all which he freely censures. The participation or equal division of semitones by Aristoxenus, defended. The doctrines of Didymus, Ptolemy, Bryennius, and of the more modern theorists, Faber, Franchinus, Gloreanus, Fogliano, and Zarlino; thirty-three chapters, in the last of which there is an encomium upon Zarlino, and an epitome of his writings.

The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh books chiefly concern rhythm, and the feet of Greek and Roman verses, all these he has expressed in musical notes; and though he uses only two kinds, the semibreve and minum, for the long and short syllables; the variety

of measure arising from this mixture is wonderful! these sounds only affording thirty-four different mutations of measure, in the arrangements of long and short notes and syllables.

Salinas seems of opinion, that the ancients had no music strictly instrumental; but that all melody was originally derived from the different order of syllables in versification, and had been first set to words, before it was played by instruments; and this was the opinion of the late Rousseau. Even for the movement and measures of Dance-tunes, such as the pavan and passamezzo, he finds corresponding Latin and Spanish verses; and the most curious parts of these last chapters, to me, are the little fragments of old Spanish melody, which belong to his specimens of versification. Some of them are very graceful and pleasing, particularly those in triple time, which resemble the Neapolitan measures more than any other in present use.

Salinas is said to have been an admirable performer on the Organ; an instrument which seems particularly happy in its construction, for the display of great musical talents, after the privation of sight;—for not only Salinas, but Francesco Cieco, the first great Organist upon record; Pothoff, the late excellent Organist at Amsterdam, and our own Stanley, who delighted the lovers of that instrument more than fifty years, seem, with respect to their performance, rather to have gained than lost by this calamity. Milton we are told, could amuse himself; and Handel, we know, had the power of delighting others upon,

this instrument, after total blindness, though it came on late in life. Salinas died in 1590, at seventy-seven years of age.



AUTHORITIES.

SIR JOHN HAWKINS's History of Music, vol. 4...

DR. BURNEY's History of Music, vol. 3.

THE LIFE
OF
EDWARD RUSHTON.

~~~~~  
'Tho' train'd in boisterous elements, his mind  
Was yet by soft humanity refin'd ;—  
Brave, liberal, just, the calm domestic scene  
Had o'er his temper breath'd a gay serene.'

~~~~~  
There is no history so useful to man, as the history of man ; hence it is that Biography is considered not only one of the most pleasing sources of amusement that we can turn to, but it contains one of the best lessons of moral instruction that the human mind can possibly contemplate. In perusing the pages of Plutarch, how are we struck with the rich fund of intellectual knowledge, contained in the volumes of that inimitable Work?—but why confine ourselves to the pages of antiquity ? The histories of all ages, and of every country, particularly that of our own, furnish many bright examples worthy our closest imitation.

It is peculiarly pleasing to observe how many individuals in the middle and lower ranks of life without the advantages of education, have raised themselves to a distinguished place in society, by the cultivation of their literary talents; and among these was Edward Rushton of Liverpool, who though he did not attain to the higher departments of literature, was remarkable for the clearness and perspicuity of his style, and for employing his pen in the cause of humanity, and of truth.

EDWARD RUSHTON was born on the 11th of Novr. 1756, in John-street, Liverpool. His education, which he received at a free school, terminated with his ninth year. At ten, he read Anson's Voyage, resolved to be a sailor, was bound apprentice to Watt and Gregson, and before he entered his eleventh year, he was 'a sea-boy on the high and giddy mast.' He performed the various duties of his station with skill and credit, as was evinced by the following fact. When he reached his sixteenth year, he received the thanks of the Captain, and crew of the vessel, for his seaman-like conduct during a storm—having seized the helm, and extricated the ship, when the Captain and Crew were wandering about in despair.

Before seventeen, whilst yet in his Apprenticeship, he signed articles as second mate of the vessel, in which, a short time before he entered as cabin boy. When in this situation in the West Indies, a circumstance occurred which is worthy of preservation. He was dispatched from the ship with a boat's crew to the shore, from which the vessel was then lying some

miles distant. When within about three miles of Jamaica, the boat from some unknown cause upset, and five or six individuals were consequently left to struggle for life, depending only on their bodily strength and skill, for their preservation. The boat in a short time presented itself keel upwards, upon which they all speedily mounted; but no sooner had they seated themselves, and congratulated each other on their escape, than the boat slipped from under them, and they were again left to the mercy of the waves. In the boat among others was a negro, whose name was Quamina; between this individual and Rushton a friendship had for some time subsisted, for Rushton had taught Quamina to read. When the boat disappeared, Rushton beheld at some distance a small cask, which he knew contained fresh water; for this cask he made, but before he could reach it, it was seized by the negro, who on seeing Rushton almost exhausted, thrust the cask towards him, turned away his head, bidding him good bye, and never more was seen. This cask saved Rushton's life. He has often told this story with tears in his eyes.

As second mate of the vessel he continued until the term of his apprenticeship was expired. At this period, the offer of a superior situation induced him to proceed to the coast of Africa on a slaving voyage. When he beheld the horrors of this disgraceful traffic, he expressed his sentiments of it in strong and pointed language, with that boldness and integrity which characterized his every action, and though in a subordinate situation he went so far in that respect

that it] was thought necessary to threaten him with irons if he did not desist.

On this fatal voyage, whilst he was at Dominica, he was attacked by a violent inflammation of the eyes, which in three weeks left him with the left eye totally destroyed, and the right eye entirely covered by an opacity of the cornea. This misfortune was occasioned by his exertions in assisting to relieve the necessities of his brethren of the sable race, among whom, an infectious fever had broken out.

Thus in his nineteenth year, was he deprived of one of the greatest blessings of Nature. How much he felt this privation, he has beautifully expressed in the following little Poem.

ODE TO BLINDNESS.

Ah ! think if June's delicious rays,
The eye of sorrow can illumine—
Or wild December's beamless days,
Can fling o'er all a transient gloom ;
Ah ! think if skies obscure or bright,
Can thus depress or cheer the mind :
Ah ! think 'midst clouds of utter night,
What mournful moments wait the blind !

And who shall tell his cause for wo,
To love the wife he ne'er must see,
To be a sire, yet not to know
The silent babe that climbs his knee !
To have his feelings daily torn,
With pain, the passing meal to find—
To live distressed, and die forlorn,
Are ills that oft await the blind !

When to the breezy upland led,
At noon, or blushing eve, or morn,
He hears the red-breast o'er his head,
While round him breathes the scented thorn ;
But Oh ! instead of Nature's face,
Hills, dales, and woods, and streams combin'd,
Instead of tints, and forms, and grace,
Night's blackest mantle shrouds the blind.

If rosy youth bereft of sight,
'Midst countless thousands pines unblest—
As the gay flower withdrawn from light,
Bows to the earth where all must rest ;—
Ah ! think, when life's declining hours
To chilling penury are consign'd,
And pain has palsied all his powers ;
Ah ! think what woes await the blind.

In 1776, attended by his father, he visited London, and amongst other eminent men consulted the celebrated Baron Wentzell, Oculist to the King, who declared him incurable. In this hopeless situation poor Rushton returned to Liverpool, and resided with his

father, with whom he continued but a short period, as the violent temper of his step-mother compelled him to leave the house and maintain himself on four shillings per week. An old aunt gave him lodgings and for seven years he existed on this miserable, and considering the circumstances of his father, this shameful allowance. Whilst subsisting on this sum, he managed to pay a boy two pence or three pence per week, for reading to him an hour or two in the evening. He had a brooch, to which, as he has frequently been heard to declare he was often indebted for a dinner : nor was this brooch confined to himself ; it was frequently lent to a friend for the self-same purpose.

From this state he was removed to one much more comfortable. His father placed one of his daughters with Rushton in a tavern where he lived for about two years, and while in this situation he married. Finding however, his pecuniary circumstances rather diminishing than increasing, he gave up the business. He now entered into an engagement as editor of a newspaper called the 'Herald,' which for some time he pursued with much pleasure and little profit, until finding it impossible to express himself in that independent and liberal manner, which his reason and his conscience dictated, he threw up his situation and had to begin the world once more.

With an increasing family and very limited means, Rushton hesitated before he fixed on any particular course of life. He thought of several plans, but none seemed more agreeable to his taste than the

business of a Bookseller; his habits and his pursuits combined to render it more eligible than any other which presented itself to his thoughts. With thirty Guineas, five children and a wife, to whose exertions he was greatly indebted, he commenced bookselling. This excellent wife laboured incessantly, and with attention and frugality the business succeeded, and Rushton felt himself more easy. At this time politics ran very high in Liverpool. 'Rushton had published several of his pieces all in favour of the *Rights of Man*. He became a noted character, was marked and shot at; the lead passed very close to the eye-brow, but did not do him the smallest injury. His timid friends, by whom he had been constantly visited while all was serene, now began to desert him;—they were afraid of being seen near the house of a man who was looked upon as disaffected, because he boldly stepped forward in what he considered to be the cause of liberty and truth.' Such are the prejudices with which a man has to struggle, whose determination it is to speak and act as his heart shall dictate, as difference of opinion respecting the best means of promoting a virtuous end, the good of mankind is frequently the cause of disuniting friends who have long been warmly attached, and whose motives are perhaps equally pure.

