ESSAYS

ON SOME OF

SHAKESPEARE'S

DRAMATIC CHARACTERS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ESSAY

ON

THE FAULTS OF SHAKESPEARE.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

By WILLIAM RICHARDSON, M.A. F.R.S.E.

PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. MURRAY AND S. HIGHLEY, NO. 32, FLEET STREET.

1797.

INSCRIBED,

IN TESTIMONY OF

THE GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM

OF THE AUTHOR,

To ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq.

OF GARTMORE,

LATELY LORD RECTOR

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,

AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

FOR THE COUNTY

OF STIRLING.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the year 1774 was publiſhed, "A philoſophical Analyſis and Illuſtration of ſome of Shakeſpeare's Dramatic Characters." In the year 1784 were publiſhed "Eſſays on Shakeſpeare's Dramatic Characters of Richard the Third, King Lear, and Timon of Athens; to which were added, An Eſſay on the Faults of Shakeſpeare; and Additional Obſervations on the Character of Hamlet." Soon after were publiſhed "Eſſays on Shakepeare's Dramatic Character of Sir John Falſtaff; and on his Imitation of Female Characters:" to which were added, ſome general Obſervations on the chief Objects of Criticiſm in the Works of Shakeſpeare.

Theſe different performances are now collected into one volume with one uniform title: they are more commodiouſly arranged; and have received ſuch correction and improvement, as muſt neceſſarily have occurred to the author, and been ſuggeſted by his friends, in the courſe of ſeveral preceding Editions. He hopes therefore that, on theſe accounts, they are rendered ſtill leſs unworthy of public notice.

CONTENTS.

The Reader is requeſted to correct the following

ERRATA.

P. 22, l. 22, *for* cannon, *read* canon.

90, — 15 and 16, *for* It is, *read* Is it.

91, — 22, *for* may have, are, *read* may have to other objects, are.

190, — laſt of the note, *for* of ſeduction, *read* of the arts of ſeduction.

306, — 19, *for* puts, *read* put.

319, — 7, *for* early our inherent, *read* early or inherent.

332, — 7, *for* ſmother'd, *read* ſmooth'd.

333, — 15, *for* contract, *read* contraſt.

372, — 1, *for* ſafe in port, *read* on ſome bliſsful iſland.

379, — 26 and 27, *for* to make "fewel cheap," *read* to make "coals cheap."

INTRODUCTION.

MORALISTS of all ages have recommended Poetry as an art no leſs inſtructive than amuſing; tending at once to improve the heart, and entertain the fancy. The genuine and original Poet, peculiarly favoured by nature, and intimately acquainted with the conſtitution of the human mind, not by a long train of metaphyſical deductions, but, as it were, by immediate intuition, diſplays the workings of every affection, detects the origin of every paſſion, traces its progreſs, and delineates its character. Thus, he teaches us to know ourſelves, inſpires us with magnanimous ſentiments, animates our love of virtue, and confirms our hatred of vice. Moved by his ſtriking pictures of the inſtability of human enjoyments, we moderate the vehemence of our deſires, fortify our minds, and are enabled to ſuſtain adverſity.

Among the ancient Greeks, the ſtudy

of the Poets conſtituted an eſſential part in their celebrated ſyſtems of education. Plutarch obſerves, in his treatiſe on this curious and intereſting ſubject, that, as mandrakes planted among vines, imparting their virtue to the grape, correct its acidity, and improve its flavour; ſo the poetic art, adorning the precepts of philoſophy, renders them eaſy and agreeable. Socrates, according to Xenophon, was aſſiduous in applying the works of Homer and Heſiod to the valuable purpoſes of moral inſtruction. Diſcourſing on the character of Therſites, he diſplayed the meanneſs of calumny, and the folly of preſumption; he argued, that modeſty was the companion of merit, and that effrontery was the proper object of ridicule and reproach. Diſcourſing on the ſtory of Circe, he illuſtrated the fatal effects of intemperance; and rehearſing the fable of the Syrens, he warned his diſciples againſt the allurements of falſe delight. This great teacher of virtue was ſo fully convinced of the advantages reſulting from the connection of poetry with philoſophy, that he aſſiſted Euripides in compoſing his tragedies, and fur-

niſhed him with many excellent ſentiments and obſervations. The propriety of beſtowing attention on the ſtudy of human nature, and of borrowing aſſiſtance from the poets, and eſpecially from Shakeſpeare, will be more particularly illuſtrated in the following remarks.

The ſtudy of human nature has been often and variouſly recommended. "Know thyſelf," was a precept ſo highly eſteemed by the venerable ſages of antiquity, that they aſcribed it to the Delphian oracle[a]. By reducing it to practice, we learn the dignity of human nature: Our emulation is excited by contemplating our divine original: And, by diſcovering the capacity and extent of our faculties, we become deſirous of higher improvement. Nor would the practice of this apophthegm enable us merely to elevate and enlarge our deſires, but alſo, to purify and refine them; to withſtand the ſolicitations of groveling appetites, and ſubdue their violence: For improvement in virtue conſiſts in duly regulating our inferior

[a] Cic. de legibus.

appetites, no leſs than in cultivating the principles of benevolence and magnanimity. Numerous, however, are the deſires, and various are the paſſions that agitate the human heart. Every individual is actuated by feelings peculiar to himſelf, inſenſible even of their exiſtence; of their preciſe force and tendency often ignorant. But, to prevent the inroads of vice, and preſerve our minds free from the tyranny of lawleſs paſſion, vigilance muſt be exerted where we are weakeſt and moſt expoſed. We muſt therefore be attentive to the ſtate and conſtitution of our own minds; we muſt diſcover to what habits we are moſt addicted, and of what propenſities we ought chiefly to beware: We muſt deliberate with ourſelves on what reſources we can moſt aſſuredly depend, and what motives are beſt calculated to repel the invader. Now, the ſtudy of human nature, accuſtoming us to turn our attention inwards, and reflect on the various propenſities and inclinations of the heart, facilitates ſelf-examination, and renders it habitual.

Independent of utility, the ſtudy of the

human mind is recommended in a peculiar manner to the curious and inquiſitive; and is capable of yielding delight by the novelty, beauty, and magnificence, of the object. Many find amuſement in ſearching into the conſtitution of the material world; and, with unwearied diligence, purſue the progreſs of nature in the growth of a plant, or the formation of an inſect. They ſpare neither labour nor expence, to fill their cabinets with every curious production: They travel from climate to climate: They ſubmit with cheerfulneſs to fatigue, and inclement ſeaſons; and think their induſtry ſufficiently compenſated, by the diſcovery of ſome unuſual phænomenon. Not a pebble that lies on the ſhore, not a leaf that waves in the foreſt, but attracts their notice, and ſtimulates their inquiry. Events, or incidents, which the vulgar regard with terror or indifference, afford them ſupreme delight: They rejoice at the return of a comet, and celebrate the blooming of an aloe, more than the birth of an emperor. Nothing is left unexplored: Air, ocean, the minuteſt objects of ſenſe, as well as the greateſt and

moſt remote, are accurately and attentively ſcrutinized. But, though theſe reſearches be laudable, and are ſuited to the dignity of the human mind, we ought to remember, that Mind itſelf deſerves our attention. Endowed with the ſuperior powers of feeling and underſtanding, capable of thought and reflection, active, conſcious, ſuſceptible of delight, and provident of futurity, it claims to itſelf a duration, when the moſt ſplendid objects around us ſhall be deſtroyed. Obſerve the vigilance of the ſenſes in collecting images from every part of the creation: Memory preſerves them as the materials of thought, and the principles of knowledge: Our reaſoning faculty ſeparates, combines, or compares them, in order to diſcover their relations and conſequences: And imagination, ſedulous to amuſe, arranges them into various groups and aſſemblages. If we conſider the paſſions and feelings of the heart; if we reflect on their diverſity, and contemplate the various aſpects they aſſume, the violence of ſome will terrify and aſtoniſh, the fantaſtic extravagance of many will excite amazement; and others, ſoft and com-

placent, will ſooth us, and yield delight. Shall we aſſert, therefore, that the ſtudy of human nature is barren or unpleaſant? Or that Mind, thus actuated and informed, is leſs worthy of our notice than the inſect produced at noon-tide, to finiſh its exiſtence with the ſetting-ſun? "Shall a man," ſays Socrates, "be ſkilled in the geography of foreign countries, and continue ignorant of the ſoil and limits of his own? Shall he inquire into the qualities of external objects, and pay no attention to the mind?"

