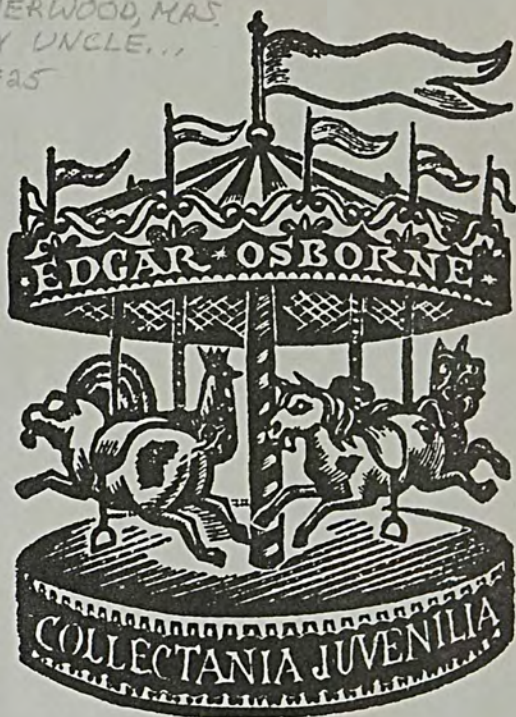
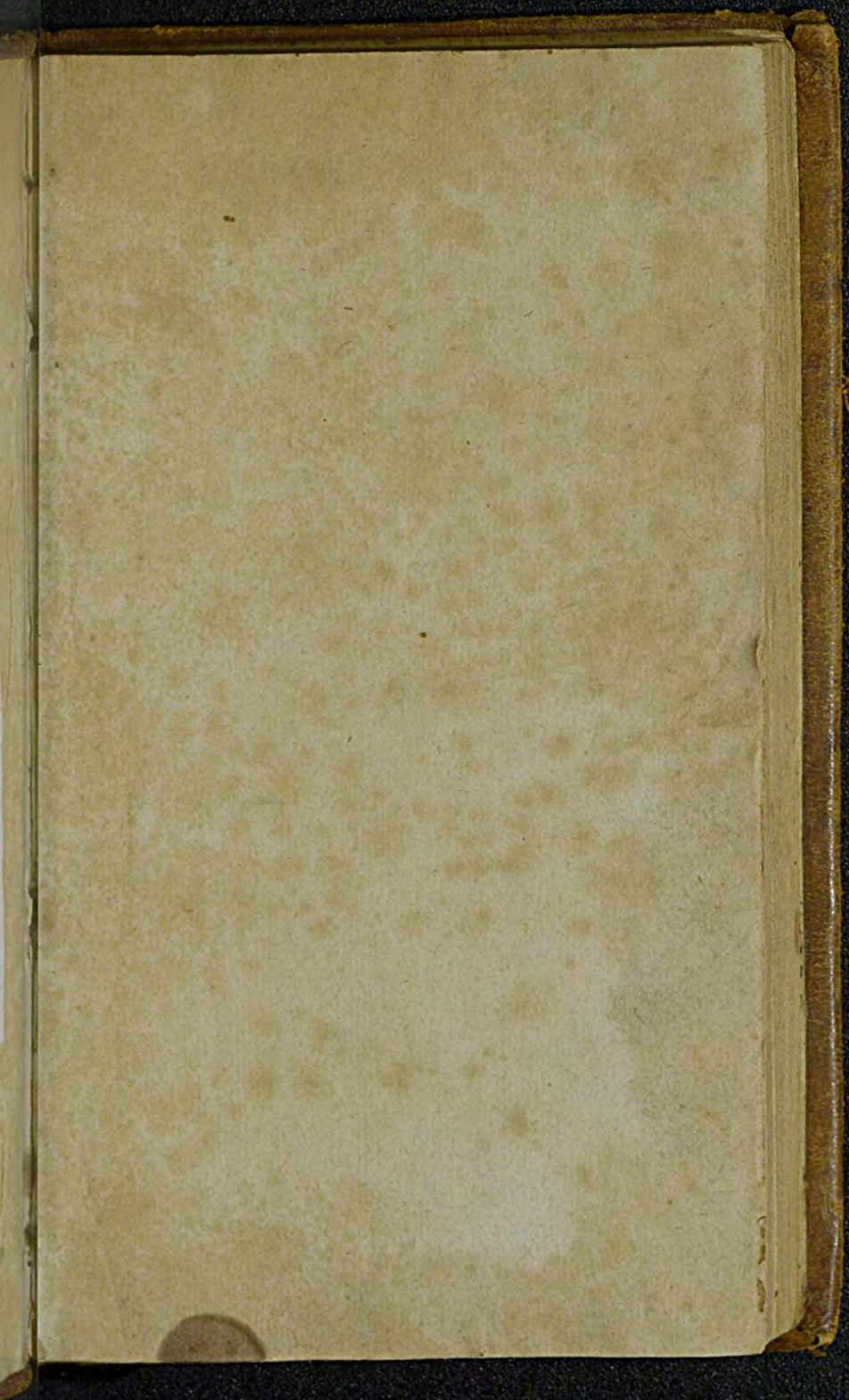


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Page 40.

My Uncle Timothy.

MY UNCLE TIMOTHY :

AN INTERESTING TALE

For Young Persons.

Margaret Colman

BY

MRS. SHERWOOD,

AUTHOR OF STORIES ON THE CHURCH CATECHISM ;
LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER, &c.

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MY UNCLE TIMOTHY.

CHAP. I.

The evil of a disputatious spirit—Description of my Uncle's person and character—Maria's opinion of him and of the learned in general—His argument concerning the stage coach which brought me from Oxford—Our first meeting.

I HAVE lately been led to meditate with attention upon the nature of that quality, which, whether denominated pride, conceit, vanity, or self-love, consists, under every modification, in an inordinate love of self, and absence of that knowledge of our own hearts, which is the only true foundation of humility.

The immediate and invariable effect of this state of mind, is to spread a darkness over the understanding in certain particulars, though in others it may lead to strong efforts, and partial exertions, especially in cases where the promise of praise and celebrity are held forth as the reward of these

exertions. Notwithstanding which this quality has a powerful tendency, not only to keep the mind in a state of ignorance in general, but to render its possessor more or less ridiculous, for true dignity consists in humility, and every false pretension, however skilfully made, subjects a man to the contempt of the unregenerate, and the pity of those who have been blessed with a correct insight into the real condition of the children of Adam in the present state of being.

Solomon says, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him." Prov. xxvi. 12, and, undoubtedly, there is nothing which, from the beginning of time to the present day, has retarded the progress of improvement in the same degree as this feeling of self-importance; which reigns in the heart of the natural man, and which clings with a deplorable tenacity, to many an individual in whom we trust that the work of conversion has taken place.

Hence proceeds that want of Christian simplicity, that seeking of his own things so remarkable in many professors, and that niggard spirit with which we give honour to those who do not precisely belong to our own peculiar sect or party.

The present object, however, for which I take up my pen, is, to point out one especial consequence which very commonly proceeds from a want of self-knowledge in persons, who having received a regular education, and acquired a fluency of language, are thereby induced to treat all those whose acquirements, though perhaps fully equal to their own, may not have been obtained in the same manner, with a kind of contempt, as beings of an inferior order; rejecting all information which they might be enabled to impart, and controverting every opinion which they presume to utter: till, at length, by force of indulgence, the habit of disputation takes entire possession of their minds, and the spirit of dogmatism keeps them in a state of constant warfare; shutting up every avenue of improvement, and sealing every source of information.