Rushton however, experienced the satisfaction of enjoying the steady attachment, and unremitting attention of a few tried and true friends, who with him had rejoiced in the triumphs of liberty in whatever land they were achieved. Whilst in business as a

bookseller, the purses of the late Mr. W. Rathbone, and of Mr. W. Roscoe, were offered to him; he was invited to take what sum he might want, he refused them both, and he has often declared his feelings to have been those of satisfaction, when he reflected on this refusal. He was in poverty, nay, at the very moment he was struggling hard to gain a scanty pittance; yet, he maintained his independence. His life for some years was but little varried, he continued successively to produce poetical pieces.

The premature death of the unfortunate Thomas Chatterton, or as Doctor Anderson has emphatically styled him the 'Boy of Bristol,' excited in every mind the deepest sorrow for his misfortunes. This poor neglected child of genius, had scarcely reached his 18th year when he terminated his existence by poison. He had eaten nothing for three or four days before he committed this rash act; having no friend or patron to whom he could look up for encouragement and being too proud to appeal to the charity of strangers, he adopted the dreadful alternative of quitting a world where he had met with nothing but poverty, disappointment, and neglect. This melancholy catastrophe, could not be overlooked by the humane hearted Rushton. He has done justice to his memory in a copy of verses, which seem to be the effusion of a mind deeply imbued with the mournful subject. After speaking of his fine poetic genius, he proceeds to paint the horrid scene which preceded his death, in the most affecting language.