But, though the utility or pleaſure reſulting from the ſtudy of human nature are manifeſt, the progreſs men have hitherto made in it, neither correſponds with the dignity of the ſubject, nor with our advances in other regions of ſcience. Neither is our knowledge of the paſſions and faculties of the mind proportioned to the numerous theories men have fabricated concerning them. On the contrary, the numerous theories of human nature that have appeared in various ages and languages, have been ſo different from one another, and withal ſo plauſible and impoſing, that, inſtead of in-

forming, they perplex. From this uncertainty and diverſity of opinion, ſome have aſſerted that the mind of man, on account of its tranſcendent excellence, and the inconceivable delicacy of its ſtructure, can never be the object of preciſe inquiry. Others, again, from very different premiſes, deduce the ſame concluſion, forming their opinions on the numerous, and apparently diſcordant, powers and affections of the mind, and affirming, that its operations are governed by no regular principles.

That a perfect knowledge of the nature and faculties of the mind is not to be acquired in our preſent condition, cannot poſſibly be denied. Neither can the contrary be affirmed of any ſubject of philoſophical inquiry. Yet our internal feelings, our obſervation and experience, ſupply us with rich materials, ſufficient to animate our love of knowledge; and, by enabling us to proſecute our reſearches, to extend the limits of human underſtanding. Neither can we affirm, that our thoughts, feelings, and affections, are in a ſtate of anarchy and confuſion. Nothing, you ſay, ſeems wilder and more

incoherent, than the thoughts and images continually fluctuating in the mind: Like the "gay motes that people the ſun-beams," they know no order, and are guided by no connection. We are conſcious of no power that directs their motions, reſtrains their impetuoſity, or regulates their diſorder. No leſs irregular and diſcordant are the feelings and emotions of the heart. We are alike acceſſible to love or hatred, confidence or ſuſpicion, exultation or deſpondency. Theſe paſſions and diſpoſitions are often blended together, or ſucceed each other, with a velocity which we can neither meaſure nor conceive. The ſoul that now melts with tenderneſs, is inſtantly frantic with rage. The countenance now adorned with complacency, and beauteous with the ſmile of content, is in a moment clouded with anxiety, or diſtorted with envy. He muſt therefore be more than mortal who can reduce this tumultuous and diſorderly chaos to regularity.—"Lift up thine eyes to the firmament," ſaid a countryman to a philoſopher, "number the ſtars, compute their diſtances, and explain their motions. Obſerve

the diverſity of ſeaſons, and the confuſion occaſioned by the changeableneſs of the weather: The ſun and refreſhing ſhowers cheriſh the fruits of the earth; but our fields are often blighted with mildews, the ſky is ſuddenly overcaſt, the ſtorms deſcend, and the hopes of the year are blaſted. Preſcribe laws to the winds, and govern the rage of the tempeſts; then will I believe, that the courſe of nature is regular and determined." Thus, even external phænomena, to an uninſtructed perſon, will ſeem as wild and incongruous as the motions and affections of the mind. On a more accurate inſpection, he finds that harmony and deſign pervade the univerſe; that the motions of the ſtars are regular; and that laws are preſcribed to the tempeſt. Nature extends her attention to the moſt inſignificant productions: The principles of vegetation are eſtabliſhed immutable in the texture of the meaneſt bloſſom; the laws of its exiſtence are accurately defined; and the period of its duration invariably determined. If theſe obſervations are juſt, and if we ſtill maintain that the mind is in a ſtate of anarchy and diſorder,

we are reduced to the neceſſity of affirming, that nature hath exhauſted her powers in the formation of inferior objects, and neglected the moſt important; that ſhe hath eſtabliſhed laws and government in the inanimate creation, and abandoned the mind to miſrule; and that ſhe hath given us a body ſuited to our condition, faſhioned according to the moſt accurate proportions, and adjuſted to the niceſt rules of mechanics; and left the animating principle, the mover and director of this wonderful machine, to be actuated by random impulſes, miſhapen, and imperfect. Shall we acquieſce in this opinion, and aſcribe negligence or inability to the Creator? The laws that regulate the intellectual ſyſtem are too fine for ſuperficial attention, and elude the perception of the vulgar. But every accurate and ſedate obſerver is ſenſible of their exiſtence.

Difficulty in making juſt experiments is the principal reaſon why the knowledge of human nature has been retarded. The materials of this ſtudy are commonly gathered from reflection on our own feelings, or from

obſervations on the conduct of others. Each of theſe methods is expoſed to difficulty, and conſequently to error.

Natural philoſophers poſſeſs great advantages over moraliſts and metaphyſicians, in ſo far as the ſubjects of their inquiries belong to the ſenſes, are external, material, and often permanent. Hence they can retain them in their preſence till they have examined their motion, parts, or compoſition: They can have recourſe to them for a renewal of their impreſſions when they grow languid or obſcure, or when they feel their minds vigorous, and diſpoſed to philoſophize. But paſſions are excited independent of our volition, and ariſe or ſubſide without our deſire or concurrence. Compaſſion is never awakened but by the view of pain or of ſorrow. Reſentment is never kindled but by actual ſuffering, or by the view of injuſtice.

Will anger, jealouſy, and revenge, attend the ſummons of the diſpaſſionate ſage, that he may examine their conduct, and diſmiſs them? Will pride and ambition obey the voice of the humble hermit, and aſſiſt him in explaining the principles of human na-

ture? Or by what powerful ſpell can the abſtracted philoſopher, whoſe paſſions are all chaſtened and ſubdued, whoſe heart never throbs with deſire, prevail with the tender affections to appear at his unkindly command, and ſubmit the delicacy of their features to the rigor of ſtrict inquiry. The philoſopher, accuſtomed to moderate his paſſions, rather than indulge them, is of all men leaſt able to provoke their violence; and, in order to ſucceed in his reſearches, he muſt recal emotions felt by him at ſome former period; or he muſt ſeize their impreſſion, and mark their operations at the very moment they are accidentally excited. Thus, with other obvious diſadvantages, he will often loſe the opportunity of a happy mood, unable to avail himſelf of thoſe animating returns of vivacity and attention eſſential to genius, but independent of the will.

Obſervations made, while the mind is inflamed, are difficult in the execution, incomplete, and erroneous. Eager paſſions admit no partners, and endure no rivals in their authority. The moment reflection,

or any foreign or oppoſing principle, begins to operate, they are either exceedingly exaſperated, agitating the mind, and leaving it no leiſure for ſpeculation; or, if they are unable to maintain their aſcendant, they become cool and indiſtinct; their aſpect grows dim; and obſervations made during their decline are imperfect. The paſſions are ſwift and evaneſcent: We cannot arreſt their celerity, nor ſuſpend them in the mind during pleaſure. You are moved by ſtrong affection: Seize the opportunity, let none of its motions eſcape you, and obſerve every ſentiment it excites. You cannot. While the paſſion prevails, you have no leiſure for ſpeculation; and be aſſured it has ſuffered abatement, if you have time to philoſophize.

But you proceed by recollection. Still, however, your obſervations are limited, and your theory partial. To be acquainted with the nature of any paſſion, we muſt know by what combination of feelings it is excited; to what temperament it is allied; in what proportion it gathers force and ſwiftneſs; what propenſities, and what aſſociations of

thought either retard or accelerate its impetuoſity; and how it may be oppoſed, weakened, or ſuppreſſed. But, if theſe circumſtances eſcape the moſt vigilant and abſtracted attention, when the mind is actually agitated, how can they be recollected when the paſſion is entirely quieted? Moreover, every paſſion is compounded of inferior and ſubordinate feelings, eſſential to its exiſtence, in their own nature nicely and minutely varied, but whoſe different ſhades and gradations are difficult to be diſcerned. To theſe we muſt be acutely attentive; to mark how they are combined, blended, or oppoſed; how they are ſuddenly extinguiſhed, in a moment renewed, and again extinguiſhed. But theſe fleet volatile feelings, perceived only when the mind is affected, elude the moſt dexterous and active memory. Add to this, that an object ſuggeſted by memory is ever fainter and leſs diſtinct than an actual perception, eſpecially if the object to be renewed is of a ſpiritual nature, a thought, ſentiment, or internal ſenſation.