It is astonishing what power this disputatious spirit sometimes acquires; and to what absurdities it often leads those of whom we might expect better things; inducing the unfortunate being, who is under its dominion, not unseldom to forsake the cause of truth, and to endeavour—

“To make the worse appear the better cause.”

Having, however, stated my intentions

with sufficient accuracy, I proceed to give my readers some little account of a man whom I both loved and honoured; who was in many respects a valuable and amiable character: but being unfortunately possessed with the spirit of dispute, he not unseldom rendered himself extremely disagreeable to his friends, and an object of utter aversion to strangers: and was never thoroughly understood as the kind hearted creature he really was, till his body was brought low by sickness, and the pride of human intellect destroyed by a stroke of palsy.

My father possessed a handsome estate in the county of ———, an estate now in possession of my elder brother; I was his second son, and had one brother and two sisters younger than myself; my mother was an excellent woman, a tender parent, pious without pretensions, and the perfect gentlewoman without being any thing of the fine lady; many of my early days were happily spent in the old family mansion, which was only the more endeared to me by my frequent absences at school.

My father had had several brothers, two had died in infancy, one had perished at sea, another had been killed in the American war, and one only survived at the

time of my being entered at the University of Oxford, this was my uncle Timothy; whom, however, I had never seen during my childhood; as he had always resided in the North, where he held a living, being a clergyman of the Church of England.

The rectory of the parish in which we resided was in the gift of our family; it was a rich benefice, and had always been intended for my uncle, who it was supposed would have entered into possession of it early in life; but the old rector had thought proper to keep his station at least fifteen years longer than the allotted allowance of man's life on earth, as established by the Psalmist: and as he was a worthy man, no one, not even my uncle himself, ever, I have reason to think, expressed or felt a wish to see him out of the way: however the long expected event, to wit, the death of the good old gentleman at length took place whilst I was at the University; and although some of my father's worldly neighbours advised him to keep the living for me, as I was to enter into holy orders in a few years, he rejected the proposal with due displeasure, and sent in all haste for his brother, who arrived during the interval between the

Christmas and long vacation, on which occasion I received the following information from my sister:—

Uncle Timothy is come—he cried for joy when he saw us all—he asked often after you, and says he longs to see you; we all love him already, almost as much as a second father, but he is not much like papa, he is tall and thin, and wears a bushy wig of white hair, his face is pale, and he has rather a sharp nose, and grey eyes, but when he smiles his countenance is very pleasant, but his wig makes him look older than papa; he only came yesterday, and I will tell you more about him in the next letter.

In the next letter, however, nothing more was said of uncle Timothy, but that he was got into his house, and that mamma was very glad it was so, for she had lately been troubled with headaches, which two circumstances being weighed together, were not a little perplexing; however, as the long vacation was near at hand, and as I knew that my letters to my sister were always subjected to the family inspection, I refrained from putting any questions in my epistles which might give offence; and resolved to postpone the solution of the difficulty which had arisen in mind till I

should once again be so happy as to behold the fresh fields and woods which surrounded my father's mansion.

As soon as I had liberty to take my leave of Oxford, I engaged a corner in the stage coach, and by means of travelling all night, appeared at the breakfast table at the critical moment in which my mother was pouring out the first dish of tea, it being precisely twelve hours before I was expected. I shall not attempt to describe the cry of joy which resounded through the house at the sight of me, and the confusion which ensued at the breakfast table: the presence of our father, who was a methodical and quiet man, soon, however, restored all to order, and whilst I was making up at once for supper and breakfast, I was amused with the history of all that had passed during my absence.

“And my Uncle Timothy is settled in his house,” I said, “What a pleasure it must be to have such a neighbour!”

An awkward pause followed this remark, my elder brother stooped and patted his greyhound, my father's eye-lids fell, my sisters blushed, and my mother, without looking towards me, after a short dry cough, said, “Yes, my dear, it is always pleasant to have a brother at hand.”

I looked round on all the beloved circle with some surprise, but was not so incapable of reading countenances, as not to be aware that I had blundered upon something unpleasant; I therefore instantly changed the subject, and began to describe the velocity with which I had been hurried over the ground from Oxford, making one hundred miles to the neighbouring post town, from which I had walked, in less than eleven hours; and accounting for this extraordinary speed, by saying, that we were running against an opposition coach: things of this kind were more remarkable a few years ago than they are now, and this my speedy journey afforded subject of discussion till the party broke up, and I was left in the breakfast room with my sister.

“And now, dear Maria,” I said, “now that we are alone, do explain the solemn pause which took place at breakfast: What is this Uncle Timothy? Is he not liked?” “Not liked,” she answered, hesitatingly, “Yes, it is impossible not to like him, or to love him; but there is one thing, Charles, which makes him very tiresome, he is constantly disputing, it is no matter what any one asserts, he always takes up the contrary side, and battles it out till every

one is tired ; then papa drops his eye-lids, as you know how ; mamma seems fatigued ; William slips out of the room ; Henry skulks after him ; Harriet recollects something which must be immediately done at the other end of the house, and I alone am left to weather the storm, and, I assure you, though I love my uncle Timothy, I am always sorry to see him come in ; however, now you are here, and have learnt to reason and chop logic, I shall leave him to you on these occasions."

My readers may be well assured that I had thanked my sister for her kind intentions, on which she smilingly remarked, that I spent my time very ill at the University if I had not learnt to argue with credit to myself, and if I could not, on occasion, beat common sense out of the field, and now and then "make the worse appear the better cause." "Maria," I replied, "I perceive that you have not been sharpening your wit in vain, and I thank you in the name of the learned world in general for your high opinion of the uses to which we put our acquirements ; and do you suppose that all we acquire from our books is the art of perplexing common sense with false reasonings?"

"Not all," she replied, "I hope you

acquire some better things, but jesting apart, I assure you my dear brother, that till you have experienced it, you can hardly conceive how this spirit of contradiction in one excites it in another; till I knew my good uncle, I had no idea how very difficult it is to bear a constant petty opposition, and how painful and irritating it is to have every unimportant sentiment continually controverted."

"I have no doubt that your remark is just, Maria," I replied, "for it entirely agrees with the little experience I have myself had on the subject:" and then, still feeling a little hurt at the charge she had brought against the learned world in general; though in a playful way; I was led in my own mind to make this reflection, that the love of disputation was an error into which persons of awakened intellect, and conscious of superior advantages of education, were much more likely to fall than those who had not that feeling of superiority over others: and although I knew not how my sister came to make this remark, I felt that the gentle blow she had given me was not so entirely the effect of a playful disposition as she wished me to think; however, I did not judge it right to add more upon the subject at that time,

but begging her to prepare herself, I promised to accompany her in a walk to my uncle's house; being not a little impatient to see or rather to hear the good old gentleman, little doubting that whatever his talents for discussion might be, I who was fresh from my logical studies, should be soon able to silence him by my superior talents in the same line.

Whilst my sister was gone to assume her walking paraphernalia, I took up a book, and was lounging at my ease, in a large bow-window of the breakfast room, the blinds being down to exclude the sun, when suddenly my ear was caught by these words, "I tell you, brother, that it is as impossible that he should have made the journey in the time you speak of, as that I should fly to the moon tied to the tail of a paper kite;" I started up, conjecturing that my uncle Timothy was at hand, and placing myself in a proper post of observation, behind the blinds, I saw my father coming up the gravel walk towards the house, accompanied by the good gentleman in question, whom I could have recognized any where from the portrait drawn in my sister's letter.

