

"Fain would I grant the final strain ye crave,
Fain would I leave an echo still to be,
Where first I wore the laurel crown ye gave,
Where sprung the love whose fatal trace ye see!

"I die, and leave ye nothing to recall
Even to *him*, my genius, or my song—
One passion centre eloquence, and all
The glorious gifts that to my mind belong.

"But let Corinna's name yet win a thought
From those who knew her in her prouder days;
And may some child of song, less sadly fraught,
Yet gild her memory with a poet's praise.
O! let her verses in your kind thoughts dwell,
Her soul is in them, as in this farewell!" J. T. L.

ARABELLA STUART.

Her life was like a troubled dream,
Where pleasure's light has not a gleam;
Where night and pain together meet;
Where hope flies off with pinions fleet.
When waked she from this dream of pain?
When came that day, like summer rain
Unto the parched and withered flower?
When came that calm and happy hour?
Ne'er until she had breathed her last,
Till life's last breath away had passed;
Till body and soul had ceased forever
To dwell on this dear earth together:
When they had parted forever more—
O then that troubled dream was o'er.

Williamsburg, Va.

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PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

[It is a principle with us to keep our pages open for the courteous examination of any subject to which they may have invited discussion. We accordingly publish the following communication from one of our correspondents. In justice to the gentleman, whose paper on Shelley is the theme of remark, we annex the following extract from a letter in reply to one informing him of the impression his article had given to some of our readers.]

Ed. Mess.

"Your letter informing me of the manner in which some of your readers have seen fit to regard my remarks on Shelley, is at hand. I am at a loss to conceive how any candid or discriminating mind can view the article in question as a defence of Shelley's opinions. It was intended rather to place the man himself in a more just point of view, than that which common prejudice assigns him. I only contend that mere opinions—especially those of early youth, do not constitute the only or the best criterion of character. I have spoken in defence rather of Shelley's tendencies and real purposes, than of his theories, and endeavored to vindicate what was truly lovely and noble in his nature. To these gifts and graces the many have long been blinded. We have heard much of Shelley's atheistical philosophy and little of his benevolent heart, much of

"his boyish infidelity and little of his mature opinions, much of his vile principles and little of his kind acts and elevated sentiments. That I have attempted to call attention to these characteristics of the poet, I cannot regret; and to me such a course seems perfectly consistent with a rejection of his peculiar views of society and religion. These we know were in a great degree visionary and contrary to well-established principles of human nature. Still they were ever undergoing modifications, and his heart often anticipated the noblest teachings of faith. A careful study of the life and writings of Shelley will narrow the apparent chasm between him and the acknowledged ornaments of our race. It will lead us to trace much that is obnoxious in his views to an aggravated experience of ill, and to discover in the inmost sanctuary of his soul much to venerate and love, much that will sanctify the genius which the careless and bigoted regard as having been wholly desecrated."

SHELLEY.

BY MRS. SEBA SMITH.

MR. T. W. WHITE.

Dear Sir,—In your Southern Literary Messenger for June, 1840, I read with pleasure not unmingled with regret, an interesting article from the pen of H. T. Tuckerman, entitled Shelley. I read it with pleasure, for the brilliancy of its style, and regret that he should have employed *such* a pen, in defence of *such* opinions.

I shall not attempt a detailed reply to the revolting opinions of the Shelley school, nor furnish an antidote to the concealed poison in the honey of the author of the article; but content myself with a few queries and remarks which it suggested.

The writer says, "it is easy to imagine a state of society in which such a being might freely develop and felicitously realise principles and endowments so full of promise."

So it is: but what society could exist based upon the principles advocated by Shelley, and which he adopted second-hand from Mary Woolstoncraft and Godwin? They and their followers would resolve society into its original elements, make man a solitary savage prowling the wilderness and drawn to his species only by his instincts. Imperfect as human institutions undoubtedly are, they still owe their origin to those principles implanted in the human breast by the Creator, the result of which was designed to be, that mankind should dwell in families; and the laws that have grown out of this state of things, are but so many barriers erected by wisdom and experience to hold in check the omnipotence of human passion; they are the tones of a voice coming up from the sepulchres of the olden time, and proclaiming the weakness and injustice of mere reason, when opposed to temptation and opportunity. The restraints of those laws are unfelt by the pure-minded and intellectual; the clanking chain is heard only when the sensual and licentious have involved themselves in its toils.