Even allowing the poſſibility of accurate

obſervation, our theories will continue partial and inadequate [b]. We have only one view of the ſubject, and know not what aſpects it may aſſume, or what powers it may poſſeſs in the conſtitution of another. No principle has been more variouſly treated, nor has given riſe to a greater number of ſyſtems, than that by which we are denominated moral agents, and determine the merit or demerit of human actions. But this can ſcarcely proceed from any other cauſe than the diverſity of our feelings, and the neceſſity we are under of meaſuring the diſpoſitions of others by our own. Even this moral principle, though a competent judge of the virtue and propriety of human actions, is apt to miſlead us in our inquiries concerning the ſtructure and diſpoſitions of the mind. Deſirous of avoiding the rebuke of this ſevere and vigilant cenſor, we are ready to extenuate every blameable quality, and magnify what we approve.

In order, therefore, to rectify our opinions, and enlarge our conceptions of the human mind, we muſt ſtudy its operations

[b] Dr. Reid's Inquiry, chap. i. ſect. 2.

in the conduct and deportment of others: We must mingle in society, and observe the manners and characters of mankind, according as casual or unexpected incidents may furnish an opportunity. But the mind, not being an object of the external senses, the temper and inclinations of others can only be known to us by signs either natural or artificial, referring us to our own internal sensations. Thus, we are exposed nearly to the same difficulties as before. We cannot at pleasure call forth the objects of our researches, nor retain them till we have examined their nature. We can know no more of the internal feelings of another than he expresses by outward signs or language; and consequently he may feel many emotions which we are unable easily to conceive. Neither can we consider human characters and affections as altogether indifferent to us. They are not mere objects of curiosity; they excite love or hatred, approbation or dislike. But, when the mind is influenced by these affections, and by others that often attend them, the judgment is apt to be biassed, and the force of the principle

we contemplate is increaſed or diminiſhed accordingly. The inquirer muſt not only beware of external difficulties, but muſt preſerve his heart, both from angry, and from kind affection. The maxim, that all men who deliberate about doubtful matters, ſhould diveſt themſelves of hatred, friendſhip, anger, and compaſſion, is as applicable in philoſophy as in politics.

Since experiments, made by reflecting on our own minds, or by attending to the conduct of others, are liable to difficulty, and conſequently to error; we ſhould embrace every aſſiſtance that may facilitate and improve them. Were it poſſible, during the continuance of a violent paſſion, to ſeize a faithful impreſſion of its features, and an exact delineation of the images it creates in us, ſuch a valuable copy would guide the philoſopher in tracing the perplexed and intricate mazes of metaphyſical inquiry. By frequently examining it, every partial conſideration, and every feeling tending to miſlead his opinions, would be corrected: His conception would be enlarged by diſcovering paſſions more or leſs vehement than his own,

or by discovering tempers of a different colour. We judge of mankind by referring their actions to the passions and principles that influence our own behaviour. We have no other guide, since the nature of the passions and faculties of the mind are not discernible by the senses. It may, however, be objected, that, according to this hypothesis, those who deduce the conduct of others from malignant passions, and those who are capable of imitating them, must themselves be malignant. The observation is inaccurate. Every man, unless his constitution be defective, inherits the principles of every passion: but no man is the prey of all the passions. Some of them are so feeble in themselves, or rather, so entirely suppressed by the ascendant of others, that they never become principles of action, nor constitute any part of the character. Hence it is the business of culture and education, by giving exercise to virtuous principles, and by rendering them habitual, to bear down their opponents, and so gradually to weaken and wear them out. If we measure the minds of others precisely by our own, as we have formed and fashioned

them by habit and education, and make no account of feeble and decaying principles, our theories muſt neceſſarily be inadequate. But, by conſidering the copy and portrait of minds different from our own, and by reflecting on theſe latent and unexerted principles, augmented and promoted by imagination, we may diſcover many new tints, and uncommon features. Now, that claſs of poetical writers that excel by imitating the paſſions, might contribute in this reſpect to rectify and enlarge the ſentiments of the philoſopher: and, if ſo, they would have the additional merit of conducting us to the temple of truth, by an eaſier and more agreeable path than of mere metaphyſics.

We often confound the writer who imitates the paſſions with him who only deſcribes them. Shakeſpeare imitates, Corneille deſcribes. Poets of the ſecond claſs, no leſs than thoſe of the firſt, may invent the moſt elegant fictions, may paint the moſt beautiful imagery, may exhibit ſituations exceedingly intereſting, and conduct their incidents with propriety: their ver-

ſification may be harmonious, and, above all, their characters may be judiciouſly compoſed, partaking of no incongruous qualities, and free from the diſcord of jarring principles. But the end of dramatic poetry not only requires that the characters be judiciouſly moulded and aptly circumſtanced, but that every paſſion be naturally expreſſed. There is certainly a wide difference between the deſcription of the ſallies, the repulſes, and impatience of a violent affection, whether they are deſcribed by the agent or the ſpectator, and their actual imitation and expreſſion. But perfect imitation can never be effectuated, unleſs the poet in ſome meaſure become the perſon he repreſents, clothe himſelf with his character, aſſume his manners, and transfer himſelf into his ſituation. The texture of his mind muſt be exquiſitely fine and delicate; ſuſceptible of every feeling, and eaſily moved by every impreſſion. Together with this delicacy of affection, he muſt poſſeſs a peculiar warmth and facility of imagination, by which he may retire from himſelf, become inſenſible of his actual condition, and, regardleſs of external circum-

ſtances, feel the very incidents he invents: Like the votaries of a pagan religion, he muſt worſhip idols, the works of his own hands, and tremble before the demons of his own creation. Nothing affords a ſtronger evidence of the active, verſatile nature of the ſoul, and of the amazing rapidity of its motions, than theſe ſeemingly inconceivable and inconſiſtent exertions.

Shakeſpeare, inventing the characters of Hamlet, Macbeth, or Othello, actually felt the paſſions, and contending emotions aſcribed to them. Compare a ſoliloquy of Hamlet, with one of the deſcriptions of Rodrigue in the Cid. Nothing can be more natural in the circumſtances and with the temper of Hamlet, than the following reflections.

O, that this too too ſolid fleſh would melt,
Thaw, and reſolve itſelf into a dew!
Or that the Everlaſting had not fix'd
His cannon 'gainſt ſelf-ſlaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, ſtale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uſes of this world!
Fie on't! O fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to ſeed; things rank, and groſs in nature,
Poſſeſs it merely.—That it ſhould come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not ſo much; not two:

So excellent a king, that was, to this,
Hyperion to a ſatyr: So loving to my mother,
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Viſit her face too roughly.—Heaven and earth!
Muſt I remember? Why, ſhe would hang on him,
As if increaſe of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: and yet, within a month—
Let me not think on't—Frailty, thy name is woman!
A little month; or ere thoſe ſhoes were old,
With which ſhe follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears.—Why ſhe, even ſhe—
O heaven! a beaſt, that wants diſcourſe of reaſon,
Would have mourn'd longer—married with my uncle,
My father's brother; but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month—
Ere yet the ſalt of moſt unrighteous tears
Had left the fluſhing in her galled eyes
She married.—Oh, moſt wicked ſpeed, to poſt
With ſuch dexterity to inceſtuous ſheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.

In the Cid, Rodrigue, who is the hero of the tragedy, and deeply enamoured of Chimene, is called upon to revenge a heinous inſult done to his father by the father of his miſtreſs; and he delineates the diſtreſs of his ſituation, in the following manner; certainly with great beauty of expreſſion and verſification, and with peculiar elegance of deſcription, but not as a real ſufferer.

Percé juſqu' au fond du coeur
D'une atteinte imprevue auſſi bien que mortelle;
Miſerable vengeur d'une trop juſte querelle,
Et malheureux objet d'une injuſte rigueur,
Je demeure immobile, et mon ame abattue
Cede au coup qui me tue

This harangue would better ſuit a deſcriptive noveliſt or narrator of the ſtory, than the perſon actually concerned. Let us make the experiment. Let us change the verbs and pronouns from the firſt perſon into the third; and, inſtead of ſuppoſing that Rodrigue ſpeaks, let us imagine that the ſtate of his mind is deſcribed by a ſpectator: "Pierced, even to the heart, by an unfore-" ſeen, as well as mortal ſtroke, the miſer-" able avenger of a juſt quarrel, and the un-" happy object of unjuſt ſeverity, *he remains* " motionleſs, and *his* broken ſpirit *yields* to " the blow that deſtroys him."