The two brothers seemed very deep in conversation, and when come close under

the window, which was considerably raised from the garden, they stood still, my uncle detaining my father by a button of his coat, and I then heard my uncle exclaim with some vehemence, "but hear reason, brother James, only hear reason; we will allow that the horses might run eight miles an hour, and I defy them to go quicker up hill and down hill, taking one thing with another; now the eights in one hundred will go twelve times all the world round, and we may fairly reckon another hour for the odd four miles, and the stoppages, be as quick as you will, and what, I ask you, comes of your eleven hours?"

What my father replied, I could not hear, for in proportion as my uncle heated in argument, he became louder and louder, repeating "eight miles, brother James, I say eight miles on an average up hill and down hill, is as much as any stage coach in the United Kingdoms ever has made, or ever will make: and I will no more believe that Charles came from Oxford in the time he speaks of, than that the national debt will be paid next Michaelmas day." "Well, be it so," replied my father, in a tone of constrained good humour, though evidently somewhat tinctured with dissatisfaction, "but don't you want to see

this boy, who maintains the truth of this miracle?" "To be sure, I do," said my uncle, releasing my father's button, "where is the brave fellow, lead on," and immediately the sound of their voices became more remote, as the two honoured elders wheeled round to the door of the house, on which I hastened forward to meet my uncle Timothy, and was received with all the tokens of parental tenderness, by the good old man, who, notwithstanding his talent for disputation, possessed many qualities which rendered him at once amiable and respectable.

"I am glad to see thee, my boy, I am truly glad to see thee!" said the old gentleman, settling his wig, a motion which he generally made after any occasion of excitement, "and so like thy father, just what he was at thine age," and the tears trembled in the good man's eyes.

Such was my first meeting with my uncle, and as my sister soon appeared prepared for a walk, my uncle led the way, all impatience to shew me the improvements he had made at the rectory.

CHAP. II.

The walk to the Rectory—My uncle's gratitude to his brother—The stage coach dispute unfortunately renewed—My sister's prudent interference offends my uncle—His definition of logic, and lecture upon water fowl, and the ignorance of young men in the present day—The view down the valley from my uncle's study, where the two portraits occasion a second angry ebullition—A visit to the owl in the poultry yard—Our return to dine at my father's, where the subject of my journey from Oxford produces another violent dispute.

AND now my reader may fancy me and my sister with our good uncle between us, slowly making our way through sundry green lanes, fair fields, and shady coppices, having taken a circular course, in order to protract the delight of a walk in the charming month of June, in company with relations who have long been separated, and amid regions of such bold and peculiar beauty, as are not unaptly described in the charming words of the poet—

“ Down in the dale, with many a rocky fall,
The stream runs murmuring under the cool shade
Of ashes, quivering aspens, poplars grey,
The dark hued alder, which aslant or tall,
Oak-like appears, or with its clustering young,

Hides the swamp marsh, the bitterns lonely range ;
There too is seen the random withy, known
By fragrant blossom, robed in silvery down
And there the willow, whose serener hue,
A greener gloss to neighbouring hornbeam gives :
These with a nameless and unnumbered band
Of shrub or tree, with nature's unseen grace,
Deck the calm vale, and with a secret charm
Favor the spirit of the softened scene,
Or prompt the pious muse her truest airs."

During this, our lingering route, all went on smoothly for a long time, my uncle Timothy being engaged in an account of his feelings on the reception of my father's letter, requesting his acceptance of the living now in his possession : of his delight on the occasion, his sense of gratitude to his brother, his emotion on leaving his former little flock in the north : with sundry other particulars, all of which composed a narrative of no ordinary interest to his auditors ; particularly as during the course of the recital, the good old man evidenced so much kindness of heart, such pure and perfect disinterestedness, and such correct principles respecting religion, together with such vivacity of thought, that I was perfectly delighted with my newly found relation, and anticipated many a delightful hour spent in such society.

At length we were brought by our devious path into a meadow on the borders of a coppice, through which ran a little

stream, whose gurgling murmurs mingled sweetly with the buzz of many bees, who were busy amongst the thymy herbage which covered the ground, and whose straw thatched dwellings were just discernible, as they peeped from above the hedge of a cottage garden at some distance lower down the brook; in this meadow, which was part of the glebe, my uncle had placed a bench beneath the shade of the neighbouring wood; precisely in a situation to command the best view of the rectory, the gabled roofs of which, and certain of its gothic and irregular casements were principally visible amongst the fragrant bowers and shades of the highly ornamented and fruitful garden, which had been the delight of the former occupant.

Our uncle directed us to take our seats on the bench, and then placing himself between us, he looked at one and another with vivacity, and then exultingly exclaimed, "See what it is to have a good, a kind brother! See what a place he has provided for my old age! but, Charles, he added, I shall always consider you as my partner in this concern; when you are in Orders you shall come and live in my house, and manage every thing your own way, only leave me my study and my old

fashioned bed room in the corner of that turretted part of the old roof, and I shall desire no more;" then, added the old man with vivacity, "what are my brother's children but my own, what are these young creatures to my right and left but my son and daughter; I have no thought of marriage, the time for that is gone by, but my heart is not the more cold on that account, and I pray that it never may be rendered so, by age or any other cause:" thus the good man addressed us, and I observed the big tears falling one by one from my gentle sister's cheeks; insensibly however the conversation took a less tender turn, and my uncle having for a short time discussed certain more ordinary subjects, wherein we did not find it necessary to controvert any of his opinions, my sister unfortunately remarked, that they had been much surprised at breakfast time to see me drop in, not expecting me before the evening at the earliest.

"Ah!" said the old gentleman sharply, and turning quickly to me, "that reminds me: pray nephew do you carry a watch?" "Yes, sir," I replied.

"Is it a good one?" said the old gentleman. "It is I believe," I answered, as I drew it from my pocket, and held it up,

glad of an opportunity of displaying a handsome chain and seals, of which I had lately become possessed. "And pray, sir," asked my uncle, evidently gathering heat as our questions and answers came more rapidly, "Did you look at your watch at the moment of starting?" "No, sir," I replied, "but I heard the bell of Queen's strike nine a moment before we started."

"If so, youngster," returned my uncle, "you ought not to be arrived by this time, for it is not now more than a quarter after ten." "But I am here, sir, as you see!" I replied, unable to restrain a smile, which though not intended as an offence, was observed by my uncle, who, being thereby not a little inflamed, rose from his seat, and setting himself opposite to me in an attitude, "What!" he exclaimed, "and do you really mean to support this assertion, young man, to wit: that you were conveyed from Oxford to this place, being one hundred and odd miles, in a common stage coach, in the space of eleven hours; I tell you, sir, that the thing is impossible."

There is something very offensive to human nature in being flatly contradicted; it is what few can bear with temper, and much as a moment before I had loved my

uncle, and much as I fancied I could have done for him, I now felt that come what would of it, I must answer him, and defend my wounded honour

“Sir,” I replied, “I can only assert the simple fact: it was precisely nine o’clock, by the clock of Queen’s, when the coach started from the Star.”

“By the clock of knaves!” said my uncle, in a kind of droll manner, by which I understood that he meant this turn upon me as a good joke, and then instantly resuming his seriousness, “How did you know it was nine, young man, and not six, seven, eight? I say, how did you know it, if you did not look at your watch?”