But it is not necessary to imagine any Utopian state of society, in which a man endowed like Shelley must be placed—in order to do justice to his genius. Who amongst ourselves cannot imagine some ideal land in which our wildest dreams of human felicity might have been realized? But what is all this but the selfishness of egotism, the shrinking from our portion of the burdens of life, the weakness of recoil at its salutary discipline? If we faint under the burden, it proves nothing but our own pusillanimity. The more noble the spirit, the greater is its endurance.

Shelley found himself one of the great human family, with claims upon its charities, and rights to be respected. It was a mutual obligation. The test of his greatness should have been sought in the calmness and majesty with which he went forth to the performance of a holy mission, to purify himself, and to elevate others; it should have been sought, not in the feverish, aimless desire to unsettle, but to build up—to lose self in enlarged philanthropy.

What boy, especially one gifted, is without his visionary dreams and wild speculations? But can the wise and good reverence them? Can they regard them other than as the ebullitions of youthful passion and inexperience? Happy those, who find some gentle mentor to guide their vacillating footsteps and pour oil upon the troubled waters. Poor Shelley found no hand stretched out to aid him along the dizzy height whither his own recklessness had conducted him; and he paced it with fearless feet though the burning lava rolled beneath him and scorched him with its heat.

Again, says Mr. Tuckerman, "All social reformers must expect to be misinterpreted and reviled."

Ought Shelley to be called a reformer?—to be placed side by side with those great benefactors of mankind? He helped to unsettle, but can it be called, to *reform*. And then he was but the echo, rather than the victim of others.

Again—"The most obnoxious of Shelley's opinions, was his non-concurrence in the prevalent system of religion." Non-concurrence is an exceedingly mild term for the most revolting, I was about to say, Atheism, were not the idea itself a contradiction, but the most revolting rejection of the sublime truths of the Christian Religion, and all Divine Revelation. And can even this be considered more obnoxious than his contempt and open war upon the institution of marriage?

I forbear to follow the author through his labyrinth of defence and palliation, and can only regret that a writer like Mr. Tuckerman, so well prepared to understand and appreciate the true elements of genius, drawn as he is towards it by the bonds of fraternity, should have employed the hybla of his pen in the defence of a cause so unholy. But let me drop the thankless office of critic.

The history of Shelley is a painful comment

upon his own principles. Gifted and enthusiastic, he embarked upon his career of doubt and gloom while scarcely emerging from boyhood. Acute, and delighting in metaphysical subtleties, he propounded questions of grave and momentous import, with a startling recklessness of all consequences, and at an age when the intellect is quick to detect apparent errors but slow to perceive the harmonies of truth; when a busy curiosity demands the *why* of everything, and the immature understanding is slow to give its response: at an age when none reason profoundly, however smart and penetrating they may appear; when difficulties are started and truths unperceived.

He reminds one of the child upon its mother's knee, who, even then, is disporting itself with mysteries, its eye drooping sadly under the weight of its own incomprehensible existence, as it asks with hushed voice, "Mother, who made God?" The greatest philosopher, like the little child, must veil his face in silence. The "idea of a Deity involves its reality," is the language of Coleridge; and we must leave the mystery of the God-head, for the duties comprised in our own being, and which he that runneth may read. Thus, without the submission, Shelley had all the inquisitiveness of a little child. He plunged into mysteries, which the human mind can never make less so, and involved himself in darkness which he had helped to create, till he was unable to perceive the one ray of truth which if steadily regarded would have grown brighter and brighter till the perfect day.

Embittered by his expulsion from the University, full of doubts, and vague aspirations, the writings of Godwin at once found their way to the heart of one who believed he had suffered persecution in the cause of truth. His reckless inexperience, with his contempt for established modes of thinking, were a rich soil for the reception of such doctrines.

Let us mark the results, first premising that with Shelley, deplorable as they were, such doctrines would be less likely to do harm than with a mind of a lower construction.

We are told that in Italy, the elevated moral sense and intellectuality of Shelley wrought happily upon the character of Lord Byron, and drew him from those excesses into which he was inclined to plunge. Very likely; Shelley's sense of the beautiful, and of the proprieties of things would never suffer him to degrade himself to mere animal gratifications. His nature was too noble for this. The divinity within him still uttered its still small voice. His life is a comment upon his principles. While yet a boy we find him expelled the University, not for insubordination, but for what we will not pervert by calling *liberal* discussions, but atheistical. No one will attempt to justify this. We find him disowned by his father,

himself a husband and a father; having "put love in bondage," as he says, only out of respect for public opinion, while yet in his minority. Here was a boy, with the experience of a life, persecution—if so pleased to call it—estranged affections, love, and responsibility.