Il demeure immobile, et *ſon* ame abattue
Cede au coup qui *le* tue.

Try the ſoliloquy of Hamlet by the ſame teſt; and, without inſerting the words "he ſaid," which render it dramatic, the

change will be impoſſible. Try alſo the following lines from Virgil: they are taken from that celebrated and well-known paſſage, where Dido expreſſes to Anna the paſſion ſhe had conceived for Æneas.

Quis novus hic noſtris ſucceſſit ſedibus hoſpes?
Quem ſeſe ore ferens! quam forti pectore et armis!
Credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus eſſe deorum, &c.

It may be obſerved in general, that, whenever a ſpeech ſeems proper and intelligible with the change of perſons above mentioned, and without inſerting ſome ſuch words as, "he ſaid," or, "he replied," it is narration, it is deſcription; but can ſcarcely be called the language of paſſion. I am aware, that ſome paſſages, even in Shakeſpeare, may be oppoſed to this obſervation. When Macbeth returns from the aſſaſſination of Duncan, Lady Macbeth tells him to carry back the daggers, and ſmear with blood the faces of the king's attendants, meaning to faſten upon them the ſuſpicion of the murder. Macbeth replies,

I'll go no more;—
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again, I dare not.

Is this the direct and natural expreſſion of fear? If ſo, it bears hard againſt the foregoing remark. But let us reflect attentively. Fear is not the preſent paſſion in the mind of Macbeth: a tranſient deſire of another kind for a moment engages him, namely, the deſire of giving Lady Macbeth a reaſon for not returning into the king's apartment. The man who tells you, "I am exceedingly angry, or exceedingly in love, and therefore I act in ſuch or ſuch a manner," does not in theſe words ſpeak the language either of love or of anger, but of his deſire of giving you a reaſon, or of his making an apology for his behaviour. You believe him, becauſe you truſt in his veracity, and becauſe you ſee correſponding evidence in his deportment; not that the words, "I am angry, or I am in love," independent of tones of voice, looks or geſtures, expreſs either love or anger.

It may alſo be objected that: "The excellence of dramatic writing conſiſts in its imitating with truth and propriety the manners and paſſions of mankind. If, therefore, a dramatic writer, capable of deſcribing and

of narrating with elegance and propriety, is nevertheleſs incapable of expreſſing the language and ſentiments of paſſion, he fails in the ſole end and purpoſe of his art, and of conſequence can afford no pleaſure. Contrary to this, many tragedies are ſeen and read with uncommon applauſe, and excite even the livelieſt feelings, which, if tried by the above-mentioned ſtandard, would be reckoned defective." To remove this objection, it may be obſerved, that thoſe ſympathetic emotions that intereſt us in the happineſs and miſery of others, and yield us the higheſt pleaſure at theatrical entertainments, are, by the wiſe and beneficial inſtitutions of nature, exceedingly apt to be excited: ſo apt, that if any concomitant circumſtances, though of a different kind, whether melancholy or joyful, draw the mind from its uſual ſtate of indifference, and diſpoſe it to a ſtate of extreme ſenſibility, the ſligheſt incident or expreſſion will call forth our ſympathy. Now, in dramatic performances, many things concur to throw the mind into a ſuſceptible and tender mood, and chiefly, elegance of expreſſion, harmony

of compoſition, and delightful imagery. Theſe working upon the mind, and being all united to impreſs us with the notion of certain events or circumſtances very intereſting to perſons of certain qualities and diſpoſitions, our imaginations are immediately ſtimulated and in action; we figure to ourſelves the characters which the poet intends to exhibit; we take part in their intereſts, and enter into their paſſions as warmly as if they were naturally expreſſed. Thus it appears, that it is often with beings of our own formation that we lament or rejoice, imagining them to be the workmanſhip of another. And indeed this deluſion will ever prevail with people of warm imaginations, if what the poet invents be tolerable, or not worſe than inſipid. We may alſo obſerve, that we are much more ſubject to deluſions of this kind when dramatic performances are exhibited on the ſtage, and have their effect ſupported by the ſcenery, by the dreſſes of the players, and by their action.

If this remark, that our own imaginations contribute highly to the pleaſure we receive from works of invention, be well founded,

it will explain the reaſon why men of accurate diſcernment, and of underſtandings ſufficiently poliſhed, often differ widely from one another, and, at times, widely from themſelves, in their opinions concerning works of taſte. The imagination is a faculty of a nature ſo verſatile and ſo variable, that at one time it is animated and fruitful of images; at other times, it is cold, barren, and languiſhing. At a fruitful moment, it will embelliſh the dulleſt performance with the moſt brilliant ornaments; it will impoſe them on you as genuine, and ſo entice you to beſtow applauſe. At other times, it will be niggardly, even of the aſſiſtance that is neceſſary. Hence, too, the reaſon why critics of active imaginations are generally diſpoſed to favour. Read a performance, even of ſlight and ſuperficial merit, to a perſon of lively fancy, and he will probably applaud. Some circumſtances ſtrike him: they aſſemble a group of images in his own mind; they pleaſe him, and he perceives not, in the ardour of the operation, that the picture is his own, and not that of the writer. He examines it coolly: the phantom that

pleaſed him vaniſhes: he is aſhamed of the delight it yielded him, and of the praiſes he ſo freely beſtowed. It follows alſo, on the ſame principle, that men of lively imaginations receive more exquiſite pleaſure from works of fancy, than thoſe whoſe inventive faculties are not ſo vigorous. Upon the whole, it is manifeſt, that a great portion of the delight we receive from poetry and fine writing, depends no leſs on the ſtate of our own minds, than on the intrinſic excellence of the performance. It is alſo obvious, that, though the deſcription of a paſſion or affection may give us pleaſure, whether it be deſcribed by the agent or the ſpectator, yet, to thoſe who would apply the inventions of the poet to the uſes of philoſophical inveſtigation, it is far from being of equal utility with a paſſion exactly imitated. The talent of imitation is very different from that of deſcription, and far ſuperior*.

No writer has hitherto appeared who

* The Author of the Elements of Criticiſm is, if I miſtake not, the firſt writer who has taken any notice of this important diſtinction between the imitation and deſcription of paſſion.

poſſeſſes in a more eminent degree than Shakeſpeare, the power of imitating the paſſions. All of them ſeem familiar to him; the boiſterous no leſs than the gentle; the benign no leſs than the malignant. There are ſeveral writers, as there are many players, who are ſucceſsful in imitating ſome particular paſſions, but who appear ſtiff, aukward, and unnatural, in the expreſſion of others. Some are capable of exhibiting very ſtriking repreſentations of reſolute and intrepid natures, but cannot ſo eaſily bend themſelves to thoſe that are ſofter and more complacent. Others, again, ſeem full of amiable affection and tenderneſs, but cannot exalt themſelves to the boldneſs of the hero, or magnanimity of the patriot. The genius of Shakeſpeare is unlimited. Poſſeſſing extreme ſenſibility, and uncommonly ſuſceptible, he is the Proteus of the drama; he changes himſelf into every character, and enters eaſily into every condition of human nature.

O youths and virgins! O declining eld!
O pale misfortune's ſlaves! O ye who dwell

Unknown with humble quiet! Ye who wait
In courts, and fill the golden ſeat of kings:
O ſons of ſport and pleaſure! O thou wretch
That weep'ſt for jealous love, and the ſore wound
Of conſcious guilt, or death's rapacious hand,
That left thee void of hope! O ye who mourn
In exile! Ye who thro' th' embattled field
Seek bright renown; or who for nobler palms
Contend, the leaders of a public cauſe!
Hath not his faithful tongue
Told you the faſhion of your own eſtate,
The ſecrets of your boſom*?