I gave several reasons, the chief of which was, that the coach was to set out at nine; the good man, however, took no notice of any one, but began to discuss with great strength, and vehemence of language, voice, and gesture, the comparative velocity with which stage coaches commonly move, according to the various roads over which they must needs pass, in their different courses through the United Kingdoms; laying down the averages of their respective velocity with as much decision as if he had been employed by govern-

ment as the inspector of these concerns, and had been solely occupied by the consideration of them through the greater part of his life, and coming, at length, to this conclusion, that I was certainly not less than twenty-four miles from Oxford, at the hour in which I pretended to have started: whilst the old gentleman was uttering his oration, or soliloquy, or whatever else it might be called, for no one offered to answer him until he was compelled to pause for want of breath; I sat fuming and fretting, and wishing that my adversary had been a man of my own age, that I might have made him sensible that I was actually present, let the hour of the day be what it might; for I was precisely at that age when young gentlemen are apt to be most testy, however, I no sooner perceived a pause in this discourse than I also sprang up from my seat, looked defiance in my turn, and was about to utter, I know not what expressions of high displeasure when my sister thought it right to interfere, and placing her hand on my mouth just as I had uttered these words, "and so uncle you would make me out a —," she made me swallow the next word, which was, no doubt a very bulky one, for it stuck some time in my throat, and made

me almost gasp for breath, before I could inhale a fresh draft of air, by removing the gentle hand which had taken such a liberty with my lips: but in the mean time my adversary had gathered strength, and according to the received custom of inveterate disputants, had felt himself inflamed by the interference of a third person, on whom he immediately directed all the artillery of his rhetoric, leaving me, the first offender, as one already vanquished, "So Miss Maria," he said, fixing his eyes sharply upon her, "and so, my good niece, you must stop your brother's mouth; what was that for? because you don't think me worth an answer!" "No, uncle, no!" replied Maria, "you cannot think so." "Well, child, well, what then was your reason for placing that saucy hand on his mouth;" "Because I don't like him to dispute and argue, can't he take the opinions of his elders without controverting them." For this, poor Maria had to encounter the angry looks, not only of her uncle, but of the hot young collegian, her brother; however, my uncle left me no time to speak, for answering her quickly, "What do you mean by the word disputing, child?" he said, "why arguing, uncle, reasoning, discussing, controverting," replied Maria, "I

“ I don't like arguing, or reasoning either, do you hear that Charles ?” replied my uncle, laughing, and looking triumphantly at me ; “ oh ! thou true woman, thou worthy daughter of grandmother Eve ! so thou dost not like reasoning, and pray what woman ever did ;” with that he laughed, and I perceived by a certain little pouting appearance of my sister's under lip, that she was going in her turn to be displeased, although she pointed with her foot to an orchis growing on the grass, and in order to turn the conversation into another channel, asked if it was any curious specimen of that tribe of plants.

My uncle would not suffer me to reply, for when the demon of dispute had got full possession of him, he never would let any other person in the company utter a word by his own good will ; he, therefore, as I said, took up the question, and glancing contemptuously at the poor flower, at the same time, drawing down the corners of his mouth, he said, “ I imagine, niece, you are not deep in botany, otherwise, you would know a common bloody butcher, as our country people call them, from a bee or fly orchis, but be this as it may, you have not answered my question ; tell me, I pray you, if your ever knew the

woman who could be made to understand logic, in a word, who could ever comprehend a rational argument," and having ceased to speak, he stood with an indescribable expression of cool contempt depicted on his countenance, waiting with assumed patience till she should condescend to give a reply; she, in the mean time seeming determined not to speak.

At length the good gentleman's patience seeming to be exhausted, he turned to me, and said, "Come Charles, let us proceed with our walk; Miss Maria seems to be disposed to enjoy her own reflections," "Don't suppose I am angry, uncle," said Maria, "but you know I have often told you that I never will argue on any subject."

"A capital resolution, my good niece." returned my uncle, setting himself, as it were, again in an attitude of defiance, "And pray my excellent girl, what do you mean by arguing? define, define; let us have a clear statement of your proposition."

"Uncle Timothy," replied Maria, "those are the very words which you always use at the commencement of a long discussion,

and I have resolved, more than once, to become perfectly silent whenever you have recourse to that form of speech." "And, wherefore?" asked my uncle. "Because, to be plain, uncle, I don't like disputations." "What do you mean by disputations," returned the old gentleman. "Why, angry dialogues," replied Maria, "in which each party maintains his own opinion, whether right or wrong, and remains as obstinately attached to it at the last as at the first."

"And pray my good girl," said my uncle, "who will contend in favour of such dialogues, none but a man without reason, or without temper; but whilst we condemn such unlettered and vulgar discussions, surely we must not confound them with those learned and enlightened efforts of reason by which, during the course of easy and social intercourse, error is detected, and truth brought to light, and a man of education so enabled to shew his superiority over those ignorant persons who have never been made acquainted with the art of reasoning."

My sister was silent, and I was about to propose a continuation of our walk, when my uncle, who had been eyeing her with a second look of contempt, suddenly

turned to me, and said, "I wish Charles, you would give your good sister some lessons in logic." "Sir," I replied, "perhaps as a female, she might be better employed with her needle;" "very true, Charles," said my uncle, "very true, for the minds of women are not formed for argument, they have not clear perceptions on these subjects in general, but education might do something."

"Perhaps," interrupted Maria, "it is not so much because I cannot argue, Uncle, as because I will not." "You will not," said my uncle, "and why is it that you will not, but because you have seen enough to feel that you cannot cope with those who reason scientifically: that you only expose your ignorance when you attempt to discuss any point, and thus betray your deficiencies: let me tell you niece that no one who has not entered into mathematical or logical studies, can reason satisfactorily, and I verily believe, that so far from knowing any thing of the art of reason, you could scarcely define the meaning of the word logic." Maria was silent again, on which my uncle gathering heat till his face was flushed, and his lips almost in a foam, repeated aloud the following clause, which was nearly

word for word what is found in the introduction of some of the elementary books on the subject of logic.

“Logic,” Miss Maria, “in the most extensive sense which it can with propriety be made to bear, may be considered as the science, and also as the art of reasoning; it investigates and furnishes rules to secure the mind from error in its deductions; its most appropriate office is that of instituting an analysis by the process of the mind in reasoning; it guards the mind from the reception of error, and leads it to the adoption of truth. If such, then, is logic,” proceeded my uncle, “if such, then, is the art of reasoning, what am I to think of you, if you utterly reject all logical discussions, and, like a true woman, resolve wholly to exclude from conversation all those processes of the mind by which truth is ascertained, and error detected;” in this place, or hereabouts, my sister attempted to speak, but on my uncle’s raising his voice still louder, she was silenced, and the good old gentleman left to descant, at his leisure, upon the advantages of an early acquaintance with the art of reasoning, and the natural superiority of men to women in respect to the powers of reason; concluding the whole with a

look of contempt at his niece, and a flourish of his walking stick at the same time, turning shortly round, for he had stood with his back to his own house, whilst he had uttered his declamation, and calling upon us to follow him, proceeding with great rapidity towards the rectory, his limbs being evidently propelled to additional exertions by the fervor of disputation, which had not, as yet, found time to evaporate.

I was about to follow as quickly as I could, when my sister held me a little back, saying, "allow him to be alone a few minutes, give him time to think of something else, or this logical discussion will last to the end of our walk."