TO THE MEMORY
OF
CHATTERTON.

~~~~~

Oh! thou who many a silent hour,  
Sat'st brooding o'er thy plans profound;  
Oh Chatterton! thou fairest flower,  
That ever graced poetic ground.  
'Twas thine, in lyrics sweet and strong,  
To bear th' enraptured soul along—  
'Twas thine to paint domestic wo,  
And bid the drops of pity flow!—  
'Twas thine in Homer's glowing strain,  
To sing contention's bloody reign;  
And oh! 'twas thine, with unfledged wings to soar,  
Upborne by native fire, to heights untried before.  
In lonely paths, and church-yards drear,  
When shrouded pale-eyed ghosts are seen;  
When many a wild note strikes the ear,  
From fairies rev'ling on the green.  
Then didst thou oft with daring fire,  
Sweep o'er the solemn gothic lyre;  
Then, whilst the broad moon lent her aid,  
To times long past thy fancy stray'd;  
Then Hasting's field was heap'd with dead,  
And Birtha mourn'd, and Baldwin bled;



Yet, what to thee did poesy produce,  
Why—when on earth neglect, when in the grave  
abuse.

Ah penury ! thou chilling sprite.  
Thou pale depressor of the mind,  
That with a cloud opaque as night,  
Veil'st many a genius from mankind.

Ah ! what avails the Minstrel's art,  
That melts and animates the heart ;  
If at his side with haggard mien,  
And palsied step thy form is seen ;  
When on thy sterile common thrown,  
The strongest powers must pine unknown ;  
But mark the World, let wealthy witlings raise  
The decorated lyre, and all applaud the lays.

When all is hush'd, full oft to thee  
Poor child of song, I sorrowing turn ;  
Full oft bewail thy misery—  
Full oft with indignation burn.

Heavens ! that a genius such as thine,  
Equal to every vast design ;  
A genius formed in Shakespeare's mould,  
Untutor'd, piercing, clear and bold ;  
Should pour in these enlighten'd days,  
On Britain's ear, such matchless lays ;—  
Yet, find on British ground neglect and wo,  
And envy's cankering sting, when in the grave  
below !



Oh poesy ! delusive power,  
Thou *Ignis Fatuus* of the soul,  
Thou syren of the solemn hour,  
That lur'st full oft to scenes of dole :

Oh ! how seducing are thy smiles,  
How powerful all thy witching wiles,  
Yet in the foldings of thy train,  
Lurk squalid want and mental pain ;  
See where thy wretched victim lies,  
What frantic wildness in his eyes :  
Hark how he groans ! see, see he foams, he gasps !  
And his convulsive hand the pois'nous phial grasps.

Stung by the World's neglect and scorn,  
While conscious merit fir'd his mind,  
Unfriended, foodless, and forlorn,  
With low'ring eye the bard reclin'd ;

When lo ! his mantle cover'd o'er,  
With streaming, and with clotted gore,  
The offspring of despair and pride  
Came stalking in, fell suicide,  
Wreaths of dark foxglove, hemlock green,  
And poppy round his brows were seen ;  
And now his purpose dire, his blood stain'd eyes  
And rugged front, were veiled in soft compassion's  
guise.

Rous'd from his gloom aghast and wild,  
' Ah, what art thou ? '—the minstrel cried,  
With wily tongue and aspect mild,  
' Thy guardian power, ' the form replied.



‘ Sweet bard—ah why dost thou remain,  
On this vile orb this scene of pain?  
Art thou not steeped in blackest wo?  
Hast thou a single patron? no,  
Or can thy sweetly sounding lyre,  
Make stern necessity retire?  
If not, be firm, these sordid reptiles spurn,  
(Oh Phoebus’ glowing son!) and to thy sire return.’

Stung to the soul, the hapless boy,  
With greedy ears the sounds devour’d,  
This the grim phantom saw with joy,  
And still the wordy poison pour’d.

Till slackening every selfish spring,  
Which makes us to existence cling;  
‘ Would I a worthless world adorn,’  
He cried—‘ that merits but thy scorn.’  
‘ No misery’s son this cordial take;  
And want, neglect, and pain forsake;’  
With pale distracted look the youth complied,  
Tore many a beauteous lay, and in wild ravings died.

Unshelter’d, wither’d, scarcely blown,  
Thus like a blasted flower he fell—  
Thus pined unnoticed and unknown;  
Thus bade a sorrowing scene farewell.

Gaze on his corse, ye gloomy train,  
Whom fortune tries to bless in vain;—  
Gaze on his corse, ye foodless crowd,  
And you whom torturing pangs have bow’d;



Gaze too ye ardent sons of song,  
Whom haply cold neglect has stung—  
And, when ideas black and sad arise,  
Should suicide appear—oh ! spurn him and be wise.

Thus headlong rush'd the indignant soul,  
From earth where tides of rancour flow ;  
Where folly's sons in affluence roll,  
While merit droops o'erwhelm'd with wo.

Ye gen'rous minds, if such there are,  
Who make neglected worth your care ;  
Where dwelt you when he gazed around,  
And not one gleam of comfort found ?  
Oh what a deed ! what endless fame,  
Had twined around that mortal's name—  
Who from despair had snatched this wonderful boy,  
Foster'd his towering muse, and flush'd his soul  
with joy.

And one there was, sweet fancy's child,  
Whilst thou wert listening to the shade ;  
One reverend sage, humane and mild,  
Was then on wing to give thee aid ;  
And scarcely had the parish shell,  
Convey'd thee to the cold dark cell,  
When lo ! he came, O piteous tale,  
But pity, what wilt thou avail !  
He came, by love of genius led,  
Intent to raise thy drooping head ;  
He came, he sigh'd, and down the stream of time,  
For this his praise shall flow in many a splendid  
rhyme.



Borne to the grave without a friend,  
The work-house glebe received thy clay,  
Thus did thy scrap of breathing end,  
But oh ! thy fame shall ne'er decay.

E'en Radcliff and her flowery plains,  
Where thou hast ponder'd o'er thy strains ;  
Thy natal roof, thy earthy bed,  
Scarce known amidst th' unhonoured dead ;  
When thy proud scorers are no more,  
And moths have gnaw'd their pedant lore—  
E'en these the sons of fancy shall revere,  
Sigh o'er thy mournful fate, and drop the sorrowing  
tear.

For thee compassion oft shall plead,  
Her tenderest plaints for thee shall flow,  
Her hand shall brush away each weed,  
Which envy o'er thy turf may throw.

And kindly soft that hand shall bring,  
For thee each blighted flower of spring ;  
The violet, scenting Nature's breath,  
Then, from her storms receiving death—  
The lowly primrose born to blow,  
Then 'whelm'd beneath the drifted snow ;—  
And oft with these, and tufts of wither'd bloom,  
Compassion dewy-eyed, shall deck thy early tomb.

And now where'er thy spirit stalks,  
Great framer of the antique lay,  
Whether thou haunt'st thy favourite walks,  
Or hover'st o'er thy bed of clay.



Whether, with Savage at thy side,  
Thou blam'st the World's contempt and pride ;  
Whether thou talk'st with Otway's shade,  
Of all the misery life display'd ;  
Or glid'st in gloomy guise along,  
Aloof from all the ghastly throng,  
From one inured to many a mental pain,  
Oh ! deign, immortal youth t' accept this heartfelt  
strain.

But it was not on this occasion alone, that Rush-  
ton's humanity was shewn ;—his feelings were ever a-  
live to the sufferings of his fellow-creatures ; it was the  
same to him by what name they went, or to what  
country they belonged ; whether they were burned  
by an Indian, or by an African sun ! If he conceived  
they were injured or oppressed, he was ready at all  
times to vindicate their wrongs, with all that zeal and  
ability which Providence endued him with. It was  
this love for mankind, that induced him in 1797, to  
write a letter to Washington, (the then president) on  
the subject of Negro Slavery, to whom it was  
transmitted in July, and a few weeks afterwards was  
returned under cover without one syllable in reply.  
As children who are crammed with sweetmeats have  
no relish for plain and wholesome food, so men in  
power who are seldom addressed but in the sweet  
tone of adulation, are apt to be disgusted with the  
plain and salutary language of truth ; to offend was  
not the intention of the writer, yet the president was evi-  
dently irritated. To those who are acquainted with the



philanthropic exertions of Rushton, which may be said to have characterized him from his youth, no apology for the subjoined extracts from that letter is necessary, and to those who have read thus far of his history, every demonstration of the amiable feelings which he retained to the last period of his existence, will I trust be acceptable. It must be farther observed, in favour of Rushton, that the letter now in question was not the result of any party feeling towards the American people. His political principle was that of a staunch republican; he venerated the name of Washington; he not only considered him one of the greatest, but one of the best men that ever appeared in the World! He also knew at the same time that he was but a human being like himself, liable to err;—and that Washington did err, is a truth that none of his friends can deny; all his Biographers acknowledged that he kept three hundred poor Africans in chains;—it was this inconsistency that called forth Rushton's remarks.

Sometime afterwards he wrote to Thomas Paine on the same subject, but that pretended friend to mankind lent a deaf ear to his remonstrance among his poetical productions which appeared about this time, was that beautiful Poem of '*Mary le More*,' with several others on the same subject. The most particular occurrence in the latter years of his life, was a partial recovery of his sight; an event, which tended to make those years much more comfortable than any he had experienced since his youth. In the summer of 1805, hearing of the repeated successes of Dr. Gibson of Manchester, as an oculist, he was induced to obtain his opinion; that opinion was



favourable, and after enduring with his accustomed fortitude, five dreadful operations, he was in the summer of 1807, ushered into that World from which, for more than thirty years he had been excluded. His feelings on this occasion are truly recorded in the lines addressed to Gibson on this happy event.

During the last years of his life Rushton did not write much, but those poems which he did produce, are excellent. ‘The Fire of English Liberty’—‘Jemmy Armstrong,’ Stanzas addressed to Robert Southey, are all strongly in favour of those principles which with fire unabated, he preserved till the last moment of his mental existence. For the few last years of his life he was occasionally troubled with the gout, and his health visibly declining; but under all his afflictions he preserved his usual cheerfulness and gaiety till the last, and died on the 22nd Novr. 1814, aged 58. The following view of his character was given by one of his intimate friends.

Edward Rushton was a public character, eminently distinguished by his actions, and by none more honourably than by his abhorrence of the doctrine of expediency, when opposed to the straight forward path of duty and principle. He thus put to shame many of ‘the puny dangles after wealth,’ and a false fame. Let it not be thought that this is the language of mere declamatory panegyric, as in many commonplace encomiums of the dead, where to bestow indiscriminate praise is the sole object. Such fulsome praise disgusts. The truth of the present attempt to describe worth, is felt by the writer, yet, he would not



be thought to hold up Edward Rushton or any other man as the model of perfection. Every human being has his portion of alloy. But he wishes to prove by an eminent example how much Man may, by exercise of his faculties and moral capacities, advance himself in the practice and course of virtue. Examples of this kind selected out of the middle walks of life are cheering and animating, and may very materially assist by an honourable emulation, to incite to virtuous deeds, and tend to promote a closer attention to the dictates of unbending principle, a thing much wanting in the present day; and therefore, essentially necessary to be more strongly inculcated.

Edward Rushton is praised, and justly praised for the good qualities which he possessed, but the great aim in penning the foregoing sketch is to advocate the cause of virtue, by exhibiting a bright example. The Roman poet exclaimed, *Amicus Socrates, Amicus Plato, sed magis Amica veritas*. So Edward Rushton was my friend, and I am proud to have enjoyed a share of his friendship, but the cause of virtue is dearer to me than any man, how much soever, like the subject of this memorial, he may have been distinguished by talents, and dignified by the proper employment of them.

The Works of Rushton are not numerous, but, they are truly valuable for their moral excellence. I have already observed that Rushton was not a first rate genius, but as a Man, he did honour to the age, and country in which he lived.