Many dramatic writers of different ages are capable, occaſionally, of breaking out with great fervour of genius in the natural language of ſtrong emotion. No writer of antiquity is more diſtinguiſhed for abilities of this kind than Euripides. His whole heart and ſoul ſeem torn and agitated by the force of the paſſion he imitates. He ceaſes to be Euripides; he is Medea; he is Oreſtes. Shakeſpeare, however, is moſt eminently diſtinguiſhed, not only by theſe occaſional ſallies, but by imitating the paſſion in all its aſpects, by purſuing it through all its windings and labyrinths, by moderating or accelerating its impetuoſity according to the

* Akenſide.

influence of other principles and of external events, and finally by combining it in a judicious manner with other paſſions and propenſities, or by ſetting it aptly in oppoſition. He thus unites the two eſſential powers of dramatic invention, that of forming characters; and that of imitating, in their natural expreſſions, the paſſions and affections of which they are compoſed. It is, therefore, my intention to examine ſome of his remarkable characters, and to analyze their component parts. An exerciſe no leſs adapted to improve the heart, than to inform the underſtanding. My intention is to make poetry ſubſervient to philoſophy, and to employ it in tracing the principles of human conduct. The deſign ſurely is laudable: of the execution, I have no right to determine.

ESSAY I.

ON THE CHARACTER OF MACBETH.

THE human mind, in different ſituations and circumſtances, undergoes many extraordinary changes, and aſſumes a variety of different aſpects. Men of gaiety and cheerfulneſs become reſerved and unſocial: the beneficent temper, loſing its kindneſs and complacency, becomes moroſe and uncomplying: the indolent man leaves his retirement: the man of buſineſs becomes inactive: and men of gentle and kind affections acquire habits of cruelty and revenge. As theſe changes affect the temper, and not the faculties of the mind, they are produced by irregular and outrageous paſſions. In order, therefore, to ex-

plain any unuſual alteration of temper or character, we muſt conſider the nature of the ruling paſſion, and obſerve its tendency.

In the character of Macbeth, we have an inſtance of a very extraordinary change. In the following paſſages we diſcover the complexion and bias of his mind in its natural and unperverted ſtate.

> Brave Macbeth, (well he deſerves that name)
> Diſdaining fortune, with his brandiſh'd ſteel,
> Which ſmok'd with bloody execution,
> Like Valour's minion, carved out his paſſage.

The particular features of his character are more accurately delineated by Lady Macbeth.

> Glamis thou art, and Cawdor;—and ſhalt be
> What thou art promis'd—Yet do I fear thy nature;
> It is too full o'the milk of human kindneſs,
> To catch the neareſt way. Thou would'ſt be great;
> Art not without ambition; but without
> The illneſs ſhould attend it.

He is exhibited to us valiant, dutiful to his Sovereign, mild, gentle, and ambitious: but ambitious without guilt. Soon after,

we find him falſe, perfidious, barbarous, and vindictive. All the principles in his conſtitution ſeem to have undergone a violent and total change. Some appear to be altogether reduced or extirpated: others monſtrouſly overgrown. Ferocity is ſubſtituted inſtead of mildneſs, treaſonable intention, inſtead of a ſenſe of duty. His ambition, however, has ſuffered no diminution: on the contrary, by having become exceedingly powerful, and by riſing to undue pretenſions, it ſeems to have vanquiſhed and ſuppreſſed every amiable and virtuous principle. But, in a conflict ſo important, and where the oppoſing powers were naturally vigorous, and inveſted with high authority, violent muſt have been the ſtruggle, and obſtinate the reſiſtance. Nor could the prevailing paſſion have been enabled to contend with virtue, without having gained, at ſome former period, an unlawful aſcendency. Therefore, in treating the hiſtory of this revolution, we ſhall conſider how the uſurping principle became ſo powerful; how its powers were exerted in its conflict with oppoſ-

ing principles; and what were the conſequences of its victory.

I. The growth of Macbeth's ambition was ſo imperceptible, and his treaſon ſo unexpected, that the hiſtorians of an ignorant age, little accuſtomed to explain uncommon events by ſimple cauſes, and ſtrongly addicted to a ſuperſtitious belief in ſorcery, aſcribed them to præternatural agency. Shakeſpeare, capable of exalting this fiction, and of rendering it intereſting, by his power over the "terrible graces," has adopted it in its full extent. In this part, therefore, having little aſſiſtance from the poet, we ſhall hazard a conjecture, ſupported by ſome facts and obſervations, concerning the power of fancy, aided by partial gratification, to invigorate and inflame our paſſions.

All men, who poſſeſs the ſeeds of violent paſſions, will often be conſcious of their influence, before they have opportunities of indulging them. By nature provident, and prone to reflection, we look forward with eagerneſs into futurity, and anticipate our enjoyments. Never completely ſatisfied

with our preſent condition, we embrace in imagination the happineſs that is to come. But happineſs is relative to conſtitution: it depends on the gratification of our deſires: and the happineſs of mankind is various, becauſe the deſires of the heart are various. The nature, therefore, of anticipated enjoyment is agreeable to the nature of our deſires. Men of indolent diſpoſitions, and addicted to pleaſure, indulge themſelves in dreams of feſtivity. Thoſe, again, who have in their conſtitution the latent principles of avarice, adminiſter to the gratification of their fatal propenſity, by reveries of ideal opulence. Dignity, parade, and magnificence, are ever preſent to the ambitious man: laurels, if he purſue literary fame: battles and conqueſt, if his genius be warlike. Whoever would cultivate an acquaintance with himſelf, and would know to what paſſions he is moſt expoſed, ſhould attend to the operations of fancy, and by remarking the objects ſhe with greateſt pleaſure exhibits, he may diſcern, with tolerable accuracy, the nature of his own mind, and the principles moſt likely to rule him. Ex-

curſions of the imagination, except in minds idly extravagant, are commonly governed by the probability of ſucceſs. They are alſo regulated by moral conſiderations*: for no man indulging viſions of ideal felicity, embrues his hands in the blood of the guiltleſs, or ſuffers himſelf in imagination to be unjuſt or perfidious. Yet, by this imaginary indulgence, harmleſs as it may appear, our paſſions become immoderate. This is manifeſt from the following obſervations.

When the mind is agitated by violent paſſions, the thoughts preſented to us are of a correſponding character. The angry man thinks of injury, perfidy, or inſult. Under the influences of fear, we figure to ourſelves dangers that have no reality, and tremble without a cauſe†. Minds, differently fa-

* See Hutcheſon on the origin of our ideas of beauty and harmony.

† Vitas hinnuleo me ſimilis, Chloë,
Quaerenti pavidam montibus aviis
Matrem, non ſine vano
Aurarum, et ſilvae metu.
Nam ſeu mobilibus vitis inhorruit
Ad ventum foliis, ſeu virides rubum
Dimovere lacertae,
Et corde et genibus tremit. HOR.

ſhioned, and under the influence of different paſſions, receive from the ſame objects diſſimilar impreſſions. Exhibit the ſame beautiful valley to the miſer and to the poet. Elegant and lovely images ariſe in the poet's mind: Dryads preſide in the groves, and Naiads in the fountains. Notions of wealth ſeize the heart of the miſer: he computes the profits of the meadows and cornfields, and envies the poſſeſſor. The mind, dwelling with pleaſure on theſe images that coincide with its preſent humour, or agree with the preſent paſſion, embelliſhes and improves them. The poet, by figuring additional lawns and mountains, renders the landſcape more beautiful, or more ſublime: but the miſer, moved by no compaſſion for Wood-nymphs or Naiads, lays waſte the foreſt, changes the windings of the river into a dead canal, and ſolicits wealth at the expence of beauty. Now, as the influences of paſſion govern and give a train to our thoughts, theſe, in return, nouriſh and promote the paſſion. If any object appears to us more ſtriking and excellent than uſual, it communicates a ſtronger impulſe, and excites a

keener and more vehement deſire. When the lover diſcovers, or fancies he diſcovers, new charms in the character of his miſtreſs, if her complexion glow with a ſofter bluſh, if her manner and attitude ſeem more engaging, his love waxes ardent, and his ardour ungovernable. Thus imaginary repreſentations, more even than real objects, ſtimulate our deſires; and our paſſions, adminiſtering fewel to themſelves, are immoderately inflamed. Joy is in this manner enlivened; anger more keenly exaſperated; envy burns with additional malice; and melancholy, brooding over images of miſery and diſappointment, is tortured with anguiſh, and plunges into deſpair.

Thus far ambition may be invigorated, aſſiſted merely by a lively temperament, and a glowing imagination. Prompted by its incitements, we engage with eagerneſs in the career of glory; and, with perſevering courage, undergo fatigue and encounter danger. But though imagination may dazzle and inflame, the prudent man, in the purſuit of honours, limits his deſires to objects within his reach. The moſt active ſpirit, confined

to a narrow ſphere, is never deſirous of unattainable glory, but is ambitious of being diſtinguiſhed in his condition. If, however, by ſucceeding in inferior enterprizes, higher objects are exhibited to us, our ambition, by partial gratification, becomes more violent than before. In producing this effect, the following cauſes co-operate.