"What! Maria," I said, "are you angry because you have been classed amongst that order of beings who are considered incapable of reason?"

"No," she replied, "I am not angry, but I am wearied, if you knew what I have suffered for the last few months from this spirit of dispute, you would not be surprised to find that this is a subject on which I am not a little sore. This is not the first time in which I have found myself engaged in an argument upon arguments, and a disputation concerning disputations; and I assure you that I have

been more than once surprized into a very hot war of words, merely because I asserted, that I had resolved never to dispute again."

Here we were interrupted by my uncle, who had proceeded, on the spring of the moment, to the other side of the little valley, without perceiving that we were not near him; but being arrived at a certain point of view, which he wished us to observe, had, in consequence looked behind him, and missed us, on which he set up such a shout as made the whole valley ring, and caused several water fowl, who were in a little patch of marshy ground below, to spring up, and fly from the place of alarm.

My uncle's eye was drawn to these objects by the sound of their heavy wings, and when we came up to him, we found that the water fowl had flown away with the subject of our late argument; yet not without suggesting another subject of discussion, in which my uncle failed not to enlarge and descant, with as much apparent familiarity with the matter in question as if he had spent all his life amidst wild ducks and herons, his eye being, in the mean time, directed towards me, waiting some remark from me, which I expected would have been the

certain forerunner of a vehement debate ; however, by pleading my utter unacquaintance with aquatic birds, I came off with a slight reproof, and a gentle hint respecting the ignorance of the young men of the present day, with respect to natural history and rural affairs: by this time we were entered the rectory garden, where all the sweets of paradise, together with the song of birds, and hum of bees, seemed to be assembled in one favoured spot ; here my good uncle, in his delight and eagerness to shew me his possessions, and to shew them as the gift of his brother, ceased for a short time to argue, and I had almost forgotten this, his infirmity, in the delight of seeing him thus happy, till on our entering his study, which was his favourite room, and deserved to be such, as independent of its store of rich and valuable authors, it commanded a view down the valley so gaily and so smilingly beautiful, as no man of taste might look upon without admiration, and no man of piety without gratitude: I perceived, by a certain little anxiety in my sister's usually placid countenance, that something was likely to be amiss, and before I could form any conjecture on the subject, the old gentleman burst out, at the same time casting

a kind of sinister glance at my sister, who had run to the window, and put her head out of it, as if resolved not to hear any thing that was passing within the room.

“Charles,” said the old gentleman, fixing one hand on his side, and flourishing with the other, “nephew, Charles, do you see those portraits on each side the chimney-piece?” “I do, uncle,” I replied, directing my eye to the representation of a prim old lady in a mob cap, with a nose-gay in her hand, on the right of the chimney, and a very suitable companion to the venerable dame in the figure of an old gentleman, in a gold laced suit on the left. “You see them, do you?” asked my uncle, “I do, sir,” I replied, taking occasion to produce what we now call a quizzing glass, with which I had furnished myself at Oxford, but had not yet ventured to sport in the country, “Your grandfather and grandmother, Charles,” added my uncle, with a glance at my sister, which indicated a coming storm, “I understand as much,” I replied, “there are similar pictures to these, you know, in our breakfast room at the hall.”

“Uncle,” exclaimed my sister, at this moment drawing her head in from the window, “What have you done with the

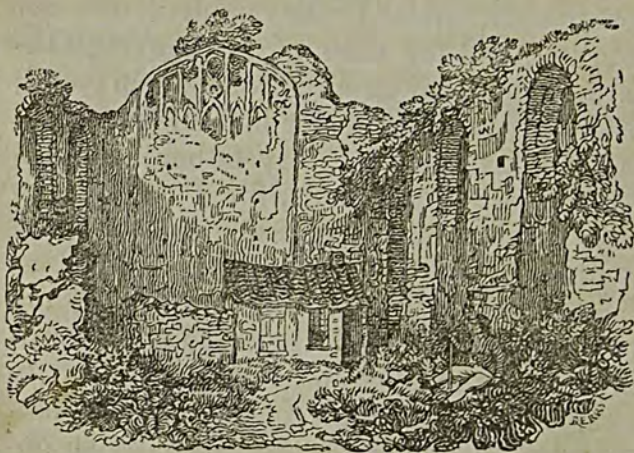
old doctor's owl, is it alive still?" "Perish all owls," returned my uncle in high indignation, and with a countenance of consummate contempt, and whilst I doubted what might have excited this storm, it burst upon my head, and I was made to know that I had fallen into the very same error into which my sister had stumbled before me, and the remembrance of which had occasioned the slight alteration of her countenance, which I had observed on her coming into the study. "Similar portraits to those in your breakfast room," said the old gentleman, "the very remark, the precise remark, made by your sister, the very same; well may you use a glass, master Charles, truly you need one, and a pair of spectacles would not misbecome Miss Maria: then advancing several steps, he laid his hand on my shoulder, turned me towards the portraits, shouting at the same time in my ears, exclaiming, "have not you enough tact, Mr. Oxonian, to distinguish between the hand of a Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the miserable sign-post daubings in your breakfast parlour."

"*Oh tempora! oh mores!*—I will own, I did not expect this of you; look sir, look at your grandfather's eye; is that the eye of a common dauber; look at the ruff

round the old lady's neck, does it not stand out from the canvass as if it had come but yesterday out of the hands of the laundress; and those flowers in her hand, the very bees might settle on them. Let me tell you, nephew Charles, that I would not take two hundred pounds for these paintings, whilst those in that breakfast parlour of yours are not worth picking up in the street, excepting for the purpose of hanging in a tree before the door of some ale-house." Here my good uncle, taking the portraits in question as his text, descanted largely upon the subject of portrait painting, using all the technical terms of the art with a fluency which astonished me, who had never heard of his taking a pencil in his hand; however, he spoke with so much decision, and with such rapidity, and used, as I have before said, so many scientific expressions, that he left little doubt in my mind at the time, of his being thoroughly acquainted with the subject: in the mean time my sister and I remained perfectly silent, till the good man, having exhausted all the inflammatory feelings which the occasion had created, strode off to his poultry yard, of which he was excessively fond, bidding us follow him, and saying, it was wonderful

to see how peacefully the owl lived with the chickens." "Then the owl is alive, uncle," said my sister: "who said he was not," returned the old gentleman, marching on—"do you think I would cut short a single item of his day?" Thus passed a great part of our morning, and I do not recollect that we hit upon more than two disputatious points before we were safely housed in my father's dining-room; where my uncle, who generally contrived to avoid any other discussions more important than those of beef and mutton, during the first course, remained awhile in a state of perfect tranquillity, till my elder brother unfortunately started the subject of my journey, and the time of my leaving Oxford, which sent us all abroad again; and, after a hot argument for half an hour, the ladies left the room. My father pretended to nod in his chair, for I cannot believe that he could sleep while such weighty arguments were flying about his head as those used by myself and my uncle; my two brothers fancied they had some business in the stable, and I alone was left to bear the whole brunt of my uncle's eloquence, by which I was presently so entirely carried away that I did not observe when my father made his escape; and

when my younger sister called us to tea, she found us both standing in the window quoting Latin without mercy, and haranguing each other as loudly and vehemently as if we had been the two opposing candidates at a contested election. So violent, indeed, was our contention, that my sister spoke more than once before she could make us hear; but when she at length succeeded she was taken up with no little asperity by my uncle, who seemed scarcely able to restrain himself from bidding her begone.



CHAP. III.