Rushton's poetical pieces were not originally intended for publication, but being read and admired by his friends, they appeared first in the periodical journals of the day, and were afterwards collected together, and published in a small duodecimo volume, at London, in 1804; these with his letters to General Washington, and Thomas Paine, are the only productions of his, which were given to the public.



## AUTHORITIES.

Belfast Magazine, vol. 5th & 7th...Liverpool Mercury, Novr, 1814.



EXTRACTS FROM RUSHTON'S LETTER  
TO  
GENERAL WASHINGTON.



*The following extracts from Rushton's letter to General Washington, will I trust be acceptable to my readers, as they will shew in what light he held this disgraceful traffic.*



After paying some well merited compliments to Washington's military talents, and patriotic exertions in the service of his country, during the Revolutionary War, he proceeds to animadvert on his conduct as a slave-holder, in the following terms.

‘But it is not to the commander in chief of the American Forces, nor to the president of the United States, that I have ought to address; my business is with Geo. Washington of Mount-vernon, in Virginia—a man, who, notwithstanding his hatred to oppression, and his ardent love of liberty, holds at this moment, hundreds of his fellow-beings in a state of abject bondage; yes, you, who conquered under the banners of freedom; you, who are now the first Magistrate of a free people, are



(strange to relate) a slave-holder. That a liverpool merchant should endeavour to enrich himself by such a business, is not a matter of surprise, but that you, an enlightened character, strongly enamoured of your own freedom; you, who if the British forces had succeeded in the Eastern states, would have retired with a few congenial spirits, to the rude fastnesses of the Western wilds, there to have enjoyed that blessing, without which, a paradise would be disgusting, and with which, the most savage region is not without its charms; that you, I say, should continue to be a slave-holder, a proprietor of human flesh and blood, creates in many of your British friends, both astonishment and regret; you, who are a republican, an advocate for the dissemination of knowledge, and for universal justice. Where then are the arguments by which this shameful dereliction of principle can be supported? your friend Jefferson has endeavoured to shew that the Negroes are of an inferior order of beings, but surely you will not have recourse to this subterfuge. Your Slaves it may be urged, are well treated—that I deny, Man never can be well treated who is deprived of his rights. They are well clothed, well fed, well lodged, &c. Feed me with ambrosia, and wash it down with nectar; yet, what are these if liberty be wanting? you took arms in defence of the *Rights of Man*;—your Negroes are men:—Where then are the rights of your Negroes?

It has been said by your apologists, that your feelings are inimical to slavery, and that you are induced to acquiesce in it at present, merely from motives



of policy ; the only true policy is justice, and he who regards the consequences of an act, rather than the justice of it, gives no very exalted proof of the greatness of his character. But if your feelings be actually repugnant to slavery, then are you more culpable than the callous-hearted planter, who laughs at what he calls the pitiful whinings of the abolitionists, because he believes slavery to be justifiable ; while you persevere in a system which your conscience tells you to be wrong. If we call the man obdurate, who cannot perceive the atrociousness of slavery, what epithet does he deserve, who, while he does perceive its atrociousness, continues to be a proprietor of slaves ? Nor is it likely that your own unfortunate Negroes are the only sufferers, by your adhering to this nefarious business ; consider the force of an example like yours ; consider how many of the sable race, may now be pining in bondage, merely forsooth, because the President of the United States, who has the character of a wise and good man, does not see cause to discontinue the long established practice. Of all the slaveholders under Heaven, those of the United States, appear to me the most reprehensible ; for man never is so truly odious as when he inflicts upon others that which he himself abominates. When the cup of slavery was presented to your countrymen, they rejected it with disdain, and appealed to the world, in justification of their conduct—yet, such is the inconsistency of man, that thousands upon thousands of those very people, with yourself amongst the number, are now sedulously employed in holding the self-same bitter draught to



the lips of their sable brethren. From men who are strongly attached to their own rights, and have suffered much in their defence;—one might have expected scrupulous attention to the rights of others; did not experience show, that when we ourselves are oppressed, we perceive it with a lynx's eye; but when we become the oppressors, no noon-tide bats are blinder; you are boastful of your own rights; you are violators of the rights of others, and you are stimulated by an insatiable rapacity, to cruel and relentless oppression. In defending your own liberties, you undoubtedly suffered much, but if your Negroes emulating the spirited example of their masters, were to throw off the galling yoke, and retiring peaceably, to some uninhabited part of the Western region, were to resolve on liberty or death, what would be the conduct of the Southern planters on such an occasion? Nay; what would be your own conduct? you, who were 'born in a land of liberty,' who 'early learned its value;' you, who 'engaged in a perilous conflict to defend it;' you who, 'in a word, devoted the best years of your life to secure its permanent establishment in your own country, and whose anxious recollection, whose sympathetic feelings, and whose best wishes are irresistably excited; whensoever in any country you see an oppressed nation, unfurl the banners of freedom.'—Possessed of these energetic sentiments, what would be your conduct? would you have the virtue to applaud so just and animating a movement, as the revolt of your Southern Negroes? No; I fear both you and your countrymen, to gratify your own sordid views,



would scatter among an unoffending people, terror, desolation, and death. Harsh as this conclusion may appear, yet it is warranted by your present practice; for the man, who can boast of his own rights, and hold two or three hundred of his fellow-beings in slavery, would not hesitate in case of a revolt, to employ the most sanguinary means in his power, rather than forego that, which the *truly* republican laws of his country are *pleased* to call, his property. Shame! shame! that man should be deemed the property of man, or that the name of Washington should be found among the lists of such proprietors!

Should these strictures be deemed severe or unmerited on your part, how comes it, that while in the Northern or middle states, the exertions of the Quakers, and other Philanthropists, have produced such regulations, as must speedily erradicate every trace of slavery in that quarter; how comes it that from you these humane efforts! have never received the least countenance? If your mind have not sufficient firmness, to do away that which is wrong, the moment you perceive it to be such, one might have expected that a plan for ameliorating the evil, would have met with your warmest support; but no such thing. The just example of a majority of the states, has had no visible effect upon you; and as to the men of Maryland, of Virginia, of the two Carolinas, of Georgia, and of Kentucky, they smile contemptuously at the idea of Negro Emancipation, and with the States-constitution in one hand, and the cow-skin in the other, exhibit to



the world such a spectacle, as every real friend to Liberty, must from his soul abominate.

‘Then what is man, and what man seeing this, and having human feelings, does not blush and hang his head to think himself a man.’ Man does not readily perceive defects in what he has been accustomed to venerate; hence it is, that you have escaped those animadversions, which your slave proprietorship has so long merited. For seven years, you bravely fought the battles of your country, and contributed greatly to the establishment of her Liberties; yet, you are a slave-holder. A majority of your countrymen have recently discovered, that slavery is an injustice, and are gradually abolishing the wrong; yet, you continue to be a slave-holder. You are a firm believer too, and your letters and speeches are replete with pious reflections on the divine being, Providence, &c. Yet you are a slave-holder! Oh Washington! ages to come will read with astonishment, that the man who was foremost to wrench the rights of America, from the grasp of Britain, was the last to relinquish his own oppressive hold of poor and unoffending Negroes.

In the name of Justice, what can induce you thus, to tarnish your own well earned celebrity, and to impair the fair features of American Liberty, with so foul and indelible a blot? Avarice is said to be the vice of age. Your slaves, old and young, male and female, father and mother, and child, might in the estimation of a Virginia Planter, be worth from fifteen to twenty thousand pounds. Now sir, are you sure



that the unwillingness which you have shewn to liberate your Negroes, does not proceed from lurking pecuniary considerations? If this be the case, (and there are those who firmly believe it is) then there is no flesh left in your heart; and present reputation, future fame, and all that is estimable among the virtuous, are for a few thousand pieces of paltry yellow dirt, irretrievably renounced.'



*THE LIFE*  
*OF*  
**WILLIAM TALBOT,**

*The celebrated performer on the improved Irish Pipes.*

—00000—

‘ Erin from her green throne surveys  
The progress of her tuneful son ;  
Exulting as the Minstrel plays,  
At the applause his Pipes have won.

Then grieve not for the loss that shades  
Fair Nature’s landscape from your view—  
The genius, that no gloom invades,  
She gave in recompense to you.’

—00000—

IT is humiliating to the pride of man to trace the helplessness of his Nature, but gratifying to consider the goodness of Providence in the provision it makes for his wants and infirmities. In no situation, perhaps, is this better exemplified, than in the case of those, who, condemned to perpetual darkness, are left to grapple with the difficulties of life, and to make their



way through its mazy windings, under a privation, which, of all others, is the most appalling. The subject of the present memoir is of this class. He was born near Roscrea, in the county of Tipperary, in the year 1781, and lost his sight in the small-pox, when only four years of age; about that time, Talbot's mother being in a delicate state of health, was advised to remove to a situation more suited to her constitution, near the sea coast, and soon after, the family settled in the village of Tramore, within six miles of Waterford. There young Talbot soon discovered considerable mechanical taste, in the construction of miniature wind and water-mills, and in the fitting up of small ships and boats, with every rope and appendage as exactly formed, as those found in vessels on a larger scale. Being an only child, he was much indulged by his parents, who afforded him a greater facility in cultivating his favourite pursuits; and it is not a little remarkable, that at the several periods of the year, when boys amuse themselves with kites, tops, hoops, marbles, bows and arrows, this youthful adventurer was observed to be one of the most expert at those juvenile recreations; he has been known to gain the ring at castle-top, and to hit the mark with an arrow at thirty yards distance, when others, who were considered adepts, and blessed with the advantages of sight, found themselves far outstripped in this respect, by his adroitness and ingenuity.

At the age of 13, his performance on the Irish pipes obtained him considerable celebrity, particularly in country-dance playing; and such was the fascination