The temporary and accidental emotion of joy, occaſioned by ſucceſs, enlivens and animates the paſſion upon which it depends. You love your friend; he returns unexpectedly from a long journey; your joy on his arrival heightens your affection, and you receive him with tranſport.

> Non ego ſanius
> Bacchabor Edonis: recepto
> Dulce mihi furere eſt amico. HOR.

The new object appearing more excellent than the former, excites a livelier appetite. To the churchman, who was meek and moderate in purſuit of inferior dignity, exhibit a mitre, and you ſpoil his peace.

The proximity of the object, becauſe nothing intermediate diverts our attention,

quickens and promotes the paſſion. The profligate heir, who longs for the death of an avaricious father, is more eagerly impatient during his laſt moments, than during the courſe of a tedious life. And the nearer the hour of aſſignation approaches, the heart of the lover throbs with a keener and more intenſe deſire. To theſe illuſtrations the following paſſage from a celebrated* hiſtorian, is extremely appoſite: "James, harraſſed with his turbulent and factious ſubjects, caſt a wiſhful eye to the ſucceſſion of England; and, in proportion as the queen advanced in years, his deſire increaſed of mounting that throne."

Succeſs, as it produces vanity, invigorates our ambition. Eminently or unexpectedly diſtinguiſhed, we fancy ourſelves endowed with ſuperior merit, and entitled to higher honour. Alexander, after the conqueſt of Perſia, grew more vain and more extravagantly ambitious than before.

In this manner, by joy, by the proſpect, and proximity of a more ſplendid object, and by vanity, all depending on partial

* Hume.

gratification, the paſſion is ſwelled, and becomes exceſſive. Macbeth having repelled the inroads of the iſlanders, and having vanquiſhed a numerous hoſt of Norwegians, is rewarded by his king, and revered by his countrymen. He riſes to unexpected honours: his ambition, foſtered by imagination, and confirmed by ſucceſs, becomes immoderate: and his ſoul, elevated above meaſure, aſpires to ſovereignty.

II. Every variation of character and paſſion is accompanied with correſponding changes in the ſentiments of the ſpectator. Macbeth, engaged in the defence of his country, and purſuing the objects of a laudable ambition, is juſtly honoured and eſteemed. But the diſtraction which enſues from the conflict between vicious and virtuous principles renders him the object of compaſſion mixed with diſapprobation.

The chief obſtacle in the way of our ſelfiſh deſires proceeds from the oppoſition of our moral faculties. Inveſted by nature with ſupreme authority to judge concerning the paſſions of mankind, they exert

themſelves in reſtraining their impetuoſity, and in preſerving the harmony of the internal ſyſtem. Accordingly, when the notion of ſeizing the crown is ſuggeſted to Macbeth, he appears ſhocked and aſtoniſhed. Juſtice and humanity ſhudder at the deſign: he regards his own heart with amazement: and recoils with horror from the guilty thought.

> This ſupernatural ſoliciting
> Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
> Why hath it given me earneſt of ſucceſs,
> Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
> If good, why do I yield to that ſuggeſtion,
> Whoſe horrid image doth unfix my hair,
> And make my ſeated heart knock at my ribs,
> Againſt the uſe of nature?

Though virtuous principles appear in this inſtance to predominate, his ambition is not repulſed. The means of gratifying it ſeem ſhocking and impracticable: and he abandons the enterprize, without renouncing the paſſion. The paſſion continues vehement: it perſeveres with obſtinacy: it haraſſes and importunes him. He ſtill deſires: but, deterred by his moral

feelings, he is unable to proceed directly, and indulges romantic wiſhes.

If chance will have me King, why, chance may crown me,
Without my ſtir.

It appears from this and ſome following paſſages, that, in agony, and diſtracted with contending principles, heſitating and irreſolute, anxious for the event, but afraid of promoting it, he had abandoned the deſign of murdering Duncan, and had formed ſome extravagant expectation of inheriting the crown by right of ſucceſſion. Thus he recovers ſome portion of his tranquillity.

Come what, come may,
Time and the hour runs thro' the rougheſt day.

He enjoys an interval of compoſure till an unexpected obſtacle rouzes and alarms him.

King. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulneſs, ſeek to hide themſelves
In drops of ſorrow.—Sons, kinſmen, Thanes,
And you whoſe places are the neareſt, know,
We will eſtabliſh our eſtate upon

Our eldeſt, Malcolm ; whom we name hereafter
The prince of Cumberland.

The ſurprize, and the uneaſy ſenſation excited by the perception of difficulty, agitate the mind of Macbeth, and their emotions coinciding with his ambition, renew and increaſe its violence.

The prince of Cumberland!—That is a ſtep,
On which I muſt fall down, or elſe o'erleap,
For in my way it lies.

But conſcience and his humanity are again alarmed, again interfere, and ſhew him the horror of his deſigns.

Stars, hide your fires,
Let not light ſee my black and deep deſires.

Habituated paſſions poſſeſs ſuperior advantages over thoſe oppoſite principles which operate by a violent and ſudden impulſe. For, ſo delicate is the conſtitution of the human mind, that lively feelings, unleſs they form the temper by being confirmed by action, are enfeebled by repetition and frequent exerciſe. The horror and aver-

ſion excited by enormous wickedneſs, unleſs we act in conformity to them, "*are "mere paſſive impreſſions, which, by be-"ing repeated, grow weaker;" and though their reſiſtance againſt an habituated paſſion be animated, it is of ſhort duration. They ſubſide: they are overwhelmed; but not extinguiſhed. Macbeth, in the following conference, appears reconciled to deſigns of treaſon: he can think of them calmly, and without abhorrence: and all the oppoſition he has henceforth to encounter, will ariſe, not from feeling, but from reflection.

Macb. My deareſt love!
Duncan comes here to-night.
La. Macb. And when goes hence?
Macb. To-morrow, as he purpoſes.
La. Macb. O, never
Shall ſun that morrow ſee.
Macb. We ſhall ſpeak further.

Inward contention of mind naturally provokes ſoliloquy. The reaſon of this appearance is obvious. In the beginning of life, feeble and unable to aſſiſt ourſelves,

* Butler's Analogy, Part I. chap. v.

we depend entirely upon others; we are conſtantly in ſociety; and, of courſe, if we are affected by any violent emotions, we are accuſtomed to utter them. Conſequently, by force of aſſociation and habit, when they return exceſſive on any future occaſion, impatient of reſtraint, they will not be arreſted by reflection, but vent themſelves as they were wont. We may obſerve, in confirmation of this remark, that children are often prone to ſoliloquy: and ſo are men of lively paſſions. In children, the aſſociation is vigorous and entire: in men of lively paſſions, habits are more tenacious than with men of a cooler temperament. When the contending principles are of equal energy, our emotions are uttered in broken and incoherent ſentences, and the diſordered ſtate of our mind is expreſſed by interrupted geſtures, abſence of attention, and an agitated demeanour.

Banquo. Look how our partner's rapt.——
La. Macb. Your face, my Thane, is as a book, where men
May read ſtrange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time.

But, when the inward diſorder proceeds from the violence of paſſion, unoppoſed by internal feelings, and thwarted only by external circumſtances, deſirous of ſucceſs, doubtful concerning the means, delivered from oppoſing principles, and capable of reflecting, without abhorrence, on intended injury, our ſoliloquies, if we are diſpoſed to them, are more coherent. Macbeth, reaſoning anxiouſly concerning the conſequences of his deſign, reflecting on the opinions of mankind, on the hatred and infamy he muſt incur, and on the reſentment he muſt encounter, overcome by fear, relinquiſhes his undertaking.

If it were *done*, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the aſſaſſination
Could tramel up the conſequence, and catch
With his ſurceaſe, ſucceſs; that but this blow
Might be the Be-all and the End-all *here*,
But *here*, upon this bank and ſhoal of time:
We'd jump the life to come.—But, in theſe caſes,
We ſtill have judgment *here*; that we but teach
Bloody inſtructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed juſtice
Commends the ingredients of our poiſon'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double truſt:
Firſt, as I am his kinſman and his ſubject,

Strong both againſt the deed; then, as his hoſt,
Who ſhould againſt his murth'rer ſhut the door,
Not bear the knife myſelf. Beſides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties ſo meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead, like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, againſt
The deep damnation of his taking off:
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blaſt, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd
Upon the ſightleſs couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in ev'ry eye,
That tears ſhall drown the wind.—
We will proceed no further in this buſineſs:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all ſorts of people,
Which ſhould be worn now in their neweſt gloſs,
Not caſt aſide ſo ſoon.