The party adjourn to the tea-table—The subject changed, but the contention continued---My uncle's definition of patriotism---The explanation between him and Mrs. Spires inflames his resentment---Maria's stratagem averts the rising storm---He disputes with Mrs. Hoskyns concerning dibbling---His intercourse with my father's family---My uncle sets out to visit the Bishop of his Diocese---Our walk to take places in the coach, with the description of our fellow-travellers.

NOTWITHSTANDING this unfortunate vein of contradiction which ran through the whole of my good uncle's composition, he was not an ill-natured man; and though he sometimes worked himself almost into a fever in the heat of argument, he frequently appeared perfectly calm after the most vehement discussion, and utterly unconscious of the many rude things which he invariably broached when this wordy warfare ran to any extreme. He was, however, in consequence of long continued habit, of so inflammable a nature, that the smallest spark served to set him on fire; and as others did not forget his rudeness

so suddenly as he did himself, he became an object of almost universal dislike.

But to proceed with my narrative. The entrance of my sister had put a stop to our argument: and my uncle, having set his wig in order, we followed her into the drawing-room, where the party round the tea-table was augmented by a farmer's wife, who had come by invitation to pay her compliments to the Squire's lady, accompanied by her sister, the wife of a grocer in the next town, whilst the husband of the country lady was at the same time engaged with my father in the garden, as I saw through the open window.

There was a general stir in the room when we entered; the two ladies, viz. Mrs. Hoskyns and Mrs. Spires, rose and curtsayed, and at the same time dropped their pocket-handkerchiefs, which had been spread on their knees to save their best gown. I shewed as many college airs as I dared to sport in the honoured presence of my ever respected mother, My uncle bowed and smiled; my youngest brother picked up the handkerchiefs, my sister handed the tea, and in a few minutes we were all seated in due form, and a proper opportunity administered for Mrs. Hoskyns's remarks

upon my astonishing growth and marvellous improvements, compliments which I received as the laws of good breeding direct, with certain inclinations of my head not quite amounting to bows, and a modest attempt at changing the subject by asking the grocer's lady after the health of her good man behind the counter.

My question had the desired effect; that is, it completely changed the tide of discourse, for Mr. Spires had been ill, and it was necessary to hear the whole history of his ailments, from their first appearance on the morrow of a corporation dinner up to the present day, with all that Mr. Mekin, the surgeon, had ordered to be done, or required to be left undone.

This history continued till the ladies had sipped their second dish of tea, and during the whole of this distressing period there was no consolation whatever, excepting that my uncle Timothy was silent, and that whilst Mrs. Spires was speaking it might be possible to shut one's ears, and think of something else; a species of relief which it was absolutely impossible to obtain when my uncle Timothy was holding forth.

The discussion respecting Mr. Spires's illness had proceeded for a considerable

time as I before said, when it was interrupted by Mrs. Hoskyns, who remarked that her poor brother-in-law was always ill after a corporation dinner, and wondered why he should persist in attending such meetings, "Why sister, you know," said Mrs. Spires, "that my poor dear husband is one of the most loyal of men, and that he thinks it a duty he owes to his king to support the government of his country, as much as is in his power. It might be taken amiss, madam, you know," she added, addressing my mother, "as Mr. Spires is one of the Aldermen, and has served bailiff twice, if he did not attend when there is a dinner, and stand up, you know, for the laws of his country and the honour of the king."

"Pshaw," said my uncle Timothy, in an under tone which only reached my ear in an indistinct manner, as I was next to him, but made all the rest of the party look towards us. "Well but, sister," said Mrs. Hoskyns, "if it is to hurt him, I really think that Mr. Spires should altogether draw off from the corporation; for although a man ought to stand up for his country and the laws and the church, on all occasions, yet I have no notion, not I, of a man ruining his constitution in order

to prove his loyalty." She called on my mother to corroborate her assertion. My uncle fidgetted in his seat, settled his wig, and looked defiance from beneath his bent brows. My sister evidently perceived the symptoms of the approaching storm, and in order to avert it began to make inquiries all around respecting the flavour of our tea—a thing which is not unseldom done by tea-makers of no great refinement, in the midst of a conversation of a much more agreeable nature than that which was supplied by the ailments and political opinions of Mr. Spires. On hearing my sister very politely, and with a smile, address each person in the company with the question—"Is your tea agreeable," "Shall I give you some more cream," "Would you choose another lump of sugar," I looked at her with amazement, and was almost inclined to tell her that this excessive civility was not the order of the then present day, when suddenly perceiving what she was about, I attempted to help her by getting up, handing round the eatables, and playing the footman with no small degree of bustle. But by these manœuvres we only delayed the evil moment, for I was no sooner returned to my seat than the indefatigable Mrs. Spires

again started the subject of her husband's loyalty, and his manner of displaying it by partaking of the dainties of every corporation dinner which came in his way; on which my uncle, rising from his chair, and standing in the middle of the circle exactly opposite the two strangers, began to reason with them on the absurdity of the idea which they entertained that a person in the situation of Mr. Spires could possibly be doing any good to society in general by attending public dinners, and helping to consume that money which ought to be otherwise devoted.

The good old gentleman began his oration by defining the nature of true patriotism, and pointing out that it consisted in a readiness to give up all selfish considerations for the good of our country; all this was very well, and nothing could be said against it, but that it was as entirely beyond the comprehension of his auditors as if it had been delivered in high Dutch. But it is a well-known property of a thorough-paced arguer, that in the heat of disputation, he always loses sight of the intellectual state of his adversary, and like soldiers in the heat of battle, invariably levels his artillery above the heads of his opponents. Thus it was with my uncle

Timothy on the occasion I am speaking of; and a vast deal of fine oratory had been expended, and the good old gentleman had already uttered certain very appropriate quotations from the best Latin authors, when he was interrupted by Mrs. Spires, who said, "I dare say, sir, that it is all right as you say, but Mr. Spires is all for his king and country, and it is a pity that a gentleman of your cloth should be on the contrary side." "Madam," said my uncle, perfectly astonished into silence. ——"I hope no offence, sir," said the grocer's lady, "perhaps I misunderstood you; but those expressions, sir, which you made use of led to the mistake." "What expressions have I used, madam," returned the old gentleman, "which could possibly lead you to suppose me an enemy to my king and country." Mrs. Spires reddened and looked round, as if afraid she had given offence, on which Mrs. Hoskyns, perceiving her embarrassment, took upon her to answer my uncle's question. "Why, sir;" said she, "you must know that there are many in our neighbourhood who are not altogether so right-headed in these matters, as they should be, sir, and Mrs. Spires hears a good deal about such folks by reason of her husband

being a magistrate, and all that; and that is the reason why she does not like to hear folks talk about patriotism, which you know is all the same as rebellion, and contempt of the laws of the land; and so you see, sir, it is natural enough for her not to like to hear such words, though she meant no offence whatever to you, sir, or this present company."