Hitherto he can scarcely be said to have acted upon the principles he had embraced. The results were yet to be developed. Accordingly, we find him in all the anxiety and trepidation of an elopement with Mary Godwin, the daughter of Mary Woolstoncraft; leaving his wife and child desolate, and one ere long to behold the light but never a father's face. Broken-hearted and despairing, his poor wife commits suicide. We are told this circumstance affected Shelley most painfully, and he regretted he had not chosen a woman of higher intellect, who could better *appreciate one constituted as he was*. Is not this the very refinement of cruelty and cold-hearted selfishness! Intellect to appreciate *him!* and where was she, the deserted and broken hearted, to find a solace for her own outraged affections! He reproaches not his own turpitude, but the helpless victim whose heart had been garnered up in him for a want of intellect.

Here is the comment. Such were the carrying out of his doctrines in his own life, with all his vaulted intellect and love for the elevated and beautiful. If such are to be the results in one case only, should not a close observer of human nature, a far-seeing spectator of principles and actions, be led to ponder well the premises that lead to conclusions so appalling! Will not the truly wise reflect that it is easier to detect an evil than to apply the remedy! That when we enter the precincts of truth, it should be with uncovered head and the shoes from off our feet, that the dust of error may not be brought therein! It is easy to pull down, but difficult worthily to build up. It is easier to teach men to cavil than to think. We should stretch out the hand to lay it upon the ark of human law with fear and trembling.

If Shelley suffered wrong from society, it was but the natural reaction of the wrong he inflicted. He was melancholy, and sometimes desponding; he imputed this to the injuries inflicted by others. It was but the wrong he was doing his own nature. It was the hungering and thirsting of his own immortal spirit, crying out for its appropriate aliment—its bread of life. He was weighed down by his own brooding immortality, which he was trampling in the dust.

Shelley was benevolent and forgiving; could he be otherwise, who took the Holy Saviour for the model of his conduct! He acknowledged the beauty of his precepts, though he denied their Divine original. And in this acknowledgment we detect the germ of truth that might, had his life been spared, have expanded into the green luxu-

riance of reverential faith. But the waters of the Mediterranean closed over him at the age of thirty, when perhaps his best existence seemed about to commence. He died, leaving his name to be a wonder and a sorrowing upon the earth. Let us do homage to the god-like stamp of genius, the image and superscription thereof, but weep that one thus endowed should have failed to render unto God the things that are God's.

We cannot claim for Shelley the most enlarged and comprehensive order of intellect; he was too fond of theory and regardless of consequences. He might have speculated for himself, but he was unfit to teach others. We have seen that his own pure intellect was insufficient to protect him from the evils of his own system, and he ought thence to have inferred what its effect would be upon others less gifted. But he lacked that high power of analysis and combination, that might have enabled him to see things in all their bearings and probable results. He failed to perceive that in setting man free from human institutions, still more from Divine, he gave him over to the more degrading bondage of human passions.

Perhaps we *should* add, that however superabounding might have been Shelley's mind originally, the narrow views he took of society, the course of reading and thinking so long adhered to, where everything was brought to establish a theory, had disqualified him for the calm and rational investigation of truth—had obscured his mental vision, and prepared him to behold all objects through the medium he had himself created.

We should be the last to justify that species of persecution to which Shelley was subjected, both in his collegiate studies and in after life—it must have served still more to bewilder a young mind already groping in its own mazes. It most likely compelled him to associate the injustice of individuals and their blind and ill-directed zeal, with those sacred truths they professed to defend—and the action of those laws that forcibly deprived him of his children, he would be likely, in the excitement of outraged feelings, to condemn in toto, as burdensome and subversive of human liberty. We must regret every atom of error infused in a cup already filled to the brim. We regret, but in vain, that no hand was ready to guide his inexperienced feet calmly along the rugged yet pleasant paths of truth and duty, to smooth the beautiful and perplexed brow, and point out the simplicity as well as the mystery of truth. With his exquisite sense of the beautiful, his affluence of imagination and splendor of diction, Shelley might have trod where others fear to look; he might have been like the city set on a hill, that cannot be hid; a light to warn and incite others to the same high destiny; while now he but reminds us of the light that flickers over the charnel-house or the treacherous morass. No one would have obeyed more nobly

the dictates of duty, could he have felt the omnipotence and divinity of that

" Stern daughter of the voice of God."

In contemplating his genius, his errors and his sorrows, we could even weep over him, and in the silence of our own spirits hear the pathetic language of truth, uttering—" how often would I have gathered him under my wing, but he would not!" We regret that his cold intellect had never been warmed into a spirit-demanding piety. That he could not submit to that bondage, which is still freedom—the holy control of duty—and exclaim with Wordsworth,

Me, this unchartered freedom tires,
I feel the weight of chance desires.
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

His ashes repose amid the ruins of the Eternal City—fit resting for one whose daring hand would help to pluck down the fair fabric of human society. Peace be unto him. Let us utter a sad farewell, in the melody of his own words over the grave of his friend Keats, who slumbers beside him.