Thus, the irregular paſſion is again repulſed: yet ſymptoms of the decay of virtue are manifeſt. Immediate inſtinctive averſion, in caſes of cenſure, accompanies the deciſions of our moral faculty: and thoſe who are deterred from crimes, merely by the dread of puniſhment, and a regard to the opinions of mankind, betray a vitiated and depraved conſtitution*. The lively feelings, oppoſed to ambition, unable, by the vivacity

* Tu nihil admittes in te formidine poenae;
Sit ſpes fallendi; miſcebis ſacra profanis. Hor.

of their firſt impreſſion, to extirpate the habit, languiſh, and are enfeebled. The irregular paſſion, like the perſevering Fabius, gathers ſtrength by delay: the virtuous principle, like the gallant, but unſupported Hannibal, ſuffers diminution, even by ſucceſs. Thus, it is manifeſt, that the conteſt between the obſtinacy of an habituated paſſion, and the vehemence of an animated feeling, is unequal; and that there is infinite danger even in the apparently innocent and imaginary indulgence of a ſelfiſh paſſion. The harmony of the internal ſyſtem is nicely adjuſted; and the exceſſive tenſion or relaxation of any of the parts produces irregular and diſcordant tones.

The opinions of mankind are variable: for nations and communities, no leſs than individuals, are liable to prejudice. Particular emergencies and prepoſſeſſions miſlead the judgment; and we applaud, at one time, what we blame at another. A ſyſtem of conduct, founded on the opinion of others, is, therefore, unſtable, inconſiſtent, and often vicious. Macbeth, conſidering the aſſaſſination of Duncan as a deed deſerving puniſh-

ment, is deterred from his enterprize; but, reflecting upon it as an event which he deſired, but durſt not accompliſh, his courage is queſtioned, and his honour impeached. When the ſenſe of honour is corrupted, virtue expires. Influenced by fatal prejudices, and flattering himſelf with the hope of impunity, he finally determines himſelf, and engages to execute the black deſign.

La. Macb. Art thou afeard
To be the ſame in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in deſire? Would'ſt thou have that,
Which thou eſteem'ſt the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own eſteem?
Letting *I dare not* wait upon *I would?*
Macb. Pr'ythee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man,—
If we ſhould fail!
La. Macb. We fail!
But ſcrew your courage to the ſticking place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is aſleep, &c.
Macb. I'm ſettled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.

In the natural and healthful ſtate of the mind, all its operations are regular and correct. The external organs of the ſenſes, correſponding with memory, preſent objects

to the underſtanding; and we regulate our actions according to the notices they communicate. But, when the mind is ſeized and occupied by violent paſſions, its operations are diſturbed, and the notices we receive from the ſenſes are diſregarded. The ſoldier, in the field of battle, eager to ſignalize his valour, perceives not that he is wounded, till he falls. The prieſts of Cybele, actuated by wild enthuſiaſm, inflicted wounds on their own bodies, and ſeemed inſenſible of the pain. In like manner, the notices communicated to the ſoul of Macbeth, agitated and ſhaken by tumultuous paſſions, are wild, broken, and incoherent: and reaſon, beaming at intervals, heightens the horror of his diſorder.

Is this a dagger which I ſee before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come let me clutch
thee:—
I have thee not; and yet I ſee thee ſtill.
Art thou not, fatal viſion! ſenſible
To feeling as to ſight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind; a falſe creation
Proceeding from the heat-oppreſſed brain?
I ſee thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.—

Thou marſhal'ſt me the way that I was going;
And ſuch an inſtrument I was to uſe.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other ſenſes,
Or elſe worth all the reſt:—I ſee thee ſtill;
And on thy blade, and dudgeon, gouts of blood,
Which was not ſo before.—There's no ſuch thing.

Let us review the conflict. Ambition, grown habitual and inveterate in the ſoul of Macbeth, ſuggeſts the idea of aſſaſſination. The ſenſe of virtue, compaſſion, and other kindred principles, are alarmed, and oppoſe. His ruling paſſion is repulſed, but not enfeebled. Reſigning himſelf to the hope of profiting by ſome future emergency, he renounces the idea of violence. A difficulty appears: it renews, rouzes, and inflames his ambition. The principles of virtue again oppoſe; but, by exerciſe and repetition, they are, for a time, enfeebled: they excite no abhorrence: and he reflects, with compoſure, on his deſign. But, in reflecting, the apprehenſion of danger, and the fear of retribution alarm him. He abandons his purpoſe; is deemed irreſolute: not leſs innocent for not daring to execute what he dares to deſire, he is charged with cowardice:

impatient of the charge, and indignant; haraſſed by fear, by the conſciouſneſs of guilt, and by humanity ſtruggling to reſume her influence, he ruſhes headlong upon his bane.

III. We come now to conſider the effects produced in the mind of Macbeth, by the indulgence of the vicious paſſion. Inveſted with royalty, he has attained the ſummit of his deſires. His ambition is completely gratified. Will he, therefore, enjoy repoſe? Unmoleſted by anxiety and fruitleſs wiſhes, will he enjoy the happineſs of his condition, and the dignity he has ſo dearly purchaſed? Or will the principles of virtue that oppoſed his preferment, baffled and put to ſhame, ſubmit, without murmuring, to the yoke; and, unable to recal the paſt, acquieſce, and be ſilent?

All caſes of internal conflict and commotion ſuppoſe vigorous and oppoſing principles. But principles inherent in our conſtitutions are ſeldom extirpated. Suppoſe them vanquiſhed. The contending paſſion is gratified. A paſſion, when gratified,

ceaſes to operate: it no longer exiſts; and the mind is left vacant. But paſſions or propenſities that have been ſuppreſſed by incompatible and more powerful principles, ſtill remain in the mind; and when oppoſition is removed, they ariſe and reſume their ſtation. The profligate, hurried away by unruly appetites, plunges into every ſpecies of exceſs: and when his deſires are ſated, conſcience, formerly active, but diſregarded, overwhelms him with deep contrition. This ſtate of mind continues, till the irregular appetites recover ſtrength, ſolicit indulgence, and are obeyed. Regret follows: and his life is thus divided between the extravagance of illicit deſire, and the deſpondency of repentance. In Macbeth, the amiable and congenial ſentiments of humanity and compaſſion, a ſenſe of duty, and a regard to the opinions of mankind, contended with ambition. Their efforts were ineffectual, but their principles were not extinguiſhed. Formerly, they warned and intreated; but, when the deed is perpetrated, and no adverſary is oppoſed to them, they return with violence, they accuſe and condemn. Macbeth,

alarmed by his feelings, now operating without controul, reflects with aſtoniſhment on his conduct; and his ſoul, darkened with horror, ſhudders and is confounded at the atrocity of his guilt. He feels himſelf the object of univerſal hatred and indignation. Religious ſentiments, formerly weak and diſregarded, are now animated by his confuſion; and, borrowing their complexion from his preſent temper, they terrify and overwhelm him. Amazed at the atrocity of his own proceedings, conſcious of perfidy and injuſtice, and of the reſentment they will excite; apprehenſive, that both heaven and earth are ſtirred up againſt him, his fancy is haunted with tremendous images, and his ſoul diſtracted with remorſe and terror.

I have done the deed:—Did'ſt thou not hear a noiſe?—
There's one did laugh in his ſleep, and one cried, *Murder!*
That they did wake each other: I ſtood and heard them.——
One cried, *God bleſs us!* and, *Amen!* the other;
As they had ſeen me with theſe hangman's hands
Liſtening their fear. I could not ſay, Amen,
When they did ſay, God bleſs us.——
But wherefore could not I pronounce, Amen?

I had moſt need of bleſſing, and Amen
Stuck in my throat.——
Methought I heard a voice cry, *Sleep no more!*
Macbeth doth murder ſleep.——
Still it cry'd, *Sleep no more!* to all the houſe;
Glamis hath murder'd ſleep; and therefore Cawdor
Shall ſleep no more, Macbeth ſhall ſleep no more.