Whilst the good woman was speaking, every muscle in my uncle's face went through a revolution, and he had just exclaimed, "Is it possible that any woman on the face of the whole earth ——;" when my sister very dexterously contrived to overturn her work basket in the centre of the circle, and to set certain balls of worsted, of various colours, with which it was stored, to perform evolutions amidst the legs of the tables and chairs, each ball in its progress leaving a lengthening yarn or tail behind it, which tails, as the various globes cut each other's orbits, became involved with that of its neighbour, insomuch so, that it required all our skill to unravel their complicated perplexities, and as in the performance of these tasks we young people made as much noise as the occasion would allow; my uncle, in despair, after having uttered several broken

ejaculations, walked out into the garden, and shortly afterwards, peace being restored, the conversation again slid back into ordinary topics, in which I found so much of a somnivolent nature, that I presently fell asleep on the sofa where I sat; and as I had not been in bed the night before, no offence was, I believe, taken at this my want of politeness.—I was not, however, destined long to enjoy the luxury of rest, for I had scarcely slept a quarter of an hour, when I was roused by a loud and increasing sound of voices, and in a minute afterwards, my uncle preceded Mr. Hoskyns and my father into the room, exclaiming with all his might in praise of some peculiar mode of dibbling which Mr. Hoskyns had condemned, and which my uncle thought proper to support. How this knotty point was decided I cannot say, for being excessively fatigued I took French leave, and soon forgot my uncle and all his discussions in a sound sleep.

And now, my courteous reader, having carried you through one complete day in my uncle Timothy's company, I shall satisfy myself with merely saying, that as this day passed, so in like manner passed many more during the first month of my long vacation.

My uncle generally visited my father's house once a day, and took one or two meals with us. My father loved his brother with the tenderest affection; he was the only one remaining of his family; he also knew that he possessed many excellent qualities, that he was a generous and humane man, a man who in the pulpit yielded to few, his doctrine being excellent, and his delivery remarkably agreeable; he was therefore prepared to enjoy his society, and to bear with him as long as it was possible to do so. My mother was also desirous to make her husband's brother comfortable under his paternal roof; and the younger branches of the family were equally disposed to pay him every respect. But that which might have been a pleasure, namely, the reception of this good man during his daily visits, at length became a task so painful that it could only be endured by dividing the labour; and all this was owing, not to any actual vice in my uncle's character, but to that ignorance of self, that respect for his own opinions, that pride of feeling which rendered it impossible for him to admit the truth and propriety of any sentiment, which he had not the honour of first

broaching in the company in which he happened to be.

There are many smooth-tongued all-accommodating persons in the world, who seem to be all things to all men, and have not an opinion independent of others ; but my good uncle was precisely the reverse of this character, or appeared to be so, for he was, in fact, a man of settled and proper principle, judging from his actions, though judged by his words he was the veriest weathercock which can be imagined, although, contrary to the custom of these aerial beings, he always turned his face to the wind, and stood in proud defiance against every breeze which happened to blow.

I had been at home a little more than a month, when some little difficulty arose within the sphere of my uncle's pastoral concerns, which it was necessary to refer to the bishop of the diocese.

It happened that the bishop at that time was an exceedingly old man, very infirm, and obliged in consequence to leave much to his chaplain, who conducted himself in this situation of delegated authority, with very great prudence and moderation. As the affair in question intimately affected

the comfort of my uncle, it was thought right that a visit should be paid to the bishop, who was at that period at his palace in the county town; and as my father had a particular friend in the same town, he proposed that I should accompany the good man in his journey, and, as he was pleased to say, endeavour as much as in me lay to restrain him from those disputatious excesses by which he had already made himself so unpleasant to many of his friends in the country. I replied that I was quite willing to accompany my uncle, but that I wholly doubted my power of restraining him when the spirit of debate took possession of his mind. "Well," said my father, "you must do your best, Charles; though I confess that you are not half so clever in averting the storms which your good uncle is so fond of exciting, as your sister Maria, who has more stratagems in one day for bewildering the good man in the midst of an argument, than would enter into my head in the course of a century." Maria, who was present, looked grave at this remark, and observed, that "she feared that her intercourse with her uncle Timothy might lead her to the practice of art, and put her upon such manœuvres

as she never should have thought of had she not had to deal with one, whom she at once loved and blushed for.—It was, however, determined that I should accompany my uncle in his journey, and the time was calculated in order to enable us to be present at a public meeting for the Bible Society, being the first meeting of the kind which had ever taken place in the city—for the Bible Society was then a new thing.

My uncle Timothy was much pleased when I proposed to accompany him on his journey, and we accordingly set off in high glee to walk to the next market town, where we were to take our places in a heavy coach, by which we hoped to arrive at our journey's end at about three in the afternoon.

My uncle, during our walk, was in one of what my sister used to call his lucid intervals—occasions wherein, his vanity not being excited, his naturally tender feelings had their full play, and his excellent principles their due influence.

Our way lay over a high and breezy common, from which, as our path stretched towards the little market town, we had a continued view of the hall, the parsonage-house, and the village church, with the

various little cottages, farm-houses, sunny lawns, meadows, and pasture grounds which commonly compose the *tout ensemble* of a smiling English landscape. It was natural for my uncle, in contemplating this scene, to revert to the days of boyhood, to speak of his father and mother and brothers, now no more, and to dwell on the various occasions in which one and another of these beloved ones had been withdrawn from the present state of being, to become members of the unseen world. Then taking the hint from this subject, he enlarged upon the miseries of human nature—miseries inflicted by sin—and the bright renovation of our hopes as revealed to us in Scripture.—I remember well, said the good man, looking down from a little eminence on which he had mounted, upon his paternal mansion, when my parents, now no more, used to sit in that alcove, at the end of the terraced walk, my mother with her knitting in her hand, and my father by her side, whilst I and my youthful brothers playing before them, knew no care, and foresaw no evil. Where are these parents now? of these little brothers how many remain? And the good old gentleman, his eyes brim full with tears, repeated that exquisite passage in the book

of Job, which contains more real pathos that can be found in all the combined writings of every merely human author:--

“Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. For there is hope for a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he. As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up. So man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep.”

In conversation like this we beguiled the way till we arrived at the town, where we found the coach ready to start, and vacant places within side, which we were glad to secure, as there were some symptoms of approaching rain.

Our fellow-travellers in the coach consisted of two elderly females, one of whom, a thin, stiff, upright person, with hard

features, and dressed with remarkable neatness, afforded an amusing contrast with her neighbour, a woman of about her own age and rank in society---which was a little beneath that which is generally accounted genteel. This second female was of dimensions to fill up two-thirds of that side of the coach which was allotted to her share. Her dress was indicative of a larger allowance of money than of taste; and the rouge on her bloated cheeks, the ringlets of flaxen hair, which were meant to conceal the deep furrows of her forehead, the golden chains, rings, shawls, &c. which encumbered her whole person, set her down at once, in my opinion, in a point of view which might be called any thing but reputable.

My uncle had scarcely settled himself in his place, before I found that he was busily engaged in physiognomizing the countenances of his opposite neighbours, his eye-brows being bent, and his features indicating no slight symptoms of contempt, especially of the lady of the rings and rouge, a feeling in which I was by no means behind-hand in participating, though I took care not to allow my sentiments to be made quite so apparent.

CHAP. III.

Conversation in the coach—Mr. Smith of the Red House—My uncle disputes with one of our fellow travellers and is abused by the other—Our arrival at Oxford, and introduction to a party of religious friends, with one of whom my uncle engages in a violent controversy concerning mere forms and ceremonies.