of his music, that no violin would be employed for that purpose, when he could be procured; his habits in this respect had been so confirmed, and his practice so extensive, that he has been known to continue playing a tune at a ball although fast asleep, and was only roused from his slumbers, by the reiterated calls of the party, for a change in the air. While travelling through the country in this way, he went, on one occasion with a few companions to a ball, about six miles distant, to amuse himself, and to hear a piper who had been engaged for the night. During the evening this man was continually boasting of his pipes, and of his own judgement, taste, and execution. Talbot, who had listened to his vaunts in silence, at length proposed, by way of quietus, to get a man who would produce better music out of an old stocking. Bets were immediately made; judges appointed, and the hour having arrived for the decision, Talbot actually drew from an old stocking, a set of small pipes, on which, he himself commenced playing, to the utter astonishment and confusion of his competitor, and to the conviction of his audience, of his entire superiority. At his leisure hours he frequently amused himself in fishing, at which he was generally very successful, as well as in playing cards and dominos, when occasion afforded him an opportunity of exercising his ingenuity in that way. Sometimes in his rambles through the country, he would indulge himself and his friends with a laugh at the expence of some blind companion, whom he would purposely lead out of the way, and there leave him, until the intreaties of the



bewildered person would bring him again to his relief.

About the 17th year of his age, he got accidentally acquainted with a captain in the Navy, for whom he had formed such a friendship, that he was induced to go with him to sea, where he continued about four years, during which he was in various parts of the world, and received much civility, attention, and kindness, from the inhabitants of the respective ports, at which he touched.

Mr. Talbot had become so accustomed to the ship, that, he has been often seen going from rope to rope to the mast head, with all the agility and skill of an experienced seaman. However, he grew tired of this kind of life, as it possessed too little variety, and became again a landsman in 1803. At this period he formed a matrimonial connexion with a young woman, for whom he had long cherished an ardent attachment, and for their mutual support had recourse to the exercise of his musical talents. He shortly after settled with his wife in Limerick, where he met with much encouragement, and commenced there, his first attempt at building an organ. In this, although having no person to give him any instruction, he succeeded surprisingly. From Limerick, after a residence of nearly three years, he removed to Cork. Here he purchased an organ for the purpose of making himself better acquainted with its mechanism ; his perfect knowledge in which, was soon evinced, by the ingenious and melodious organs, which he afterwards constructed. Mr. Talbot's acquaintance with this branch of mechanical music, first led him to conceive the application of a



deeper scale to the Irish Pipes, and by that means he has now brought the instrument to a state of perfection hitherto unparalleled in the annals of music. He has enabled it to descend a whole additional octave on the musical scale, even to G, on the first line in the bass; this instrument being at first only four notes under concert pitch. Independent of this, he has increased its power of forming and combining harmonious sounds, by various additional keys, and by other very elegant and original improvements. Of his execution on the Pipes, the Irish Nation have had long experience, and it must be admitted, that his taste, if equalled, has seldom been surpassed, in the performance of almost all those favourite airs which have given such deserved celebrity to our Native Bards.

In the city of Dublin, where he resided for many years, he was sought after, and his performance much admired, as was evident by the numerous resort of company to the houses where he played. While there, from the nature of his profession, he was often kept to a late hour in the evening, yet such was his knowledge of the city, that he would return alone to his own house, which was situated outside the Grand Canal, without making the least mistake; and has often been known, during these solitary perambulations, to serve as a guide and a guardian to many an unfortunate votary of the social board.

During his residence in Dublin, he was induced at one time to go with some friends on a boating party of pleasure in the bay; the day, however, becoming tempestuous, they were driven to sea, and



obliged to take shelter in the Isle of Man. Here his music, had he not been previously engaged, might have proved of much advantage to him, as a young woman at the inn where he stopped, was so captivated by it, that she proposed him her hand in marriage, with a mass of wealth, which she had been for some years accumulating. This treasure, by way of temptation, she discovered to him as a great secret, which consisted of a large barrel of Isle of Man penny-pieces. This offer, however, he was obliged respectfully to reject, to the great mortification of the fair damsel.

The writer of this article has known Mr. Talbot for some time, and thinks it but justice to his character to state, that he has much merit, in supporting himself and a large family, so respectably as he does, on the income derived alone from his musical abilities. The loss of sight, and want of the comforts depending upon it, although it may be deplored, seem not to be felt as a calamity by Mr. Talbot; for, notwithstanding that the great Book of Nature is for ever closed to him, he appears perfectly resigned to the will of Providence, full of contentment and chearfulness, and possesses at all times that independence of feeling, which renders life supportable under every misfortune.



#### AUTHORITIES.

Belfast Commercial Chronicle...Belfast Newsletter.



*THE LIFE*  
*OF*  
*A D A M M O N D,*  
*A BLIND MISER.*

—00000—

“ 'Tis true as witty Poets sing,  
That avarice is a monstrous thing;  
By antient bards and modern rhymes,  
'Tis painted as the worst of crimes.

Old Plautus in his comic scene,  
Seizes the miser by his chin,  
Holds up his face to public view,  
For laughter and for hatred too.  
Philosophers have all agreed  
No vice has less excuse to plead.

Not all the labours of the pen  
Can cure this plague in aged men:  
Like aged trees, the deeper shoot,  
In grossest earth their worthless root;—  
Then where such characters are found,  
Let ridicule and mirth go round;  
By jeers and pointing fingers tell,  
Where such detested monsters dwell.



The avaricious will not spare,  
To rob the orphan—cheat the heir—  
Nor honesty, nor honour rests  
Within such sordid culprit's breasts ;  
This truth to view in clearest light,  
Attend while I my tale recite."

Some men have had their names handed down to posterity, on account of their vast skill in military tactics, their dauntless courage in the field of battle, and their extensive knowledge of political science. Others have been famed for their great learning, their deep researches into the hidden recesses of Nature, and the good which their useful discoveries have produced to mankind. Some have left a lasting memorial behind them, by their superior piety and useful labours in the church ; while not a few have been recorded in the pages of history, merely on account of some enormous vice, or vices to which they were obstinately addicted. From this it appears, that mankind are willing to allow any one a place in their records, who is particularly distinguished from his fellow men. Among the various vices to which human nature is subject, none is more detestable than avarice. It petrifies the finer feelings of the soul, fastens the affections to this world 'by strong and endless ties,' blinds the understanding in relation to that which is to come, and leaves the wretched individual who is overcome by it, without any other God to trust in for happiness or help, but the mammon of pelf. The principal is the same in the nobleman and the peasant, in him who dotes on countless thousands, and him



whose soul is engrossed by a few paltry pence. It debases its miserable captive, not only below the dignity of his Nature, but reduces him to the meanest shifts and artifices, strains his every nerve, and racks his ingenuity in accumulating wealth, which it dooms never to be enjoyed by its owner, and very often leaves to be squandered by a prodigal heir. These remarks are illustrated by the following singular and well attested relation.

Adam Mond, (the subject of this Memoir) was a native of the county of Antrim, in Ireland. His mother was left a widow when he was very young, with a number of children besides, and a very small property, in the neighbourhood of Ballycastle. A horse and two ewe sheep constituted their live stock, and as much pasturage as served them for grazing, with a little arable ground, was their entire landed estate.

The mother being destitute of that energy of mind which her circumstances required, her family gradually became insubordinate, and regardless of her authority. The consequences were soon visible, and severely felt. The little farm was ill laboured, the cattle neglected, and every thing managed so badly, that by the time Mond came to man's estate, they were ejected from their house and farm, by a sheriff's order, for non-payment of rent.

The time in which this disaster happened, was very unfortunate, for young Mond, as there was then in the north of Ireland, a lawless banditti, who, to express the soundness of their principles, and inspire



their adherents with confidence, termed themselves *Hearts of Steel*. Their professed object was not only to redress wrongs, remove grievances, and administer justice, but also to renovate the government of the country. Mond, finding himself now destitute of those means, whereby he formerly indulged his slothful inclinations and lazy habits, and being still strongly possessed of those associations which attach man to his natal spot, instead of reflecting on the justice and legality of the decree, had recourse to the *Hearts of Steel*. His case being peculiarly adapted for a display of their self-constituted authority and nightly depredations, they espoused it with all that enthusiasm which is common to those who are led by their bewildered imaginations, to form themselves into secret associations for illicit purposes. A paper was accordingly written and signed by their chief in behalf of the whole body; warning the person who succeeded Mond, in the occupation of the farm, to resign it immediately in his favour, or *Captain Firebrand* would pay him an unexpected visit, and consign him, his family, and effects to the flames.

The person thus addressed was not intimidated, and, instead of obeying the unlawful mandate of this midnight cabal, he had recourse immediately to a neighbouring magistrate, swore against Mond, had him apprehended, and conveyed to the county gaol, for serving him with such an unlawful paper. At the ensuing Assizes he was tried, convicted, and in fact sentenced to death, and delivered into the hands of the Sheriff to be executed on a certain day.



The unexpected sentence of the law, the fear of death, and the love of life, now operated so sensibly on his mind, that he resigned himself up to despair and extreme grief.—Every degree of fortitude forsook him, and he wept without intermission. The gentleman who was his landlord, knowing that he had acted through ignorance and the impetuosity of youth, made immediate and personal application to the executive government, and obtained a full pardon; but before it arrived, he had actually wept out his eyes. He now returned to his own neighbourhood completely blind, which no doubt was the leading cause of his afterwards becoming one of the most wretched misers that ever lived.

The peculiar circumstances leading to, and flowing from Mond's trial and sentence, rendered him an object of charity. Losing his sight which he had so long enjoyed, made him extremely awkward, until he became acquainted with, and inured to his new situation. He had therefore no other resource left but to live on the bounty of others. Incapable of any manual labour, he was led from house to house to seek a supply of bread, generally abiding with some of his more liberal neighbours, so long as a disposition remained to entertain him. Getting acquainted, however, with the art, and no doubt with the profits of begging, he became in a short time a complete proficient, and made active application to all who came his way:—perhaps in this respect, he has been outdone by few: his industry, perseverance, and ingenuity, became proverbial; although, he had no heartfelt af-



fection for religion, he has often attended the Church, the Presbyterian Meeting-house, and the Catholic Chapel, in the same day, which were all at a considerable distance from each other, that he might receive from the liberality of their congregations.