A grave among the eternal—come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet, his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewey sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

AN EVENING WALK IN THE CITY.

BY CHARLES LANMAN.

Ever since I came to the city to reside, it has been my custom to devote one evening of every week to the express purpose of walking the streets. I generally disguise myself in the habit of a mendicant, so that I can pass through the crowd without being observed—for, as is well known, poverty is a sure passport throughout the world. The incidents which I have witnessed, and the wisdom thus collected, would be sufficient to make an interesting book. But the history of one of those evenings alone it is my present purpose to relate.

It is the middle month of Autumn. The twilight shadows have fallen upon the city, and the moon is just rising beyond the distant steeples. The hum of business has died away. The wealthy merchant is returning home to spend the evening in reviewing the profits of the day, or perhaps the whole night in dissipation. The poor mechanic is also returning to his home, after a day of toil. How different will be his reception from that of the rich and worldly man! I can almost fancy with what gladness little Mary runs to her father's arms, telling him how good a girl she has been to-day, and how far she has advanced in the spelling-book. I behold the placid and contented smile of that fond mother, as she leaves her sewing to prepare the evening meal. I hear the loud talking of little Griswold, as he relates his advancement in geography, or his exploits in playing marbles or the ball, during the "recess." In an hour's time I see that family upon their knees at prayer: an hour more and they have all retired, and the house is still. Happy

household! may not a single cloud darken the clear sky of your dreams this night.

But I must away. Beloved reader, I desire you to take my arm, and in imagination accompany me in my walk. By this means I shall be enabled to express to you my thoughts in the most familiar way.

Well, then, here we are in the principal street of the city. The lamps which line its sides extend farther than the eye can reach, throwing upon the pavements a flood of dazzling light. What an immense concourse of people are passing to and fro, from all nations and kindred and tongues! The first impression of a stranger at such a sight is, "where are they from?—where are they going?" Alas! the answers to those questions are to be found only in the Book of Life. Thoughtless indeed may be the man who first asked them, but that he did so proves him to be a philosopher.

Do you see that old fruit-woman, seated in a kind of box at the corner of yonder street? Let me tell you a little of her history—for she is a good woman, and one whom I number among my friends. Her name is Susan Gray, and her age is threescore years and five. This ancient looking dwelling on our right is the same where she was born, and where she spent her girlhood, loving and beloved. That whole block was once the property of her father, who was a man of wealth; but owing to some misfortune he became reduced, and this so affected his health that he died. In a few months after this his wife was also called away, and the daughter was left an orphan, though the consort of a poor but industrious mechanic. In process of time it so happened that he also died, leaving behind him his widow and an only child. About twenty years ago the few acquaintances that Susan had, went away in different parts, and she was left poor and friendless in the world, with nothing to cheer her pathway, save her religion and beautiful daughter. It so chanced in one of her rambles, that she determined to occupy this corner—for here the rent was free—and, if possible, gain a livelihood by following the humble employment of a fruit-woman. Success crowned her efforts until she became comfortably situated in a small secluded house. Think of it. Old Susan has been the occupant of that corner for twenty years! through the heat and cold of summer and winter. She has been as constant in her employment as the church-clock above her head, which has not failed during that period to warn the city of the fleetness of Time. How varied are the characters which she has seen pass by!—many of whom are perhaps dwelling in the uttermost parts of the earth. In her we behold a noble example of perseverance, which deserves universal applause.

Eighteen years ago, at the close of a lovely summer's day, a poor orphan boy was seen seated on a marble stoop, in the very street where we now stand. Without a single friend to advise and cheer his drooping spirits, he had come to the metropolis to seek his fortune. The opulent merchant passed by him without even deigning to bestow a smile: and this neglect almost made the heart of that pale beautiful boy break with sorrow. That night no downy pillow received his aching head; but in its stead the stony threshold was his resting-place. On an evening following, this boy stopped at the fruit-stand of Susan Gray, and offered her his three last pennies for something to satisfy the cravings of hunger. The tears that dimmed his eye were the introduction to many inquiries, which at length resulted in her asking him to come and make her house his home.

One, two, and three years were fled. It would be a pleasant task to dwell long and particularly on the enjoyments of that obscure family—and also on the simple scenes enacted beneath that roof; but when I say that religion had a part in all, the man who is familiar with the Christian