Macbeth, elevated with high and aſpiring wiſhes, dazzled with the glare of royalty, and inſtigated by keen ambition, entertains opinions bordering on impiety; and, thoughts of retribution in a future ſtate of exiſtence ſeeming to affect him ſlightly, he would "jump the life to come." But, having perpetrated the bloody deed, every noiſe appals him; and, when others prefer their oriſons to heaven, he cannot ſay Amen.

If impelled by irregular and headſtrong paſſions, we not only tranſgreſs the limits of rectitude, but are guilty of heinous acts of oppreſſion and violence, reflecting on the ſentiments of mankind, and meaſuring them by our own, we imagine ourſelves no leſs abhorred by the ſpectator, than by the ſufferer. Conſcious of our crimes, and apprehenſive of the reſentment and indignation they have neceſſarily excited, we dread the

puniſhment they deſerve, and endeavour to avoid it. By ſuſpicion and diſtruſt, the neceſſary offspring of treachery, the ſoul is for ever tormented. Perfidious ourſelves, we repoſe no confidence in mankind, and are incapable of friendſhip. We are particularly fearful of all thoſe to whom eminent virtue and integrity have given a ſtrong ſenſe of injuſtice, and to whom wiſdom and intrepidity have given power to puniſh. Prompted by our fears, we hate every amiable and exalted character, we wage war with the virtuous, and endeavour, by their deſtruction, to prevent our own. So tyrannical is the dominion of vice, that it compels us to hate what nature, having ordained for our benefit, has rendered lovely, and recommended to our eſteem.

To be thus, is nothing,
But to be ſafely thus:—Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that, which would be fear'd. 'Tis much he dares,
And, to that dauntleſs temper of his mind,
He hath a wiſdom that doth guide his valour
To act in ſafety. There is none but he,
Whoſe being I do fear: and under him
My genius is rebuk'd.

Whoever regards with ſuitable veneration the rights of mankind, the ſanctity of friendſhip, and the duty we owe to legal authority; whoever with theſe, poſſeſſes a heart ſuſceptible of tenderneſs and of compaſſion, will have a higher ſenſe of injury and injuſtice than men of colder complexions, and leſs ſtrongly impreſſed with the importance of ſocial duties. Therefore, if a man of uncommon ſenſibility, adorned with amiable and beneficent diſpoſitions, miſled by ſome pernicious appetite, commits acts of cruelty and oppreſſion, he will be more apt, by reflecting on his own conduct, to conceive the reſentment and indignation it excites, than men of a different temper. Reflecting on the compaſſion and reſentment that would have ariſen in his own mind, on the view of crimes ſimilar to thoſe he has himſelf perpetrated, he becomes afraid of the puniſhment he would himſelf have inflicted. Thus, inſtigated by his fears, and, imagining himſelf univerſally hated, he conceives a ſentiment of univerſal hatred: and, as his fears are exactly proportioned to his feelings and ſenſibility, ſo are his hatred and malevolence.

In like manner, a man of no ſenſibility, of little beneficence, and little affected by ſocial obligation, carried by avarice or ambition to commit acts of injuſtice, and having no lively conceptions, from his own feelings, of the reſentment he has excited, will, conſequently, be leſs afraid of mankind, and of courſe, leſs violent in his hatred. It follows, that, in the circumſtances of having procured undue poſſeſſions by inhuman means, and of deſiring to preſerve them, men of innate ſenſibility will be more cruel and ſanguinary, than men naturally ſevere, rugged, and inſenſible. May not theſe obſervations unravel a ſeeming difficulty in the hiſtories of Sylla, and Auguſtus, of Nero, and of Herod? Sylla and Auguſtus, naturally ſevere, having attained the ſummit of their deſires, had no imaginary apprehenſions of puniſhment, and ended their days in peace. Nero and Herod, naturally of ſoft and amiable diſpoſitions, betrayed by unruly paſſions, committed acts of cruelty, were conſcious of their crimes, dreaded the reſentment they deſerved, and, in order to avoid it, became infamous and inhuman. By conſidering

Sylla and Auguſtus in this light, ſome extraordinary circumſtances in their conduct, much celebrated by ſome modern writers, namely the reſignation of the dictatorſhip by the one, and the apparent clemency of the other, after he aroſe to the imperial dignity, ſeem diveſted of their merit; and, without having recourſe to moderate or magnanimous ſentiments, may eaſily be explained, as being perfectly conſonant to the general tone of their characters. Sylla reſigned the dictatorſhip, without any dread of ſuffering puniſhment for his antecedent cruelties, not becauſe he had extirpated all thoſe he had injured, but becauſe his ſenſibility and his power of diſcerning moral excellence being originally languid, he felt no abhorrence of his own ferocity; and therefore, incapable of conceiving how any but real ſufferers ſhould feel or reſent his barbarity, he was incapable of apprehenſion. Auguſtus, naturally of an unfeeling temper, committed inhuman actions in purſuing the honours he aſpired to, and having eſtabliſhed his authority as abſolutely and as independently as he wiſhed for,

he had no ſenſe of his former inhumanity, had no regret for the paſt, and no fear of the future. Reaſoning on the ſame principles, we may eaſily reconcile ſome appearances of benignity and tender affection in the conduct of Nero and of Herod, to their natural and original diſpoſitions. That, in the early part of their lives, they diſcovered gentle and benign affections is unqueſtioned. But their ſubſequent cruelties, and particularly thoſe related by eccleſiaſtical writers, have led men, indignant of their crimes, to pronounce them, in the very ſtructure and conſtitution of their minds, monſtrous and inhuman. Thus, from exceſſive reſentment and indignation, we leſſen the enormity of their guilt, charging that ferocity upon nature, which was the effect of their own impetuous and ungoverned paſſions. Senſibility is in itſelf amiable, and diſpoſes us to benevolence: but, in corrupted minds, by infuſing terror, it produces hatred and inhumanity. So dangerous is the dominion of vice, that being eſtabliſhed in the mind, it bends to its baneful purpoſes even the principles of virtue. Lady Macbeth, of a cha-

racter invariably ſavage, perhaps too ſavage to be a genuine repreſentation of nature *, proceeds eaſily, and without reluctance, to the contrivance of the blackeſt crimes. Macbeth, of a ſofter temper, and full of the "milk of human kindneſs," ſtruggles, and is reluctant. Lady Macbeth encourages and incites him. He commits the deed, trembles, and is filled with horror. Lady Macbeth enjoys perfect compoſure, is neither ſhocked nor terrified, and reproves him for his fears.

> Why, worthy Thane,
> Do you unbend your noble ſtrength to think
> So brain-ſickly of things?——
> My hands are of your colour, but I ſcorn
> To wear a heart ſo white.

Macbeth, inſtigated by his apprehenſions, meditates another act of barbarity. Lady Macbeth, ſo far from being afraid of conſequences, or from having contrived another aſſaſſination, is even ignorant of his intentions; but on being informed of them, ſhe very eaſily acquieſces.

* Elements of Criticiſm.

La. Macb. Come on; gentle my lord,
Sleek o'er your rugged looks; be bright and jovial
Among your gueſts to-night.
Macb. O, full of ſcorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'ſt, that Banquo, and his Fleance lives.
La. Macb. What's to be done?
Macb. Be innocent of the knowledge,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, feeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and inviſible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond,
Which keeps me pale.

Macbeth, urged by his terrors, adds one act of cruelty to another; and thus, inſtead of vanquiſhing his fears, he augments them. His agony increaſes, and renders him ſtill more barbarous and diſtruſtful.

There's not a thane of them, but in his houſe
I keep a ſervant fee'd—
The caſtle of Macduff I will ſurprize, &c.

He, at length, meets with the puniſhment due to his enormous cruelty.

Macduff. Hail, king! for ſo thou art. Behold where ſtands
Th' uſurper's curſed head.

Thus, by conſidering the riſe and progreſs of a ruling paſſion, and the fatal conſequences of its indulgence, we have ſhown, how a beneficent mind may become inhuman: and how thoſe who are naturally of an amiable temper, if they ſuffer themſelves to be corrupted, will become more ferocious and more unhappy than men of a conſtitution originally hard and unfeeling. The formation of our characters depends conſiderably upon ourſelves; for we may improve, or vitiate, every principle we receive from nature.