The gentleman who obtained his liberation, after some time taking compassion on him, gave him a little house, rent free, and employed him as a bailiff. In this department, he acted occasionally for more than forty years. When he travelled at any considerable distance from home, the compassionate ear was distressed in listening to his lamentable tale, concerning some disaster which had happened to his house or property. When he begged in the immediate neighbourhood, he was always in need of, and in the way of getting, some article of dress. Part of the price of a pair of shoes, a shirt, &c. he had always in possession, and was now making application for the remainder, that he might be somewhat comfortable.

The promised hour of comfort and indulgence, however, he never suffered to arrive; for that sun never rose for more than forty years after his blindness, that ever saw him in possession of shoe, shirt, or stocking. His whole wardrobe he continually carried on his back, which consisted generally of an old tattered coat and waistcoat, a woollen cap, which served him at least twenty years, and a pair of small clothes, which he was very careful to keep whole for a reason to be explained in the sequel. The reader may be ready to imagine he is in possession of the reason at once, when he is informed, that for more



than twenty years, Mond appeared to be severely afflicted by a well-known disease in the abdomen ; but, in this he is mistaken, as well as Mond's most intimate observers were for the above period.

Although apparent disease, added to his blindness, excited the compassion of the beholders, there was no primary intention of deception in this respect. There is no doubt, however, that he congratulated himself on the adoption of a lucky project, which served the double purpose of securing and increasing his unsuspected treasure at the same time. His art in hiding and retaining what he once got in possession, was fully equal to his industry in acquiring. At one time he had like to raise suspicions by keeping a dram shop without license, but he soon gave this up, exclaiming ever after that it broke him, and that he never was master of a penny since. In short, his asseverations concerning his distress, and his continual applications, completely blinded all who knew him, while his house and person presented one of the most wretched pictures of abject poverty ever displayed to the human eye.

In this miserable state, the winter of 1817 overtook him, the inclemency of which, was severely felt in Ireland. In his despicable hovel he had neither clothing, food, nor fire. Still, he would not accept the friendly invitation of a neighbour, who offered him a good fire and lodging, free of any expense, during the cold. This offer he declined on pretence of not being troublesome, but the real cause arose from a fear of losing his money, or having it discovered. Finding



the cold extreme, he resided by day in his own hut, receiving whatever food was sent to him, and retired at night to a corn kiln in the neighbourhood, where he slept snugly at the fire left by the last occupier. Had he accepted the benevolent proposal now mentioned, perhaps he might have concealed what was dearer to him than life itself, and dragged on his miserable existence a few years longer; whereas, by his niggardly caution his purposes were defeated in the following singular manner, and his misery so increased as to render life a burden.

Whatever occupies the mind intensely, and captivates the affections by day, is likely to become the subject of our dreams at night. It was so with Mond. Money was his favourite object, whether awake or asleep. Hence, in the presence of a person who was occupying the kiln, Mond, while asleep made mention of the spot where he had concealed a part of his treasure. The curious individual resolved upon a trial, and so repaired quietly to the secret place; here there was no disappointment. Ten Pounds sterling, in silver, were found concealed;—and, the conscience of the person being as fast asleep as Mond was at the time, it was deemed a virtue to pocket it, since its wretched owner was not disposed to use it. When Mond awoke in the morning, he speedily directed his steps to pay his morning devotions to his only deity; but how great was his grief and disappointment when he found the beloved of his soul was gone! he could by no means contain himself. He vociferated a most hideous yell, that alarmed his neighbours to a con-



siderable distance. On their arrival, so poignant was his grief, that he could not conceal the cause. He informed them of his loss. The report soon circulated, and strong suspicions were now entertained that he was still in possession of more.

To ascertain this fact was now the prevailing desire of those who had long known him. A few of his neighbours therefore one day entered his hut suddenly, and found him busily employed in counting money on the cover of a chest which had served him for the different purposes of table, chair, and treasure-desk. Perceiving he was caught, he threw himself immediately over his money, and although he knew his visitors were his best friends, he could not be constrained to rise but by violence. They now reckoned it over for him, and found the amount only £12. in silver.

On their leaving the house, imagining from the bustle that they were about to look for more, he bawled out vehemently not to meddle with some old bottles which stood in a wall-cove, as they belonged to one of his neighbours. A contrary effect was produced. They returned, and examined the bottles, finding silver in each of them. This induced a general search; when, to their great astonishment, they found better than £100. all in silver, concealed in different parts of the house. Mond now became the subject of conversation in all places where he was known, and though the sum in itself is comparatively small, yet, considering the means used by him to gather it, and the impression relative to his poverty, which had been



left on the minds of the people, it did not fail to astonish all on their coming to a knowledge of it.

Application was now made to the gentleman already mentioned, as he had previously interested himself in behalf of Mond. He advised the applicants not to return the money again to Mond, but to put it to interest, and have him comfortably clothed out of the principal. About twenty-six shillings were laid out for this purpose, certainly contrary to Mond's inclination: for on hearing the decision given, which robbed him of the pleasure of counting his coin, and involved the loss of so much, (for so he deemed it) it threw him into one of the most dreadful paroxysms of grief that language can describe. He continued three days and three nights without either food or sleep. No argument whatever could prevail with him. Those who were most attentive to him, and interested themselves most in his behalf, he deemed his greatest enemies. His grief was only equalled at the time he laboured under sentence of death, and there is little doubt, that had he possessed another pair of eyes, he would now have wept them out at the irretrievable loss which he conceived he had sustained. On the fourth day, however, his grief was assuaged. He summoned up a little courage, and appeared to feel a temporary repose. It was indeed but temporary, for on the arrival of his new clothes it was renewed in the most pungent and sensible manner.

Being requested to strip, that he might be washed and dressed, he complied only in part, for he peremptorily refused a change of small clothes. His tattered



coat and waistcoat on examination, were found to contain none of the sacred treasure ; but it was imagined that he refused a change in the other parts of his dress from motives of delicacy. It may here be observed, that a few days previous to the discovery of his wealth, his neighbours had subscribed and bought a flannel shirt or frock, for the making of which, he paid the taylor with one shilling instead of eighteen pence, asserting, with horrid imprecations, that he was not master of a single penny more. On removing this article, how was every feeling shocked on beholding a hard cord (suspended round the neck, and supposed to be attached to his truss-band,) which had sunk into his flesh in a most miserable manner ! His attendants now attempted to remove the cord, but he declared in the most solemn and violent language, that he would die before it should be disturbed.

Prompted however by their humanity, they paid no attention to his denunciation, and forcibly took it away ; when, to their utter astonishment, instead of its being attached to a truss-belt, they found a pewter pint measure (no doubt, the one he had used in his dram-shop,) fastened to the end of it, hammered closely together at the mouth, and so weighty, that it sufficiently indicated that it was not barren in contents. This singular depository contained no less than one hundred and seven guineas, in Gold. For better than twenty years he had carried it in this manner, with the utmost patience and composure. It was the appearance of this, which caused all who saw him to imagine he was diseased.



When we consider that this affection for money was so strong, that he endured for a long series of time without any apparent uneasiness the laceration of his flesh, which must have produced considerable pain continually; we need not wonder that the removal of his idol proved the cap-stone of his woes; grief now preyed upon his vitals like a vulture; wasted his strength, and sunk him shortly into a kind of stupor, from which he never recovered. He lived only seven months after this event, died unexpectedly, and went into a world of spirits, grieved on no other account but because he could not carry a portion of this ore along with him.



AUTHORITIES....Imperial Magazine vol. 2.



*THE LIFE*  
*OF*  
**DENIS HAMPSON,**  
*THE BLIND BARD OF MAGILLIGAN.*

—0000—

‘ The rolls of Fame I will not now explore,  
Nor need I here describe in learned lay  
How forth the Minstrel fared in days of yore,  
Right glad of heart, though homely in array,  
His waving beard and locks all hoary grey ;  
While from his bending shoulders decent hung,  
His Harp ; the sole companion of his way ;  
Which to the whistling wind responsive rung,  
And ever, as he went, some merry lay he sung.

—00000—

The following account of the blind Bard of Magilligan was taken from his own lips, July 3d. 1805, by the Rev. Mr. Sampson, at the request of Miss Owenson, now Lady Morgan.

“ DENIS HAMPSON, or the man with two heads, is a native of Derry : his father, Bryan Darrogher, (blackish complexion) Hampson, held the whole town-



land of Tyrcrevan ; his mother's relations were in possession of the Wood-town, (both considerable farms in Magilligan.) He lost his sight at the age of three years by the small-pox ; at twelve years he began to learn the Harp under Bridget O'Cahan : ' for,' as he said, ' in those old times, women as well as men were taught the Irish Harp, in the best families, and every old Irish family had Harps in plenty.' His next master was John C. Garragher a blind travelling Harper, whom he followed to Buncranagh, where his master used to play to Colonel Vaughan ; he had afterwards Laughlin Hanning and Patt Connor in succession, as masters. ' All these were from Connaught, which was,' as he added, ' the best part of the kingdom for music and for Harpers.' At eighteen years of age he began to play for himself, and was taken into the house of Counsellor Canning at Garvagh, for half a year ; his host, with Squire Gage and Doctor Bacon, found, and bought him a Harp. He travelled nine or ten years through Ireland and Scotland, and tells facetious stories of gentlemen in both countries : among others, that, in passing near the place of Sir J. Campbell, at Aghanbrack, he learned, that this gentleman had spent a great deal, and was living on so much per week of allowance. Hampson through delicacy would not call, but some of the domestics were sent after him ; on coming into the castle, Sir J. asked him why he had not called, adding ' sir, there was never a Harper but yourself that passed the door of my father's house,' to which Hampson answered, that ' he had heard in the neighbourhood that



his honour was not often at home ;' with which delicate evasion Sir J. was satisfied, he adds, 'that this was the highest bred and stateliest man he ever knew ; if he were putting on a new pair of gloves, and one of them dropped on the floor (though ever so clean,) he would order the servant to bring him another pair,' He says that, in that time he never met but one Laird that had a Harp, and that was a very small one, played on formerly by the Laird's father ; that when he had tuned it with new strings, the Laird and his Lady were both so pleased with his music, that they invited him back in these words : 'Hampson, as soon as you think this child of ours (a boy of three years of age,) is fit to learn on his grandfather's Harp, come back to teach him, and you shall not repent it,' but this he never accomplished.

'He told me a story of the Laird of Stone, with a great deal of comic relish. When he was playing at the house, a message came that a large party of gentlemen were coming to grouse, and would spend some days with him (the Laird ;) the Lady being in great distress, turned to her husband, saying, 'what shall we do my dear, for so many, in the way of beds.' 'Give yourself no vexation,' replied the Laird ; give us enough to eat, and I will supply the rest ; and as to beds, believe me, every man shall find one for himself, (meaning that his guests would fall under the table.) In his second trip to Scotland, in the year 1745, being at Edinburgh, when Charley the Pretender was there, he was called into the great hall to play ; at first he was alone, afterwards four fiddlers



joined :—the tune called for was, ‘the King shall enjoy his own again :’—he sung here part of the words following :—

‘ I hope to see the day  
When the Whigs shall run away,  
And the King shall enjoy his own again.’

‘ I asked him if he heard the Pretender speak ; he replied, I only heard him ask, ‘ Is Sylvan there ? ’ on which some one answered, ‘ he is not here, please your Royal Highness, but he shall be sent for.’ He meant to say Sullivan, continued Hampson, but that was the way he called the name. He says that Capt. M’Donnel, when in Ireland, came to see him, and that he told the Captain, that Charley’s cockade was in his father’s house.

‘ Hampson was brought into the Pretender’s presence by Colonel Kelly, of Roscommon, and Sir Thomas Sheridan ; and he (Hampson) was then above fifty years old. He played in many Irish houses ; among others, those of Lord D. Courcey, Mr. Fortescue, Sir P. Bellew, Squire Roche ; and in the great towns, Dublin, Cork, &c. &c.—respecting all which he interspersed pleasant anecdotes with surprising gaiety and correctness. As to correctness, he mentioned many anecdotes of my grandfather and grand-aunt, at whose houses he used to be frequently. In fact, in this identical Harper, whom you sent me to survey, I recognized an acquaintance, who as soon as he found me out, seemed exhilarated at having an old friend of (what he called) ‘ the old stock, in his poor cabin. He even mentioned many anecdotes of my own boy-



hood, which, though by me long forgotten, were accurately true. These things shew the surprising power of recollection at the age of an hundred and eight years. Since I saw him last, which was in 1787, the wen on the back of his head is greatly increased; it is now hanging over his neck and shoulders, nearly as large as his head, from which circumstance he derives his appellative, 'the man with two heads.' Gen. Hart, who is an admirer of music, sent a Limner lately to take a drawing of him, which cannot fail to be interesting, if it were only for the venerable expression of his meagre blind countenance, and the symmetry of his tall, thin, but not debilitated, person. I found him lying on his back in bed, near the fire of his cabin; his family employed in the usual way; his Harp under the bed-clothes, by which his face was covered also. When he heard my name he started up, (being already dressed,) and seemed rejoiced to hear the sound of my voice, which, he said, he began to recollect. He asked for my children, whom I brought to see him, and he felt them over and over; —then with tones of great affection, he blessed God that he had *seen* four generations of the name, and ended, by giving the children his blessing. He then tuned his old time-beaten Harp; his solace and bedfellow, and played with astonishing justness and good taste.

'The tunes which he played were his favourites; and he with an elegance of manner, said at the same time, I remember you have a fondness for music, and the tunes you used to ask for I have not forgotten,



which were Cualin, the Dawning of the Day, Elleen Aroon, Ceandubhdilis, &c. These, except the third, were the first tunes, which, according to regulation, he played at the famous meeting of Harpers at Belfast, under the patronage of some amateurs of Irish music. Mr. Bunting, the celebrated musician of that town, was here the year before, at Hampson's, noting his tunes, and his manner of playing, which is in the best old style. He said with the honest feeling of self-love, 'when I played the old tunes, not another of the Harpers would play after me.' He came to Magilligan many years ago, and at the age of eighty-six, married a woman of Innishowen, whom he found living in the house of a friend. 'I can't tell,' quoth Hampson, 'if it was not the d—l buckled us together; she being lame, and I blind.' By this wife he had one daughter, married to a cooper, who has several children, and maintains them all, though Hampson (in this alone seeming to dote) says, that his son-in-law is a spendthrift, and that he maintains them;—the family humour is whim, and the old man is quieted. He is pleased when they tell him, as he thinks is the case, that people of character, for musical taste, send letters to invite him; and he, though incapable now of leaving the house, is planning expeditions never to be attempted, much less realized; these are the only traces of mental debility; as to his body, he has no inconvenience but that arising from a chronic disorder; his habits have ever been sober; his favourite drink, once beer, now milk and water; his diet chiefly potatoes. I asked him to teach my daughter, but he declined;



adding, however, that it was too hard for a young girl, but nothing would give him greater pleasure, if he thought it could be done.

‘Lord Bristol, when lodging at the bathing house of Mount Salut, near Magilligan, gave three guineas, and ground rent free, to build the house where Hampson now lives. At the house-warming, his Lordship with his Lady and Family came, and the children danced to his Harp; the Bishop gave three crowns to the family, and in the dear year, his Lordship called in his coach and six—stopped at the door, and gave a guinea to buy meal.

#### ADDENDA.

‘In the time of Noah was green,  
After his flood I have not been seen,  
Until seventeen hundred and two.—I was found,  
By Corman Kelly under ground;  
He raised me up to that degree,  
Queen of Music they call me.’

‘The above lines are sculptured on the old Harp, which is made, the sides, and front of White Sally, the back of Fir, patched with Copper and Iron plates. His daughter now attending him, is only thirty three years old.

‘I have now given you an account of my visit, and even thank you (though my fingers are tired,) for the pleasure you procured to me by this interesting commission.’

Ever yours,

G. V. SAMPSON.



Hampson died at the advanced age of an hundred and ten years. A few hours before his death, he tuned his Harp, that it might be in readiness to entertain some company who were expected to pass that way shortly after; however, he felt the approach of death, and calling his family around him, he resigned his breath without a struggle, being in perfect possession of his faculties until the last moment of his existence.

The foregoing account of Hampson does not mention whether he had been married more than once, but this seems probable from the age of his daughter attending him, at the time it was written, who, if thirty three years old then, she must have been born when he was seventy five.

---

#### LINES WRITTEN ON HIS DEATH.

*The following lines on his death appeared in the  
Belfast Magazine, January, 1808.*

---

‘The fame of the brave shall no longer be sounded,  
The last of our bards, now sleeps cold in the grave,  
Magilligan’s Rocks where his lays have resounded,  
Frown dark at the ocean, and spurn at the wave.

For Hampson, no more shall thy soul-touching finger  
Steal sweet o’er the strings, and wild melody pour,  
No more near thy hut, shall the villagers linger,  
While strains from thy Harp, warble soft round the  
shore.



No more thy Harp swells with enraptured emotion,  
Thy wild gleams of fancy for ever are fled—  
No longer thy minstrelsy charms the rude ocean  
That rolls near the green turf that pillows thy head.  
Yet vigour and youth with bright visions had fired  
thee,  
And rosebuds of health have blown bright on thy  
cheek,  
The songs of the sweet bards of Erin inspired thee,  
And urged thee to wander, bright laurels to seek.  
Yes, oft hast thou sung of our King's crowned with  
glory,  
Or sighing repeated the lovers fond lay,  
And oft hast thou sung of the Bards famed in story,  
Whose wild notes of rapture have long passed a-  
way.  
Thy grave shall be screened from the blast and the  
billow,  
Around it a fence shall posterity raise ;  
Erin's children shall wet with their tears thy cold  
pillow,  
Her youth shall lament thee, and carol thy praise.'

---

---

AUTHORITIES.

Lady Morgan's Wild Irish Girl, vol. 3....Belfast  
Magazine.



*THE LIFE*  
*OF*  
**J O H N   K A Y,**  
*THE BLIND MECHANIC OF GLASGOW.*

---

‘ The chamber, where the good man meets his fate,  
Is privileged beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life.—Quite on the verge of Heaven.’

---

The subject of this memoir, was a native of Car-  
riden near Borrowstounness. He spent his early  
years, like most children, in the keen pursuit of amuse-  
ments, while at the same time he got acquainted with  
the elementary parts of education. He was generally  
the leader of his companions in their various diversions;  
but, an unfortunate accident happened which drew  
him away from his heart’s delight. It was in the  
tenth year of his age, when one day, a loaded musket  
had been carelessly put down where he and his com-  
panions were amusing themselves; one of them in-  
considerately took it up, not knowing it was loaded,  
and fired off the contents: John Kay being close by,



was in a moment deprived of his sight. It was not long after this melancholy event, when his relations left their native parish, and came to reside in this city. He accompanied them. Confined now to more sedentary employments, he often amused himself by making various articles of wood, which he executed with great ingenuity. For several years before his death, he assisted his brothers, who were Carpenters by trade; he wrought constantly at this profession, and finished his work so well as to astonish those who saw him. He wrought in mahogany and other sorts of fine wood, and made various kinds of furniture.

When going about the town, he needed no person to guide him, as he could find his way himself, and what was very remarkable, it taken to any particular house, though in a close, or up stairs, he could easily return again, if necessary, without any person conducting him. He has taken his friends sometimes to places in an evening, which they could scarcely find out when they had occasion to call again, even with day-light. It was not unusual for him to take a journey to Paisley, and other neighbouring towns, and to be the guide of any stranger who might be along with him. Walking one day in the streets of this city with a friend, who warned him of their being near a horse—he said there was no need for that, as he could perceive it himself; being asked how? he replied, he found a difference of air on his face, when near any particular object, and that from this feeling, he could avoid a lamp-post when  
d...2



he approached it ;—as a confirmation of this assertion, he has been frequently observed to pass by one, when walking alone.

I am not able, from any information which I have received, to point out the exact time when he began to pay serious attention to religion. The accounts which were read to him of the progress of missionaries, among heathen nations, gave him the most unfeigned pleasure.

His heart was much engaged in the religious instruction of youth. He was one of the teachers of a Sabbath evening school. A great number of the scholars were considerably beyond the age of those who usually attend such schools ; they highly respected him, and derived much improvement from his instructions. Many of them are remarkably well instructed in the word of God, considering their years : their conduct, also, in general, is very regular and becoming, which it is to be fondly hoped, are the fore-runners of their giving more decided evidence of a saving change begun in their hearts. Besides being so useful in his own school, he was a great promoter of other schools ; he was grieved when any of them fell away, and used all his endeavours to keep the scholars together, and collect them again. Those whom he thought qualified for instructing youth, he urged to come forward to take a part in this good work.

He perceived with regret, that the business of the schools, both in this city and neighbourhood with which he was connected, was not going forward for some time with that activity which he could have



wished. This led him, and one or two more to inquire into the causes, and, if possible, to apply a remedy. They were induced, in consequence, to propose another plan for conducting those schools, which was universally approved, and has since been acted upon, with the best effect. His zeal in this important work did not fall away, after the commencement of his last illness. He went to meet with his dear young friends, even when he was scarcely able to address them ; and had them frequently calling upon him in his sick chamber, to receive his pious instruction. A little while before his death, the words which he spoke, and the prayers which he offered up in behalf of his scholars, and the teachers of his school, will not soon be forgotten. I beg leave, in connexion with this, to mention a little incident related to me by a friend who was present, which happened upon a Wednesday evening, when he was accustomed to meet his more advanced pupils for religious instruction. One of them had been idling, and disturbing some of the rest, when he was calling upon them in the most affectionate manner, 'to persevere in the ways of *truth* and *godliness*.' He quickly perceived it, and naming the scholar, said, 'I cannot see you, but remember God sees you, and will not forget what you do ;' and when concluding the exercise with prayer, he prayed for her in the most fervent and affectionate manner. Indeed, on whatever occasion he spoke on religious subjects, it was with a pathos peculiar to himself.

He was a zealous friend to the religious tract



society. He aided its funds as far as his ability reached, and at the same time, used his utmost endeavours with those who were rich, for the same purpose. He took every opportunity of distributing tracts both in town and country, and has been known to convey them into families, where he thought they might be useful; and, when he dared not put them into their hands, to leave them below their doors. It was usual for him, when on a journey from home, to have a parcel of these always in his pocket, that he might bestow them in the places he visited, or give them away to persons whom he might meet with on the road; such was his zeal for the propagation of the Gospel, and so indefatigable was he for the good of his fellow-creatures. When engaged in his daily work, he was seldom to be found without tracts. He was accustomed to distribute them among the servants where he was working. Upon an occasion of this kind, he had been employed for several days in a gentleman's house, where he had frequent opportunities of conversing with the servants. One of them appeared particularly foolish—quite unwilling to enter upon any serious conversation. He one day put into her hands some suitable tracts, and requested her to read them, which she promised to do. It was not long before he saw a considerable change in her behaviour. She listened with more attention when he spoke to her upon religious subjects; she enquired what church he attended, and expressed her astonishment, how he who was blind could know so much about the Bible.

The deceased, will live long in the remembrance



of those who were benefited by his salutary counsels. Many who were in perplexity concerning the path of duty, betook themselves to his advice. Thus did he frequently restore peace to the troubled mind. He entered into all their feelings, in the most sympathising manner; he wept with those who wept, and rejoiced with those who rejoiced; frequently pointed out the path of duty, and removed difficulties, which appeared to the dejected mind wholly insurmountable. He was particularly affectionate in waiting on the sick; and sat frequently at their bed-sides, speaking to them the words of consolation, and praying with them. He was very faithful in the case of any of his brethren, who had forgotten their duty to God and his people. It is much to be lamented, that this duty is too much neglected by brethren in church-fellowship. They see others fall, and are not careful to help them, and point out the evil of their conduct. The deceased, however, was an eminent pattern of faithfulness to his brethren. He set the evil of their conduct, in so prudent, but at the same time, in such a forcible manner, before them, that he had often the comfort of reclaiming them from the error of their ways, while at the same time, he cleared himself of the blood of those who would obstinately go on in a course of sin. We would not, however, be considered as holding up the subject of this memoir as faultless;—far from it. None was readier than he to confess sin; but, notwithstanding, it may with truth be affirmed, that his faults, so far as they were known to man, were few;—his virtues many.



But I hasten forward to the period when he was near the end of his earthly career, and at the very termination of it, and to speak of the wondrous love of God manifested towards him. He had now been nearly six months afflicted with a distemper, which was supposed to be *bile* in the *stomach*, and was quickly wasting away. During a great part of that time he was confined to his room. I should have mentioned, that in the prayers which I have already referred to, he was particularly mindful of his own school. He afterwards expressed a particular desire to the Christian friend whom he had procured to teach in his place, that he would continue with the school; desired his sister to collect what tracts he had, and give them to Mr. A——, and requested that he would distribute them among the scholars, as a token of his affection, and mention his situation particularly to them. The tracts were given to the scholars, according to his desire, and many of them were bathed in tears, when they heard that their faithful and affectionate teacher was now no more. Our dying friend encouraged Mr. A——, to go on with the school, and to hope for the divine blessing, as the Lord would certainly countenance his own ordinances, though, perhaps, not immediately.

It may surprize some, in the course of reading this narrative, to be informed of the deceased speaking so much when he was so weak, and so near his dissolution. All his friends who visited him that day, were astonished at it; they had formerly seen him when he could scarcely reply to them, but now,



when, in reality, he was on the verge of eternity, he spoke as he was accustomed to do when in health. Sure we must see in this the hand of God; surely he spoke truly, when he himself said, the Lord hath opened my mouth, that I might speak to his praise. We have said that this change took place about seven o'clock in the morning, and he was enabled to speak a great part of that day: but on the 16th of Decm. 1809, he breathed out his last—aged thirty-two years.

---

#### AUTHORITY.

Kay's Life—Glasgow edition of 1816.



## EXTRAORDINARY ACQUIREMENTS

OF

## A BLIND LADY.

---

*In the Annual Register for 1762, we have the following Account.*

---

A young lady of good family in France, now in her 18th year, lost her sight when only two years old; her mother had been advised to lay some pigeon's blood on her eyes, to preserve them in the small pox; whereas, so far from answering the end, it ate into them. Nature, however, may be said to have compensated for the unhappy mistake, by beauty of person, sweetness of temper, vivacity of genius, quickness of conception, and many talents, which certainly must alleviate her misfortune. She plays at cards with the same readiness as others of the same party. She first prepares the packs allotted to her by pricking them in several parts; yet, so imperceptibly, that the closest inspection can scarcely discern her indexes. She sorts the suits, and arranges the cards in their proper sequence, with the same precision, and nearly the same facility as they who have their sight.



All she requires is, that every card should be named as it is played; and these she retains so exactly, that she frequently performs some notable strokes, such as shew a great combination and strong memory. The most wonderful circumstance is, that she should have learned to read and write; but, even this is readily believed on knowing her method. In writing to her no ink is used, but the letters are pricked down on the paper, and, by the delicacy of her touch, feeling each letter, she follows them successively, and reads every word with her finger ends. She herself, in writing, makes use of a pencil, as she could not know when her pen was dry;—her guide on her paper is a small thin ruler, and of the breadth of her writing. On finishing a letter, she wets it, so as to fix the traces of her pencil, that they be not obscured or effaced; then proceeds to fold and seal it, and write the direction; all by her own address, and without the assistance of any other person.

Her writing is very straight, well cut, and the spelling no less correct. To reach this singular mechanism, the indefatigable cares of her affectionate mother were long employed, who accustomed her daughter to feel letters cut in cards or pasteboard, brought her to distinguish an A from a B, and thus the whole Alphabet, and afterwards to spell words; then by the remembrance of the shape of the letters, to delineate them on paper; and lastly to arrange them so as to form words and sentences. She has learned to play on the Guitar, and has even contrived



a way of pricking down the tunes, as an assistance to her memory. So delicate are her Organs, that in singing a tune, though new to her, she is able to name the notes. In figure dances she acquits herself extremely well, and in minuets with inimitable ease and gracefulness.

As for the works of her sex, she has a masterly hand;—she sews and hems perfectly well; and in all her works she threads the needles for herself, however small. By the watch, her touch never fails telling her exactly the hour and minute.

*AUTHORITY*...Oxford Encyclopedia, art. Blind.

---

*Method of playing on the Violin, and Violincello at the same time.*

Mr. JAMES WATSON, a blind Musician of Dundee, has invented a method, by which, he can play upon these two instruments at once, with the greatest facility and correctness. He plays on the Violin in the usual manner, and on the Violincello by means of his feet. His right foot goes into a sort of shoe at the end of the bow, and in consequence of his right thigh being supported by a spring attached to the chair on which he sits, he has the whole command of the foot, without suffering any fatigue. By means of his left foot he acts upon a set of levers, by which he shortens the strings with great facility.

Mr Watson has frequently played thirteen and fourteen hours in one day, without any extraordinary fatigue

*AUTHORITY*...Edinburgh Philosophical Journal, vol. 3.



# CONTENTS.

|                            |     |     |        |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|--------|
| Life of the Author,        | ... | ... | page 1 |
| -----Homer,                | ... | ... | 37     |
| -----Milton,               | ... | ... | 49     |
| -----Blacklock,            | ... | ... | 75     |
| -----Saunderson,           | ... | ... | 111    |
| -----Euler,                | ... | ... | 124    |
| -----Metcalf,              | ... | ... | 136    |
| -----Stanley,              | ... | ... | 153    |
| -----Strong,               | ... | ... | 157    |
| -----Moyes,                | ... | ... | 161    |
| -----Clancy,               | ... | ... | 169    |
| -----Kennedy,              | ... | ... | 175    |
| -----Blind Harry,          | ... | ... | 181    |
| -----King of Bohemia,      | ... | ... | 203    |
| -----Gonelli,              | ... | ... | 207    |
| -----Maguire,              | ... | ... | 208    |
| -----Gower,                | ... | ... | 210    |
| -----Price,                | ... | ... | 212    |
| -----Carolan,              | ... | ... | 213    |
| -----Crumbhorn,            | ... | ... | 229    |
| -----Sampson,              | ... | ... | 242    |
| Anecdote of the Biter Bit, | ... | ... | 249    |



|                             |     |     |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Life of Salinas,            | ... | ... | 253 |
| ----- Rushton,              | ... | ... | 259 |
| ----- Talbot,               | ... | ... | 285 |
| ----- Mond,                 | ... | ... | 291 |
| ----- Hampson,              | ... | ... | 303 |
| ----- Kay,                  | ... | ... | 312 |
| Extraordinary acquirements, | ... | ... | 320 |
| ----- Watson.               | ... | ... | 322 |