WHILST rumbling through the streets a few words only passed between myself and my uncle, but when we had left the stones and entered upon a fine bowling road, where the thunder of the wheels no longer supplied the want of conversation, I addressed my opposite neighbour, whom I shall denominate the thin lady, with some observations on the weather, on which her rigid features relaxed, and she added her remarks to mine on the important subject with all requisite seriousness. Having duly discussed this interesting and universal topic, I was somewhat at a loss what subject next to touch upon, for I was sensible that there were not many ideas in common between myself and my respectable com-

panion; when, suddenly, a large new and flaming brick house, elegantly decorated with stone ornaments, and set forth with certain young plantations of Scotch firs and Lombardy poplars, burst upon our view. It was natural for me in my perplexity, desiring as I did to make up by my civility for my uncle's want of politeness, and not knowing what next to say, to avail myself of the relief offered by this conspicuous object, and to enquire, with a great deal of apparent solicitude, respecting this house and its inhabitants. I could not have been more fortunate in my enquiries; the old lady brightened up immediately, and assuming something of the air of one who has some piece of important intelligence to relate, replied, "It is the Red House, Sir, and is just finished; it belongs to Mr. Smith. Sure, Sir, you must come from a great distance, or you must have heard of Mr. Smith of the Red House." I pleaded ignorance, and begged that I might be made better acquainted with the history of this gentleman. This request was not made in vain. Being thus invited, the good lady opened her store of information, and gave me the whole account of the family at the Red House; which

agreeable discussion, with a few questions judiciously introduced on my part, held out for several miles, during which time my uncle sat biting his lips in an inexplicable manner; and the lady on the opposite direction seemed resolved to pour contempt upon us all together, by seeming wholly occupied with a London paper, which she had produced with the sole purpose, as it would seem, of making us feel the utmost weight of her scorn.

At length my uncle began to hem and clear his throat, symptoms which always threatened an explosion, and then suddenly turning to me, "Nephew," said he, "I hope you are amused." "Very much, Sir," I replied, as coolly as I could, "there is considerable variety on this road." "I am glad you find it so," returned the old gentleman, and then raising his voice, "but surely young man you might find something more amusing to entertain your opposite neighbour with, than such uninteresting matters as have occupied you for the last half hour." A slight colour passed over the faded cheeks of the thin lady on hearing this sudden burst of rudeness; and the more portly dame seemed not a little to enjoy the scene, for she instantly dropped

her newspaper and looked round with satisfaction, As to myself I was utterly confounded, and really apprehended for a moment that I had been acting a very absurd part, by entering into discourse with the humble and inoffensive person into whose society I had been thus accidentally thrown. It must be recollected that I was at that time a very young man, and had all the dread of making myself ridiculous, which naturally attaches itself to an inexperienced person. However, as I was at a loss what to say, I resolved not to take any notice of my uncle's strange observation, and accordingly thrust my head out of the window to cool myself, for I felt my face all in a glow, and for some moments did not hear what was passing within; but a sudden shower which had come on forcing me to draw again into my shell, I became aware that my uncle and the thin lady were already completely set to. "Sure, Sir," said the lady, whose cheeks were tinged with two deep spots of red, "sure, Sir, there can be no great harm in a little innocent discourse with a fellow-traveller when one goes out to enjoy one's self. I am sure I said nothing improper to the young gentleman, as he can bear

witness," and she looked at me to take her part. Being thus called upon, I could contain myself no longer and I spoke warmly, asking my uncle what satisfaction he promised himself from thus disturbing every body's comfort. My uncle took no more notice of this question than if he had never heard it, but proceeded to ask the old lady what amusement she could derive, or any other woman, from hearing and retailing such unimportant matters as those which had come under her consideration during the last hour. The good lady bridled and looked at me, but seemed to be perfectly silenced by her astonishment at this sudden and violent attack; and in the mean time my uncle held forth in a manner which would have done him credit in a proper place and on a proper occasion, on the unprofitableness of such conversation as had passed, and the injury which is done to the mind by allowing it to be filled with such impertinencies as those above enumerated.

This oration occupied some time, and as my uncle had introduced, during the course thereof, several arguments from Scripture, the good old lady, who could no more understand the drift of his discourse than the horses who were dragging

us over the road, was unable to draw any other conclusion than that the gentleman, her fellow-traveller, suspected her of being an irreligious person; wherefore, as soon as a pause in the discourse gave her opportunity she began her defence, saying, that she was truly sorry to fall under the censure of a person of his cloth, but that she was not conscious of deserving it; adding, that at———, where they were going, she was well known to the minister of the parish, and that he would and could vouch for her; that there were few persons so constant at church as herself; that she never failed on sacrament Sundays; that she fasted on Good Fridays and Ash Wednesdays; with many other et ceteras not needful to enumerate.

I observed the aspect with which my uncle hearkened to the old lady's defence, and was therefore prepared for what followed, which was a long discourse in favour of that religion whose seat is in the heart, with such an attack upon that which merely consists in forms and outward acts, that any intelligent person who had heard him for the first time would have classed him amongst the most violent of Antinomians, an utter enemy to all forms, a professed

despiser of all outward acts of piety, and a fit companion for the lady Guion, and other well-meaning but injudicious personages of the same kind. In vain did I attempt to arrest the good old gentleman in his flight; no hint, no interruption, no exhortation would suffice for the purpose; for, becoming heated with his own arguments, and inflamed by his own vehemence, he seemed at length to consider mankind only in their spiritual nature, and wholly to forget that earthly beings and creatures of time, cannot act or exist in the same manner as those who are neither shackled by time or confined in a material case. The good old gentleman having, however, at length run himself out of breath, was obliged to pause for a moment, and during that pause I could not help, vexed as I was, being amused by two short comments, which proceeded from the mouths of the two ladies, one of whom, viz. the thin lady, remarked, that she had been mistaken, having taken the gentleman for a clergyman of the Church of England; and the other, to wit, the more splendid dame, observing, with a smile of disgusting self-complacency, and a look of extreme scorn on her female companion, that she was altogether of the gentleman's opinion: that

for her part she had always considered religion as a matter of feeling, and that she never thought any good of those who were for ever at their prayers; adding other impieties to which my good uncle had never dreamt of giving the smallest sanction.

Unpleasing, however, as the occasion was, it was impossible to restrain a smile at the appearance of unfeigned amazement and concentrated horror which were visible on every feature of my uncle's countenance, when he found himself thus addressed, as a friend and ally, by a creature so utterly hateful in outward semblance as was the lady in question. Had a serpent suddenly risen up from the cushions of the seat, and claimed brotherhood with him, he could scarcely have expressed less aversion; the very hairs of his wig seemed to stand on end, and after a few moments the storm burst, and in a strain of high and eloquent indignation, the good old gentleman made his companion understand that she had wholly mistaken him, and that she might be assured that he differed as widely from her in her religious opinions as in every other.—Here again he went too far in the heat of argument, and in consequence he was saluted with such a torrent of coarse language as it was impossible to

hear with sang froid, although the person from whom it proceeded was scarcely worthy of notice; and I was considering how the next twenty miles were to be endured in this situation, when the coachman stopped to water the horses at a village inn, and the fat lady called to her travelling companion, a thin sallow man at the top of the coach, and declared her intention, as the shower had passed away, of finishing her journey on the outside, a move which I myself had meditated but a minute before, and had only been deterred from making by my unwillingness to forsake my uncle in his tribulation.

When the door of the coach had shut out the lady, and we had received her last glance of contempt as she waddled round to the other side of the coach, we who were left within began, as it were, to plume ourself afresh, like birds set free from a snare. The good lady opposite to me drew herself a little out of the corner, into which she had been compressed by her late more ample neighbour, and looking at me with complacency ventured at something like a smile; whilst my uncle, drawing himself up, uttered a loud and deep groan, finishing off in a tone which at once partook of the lamentable and the ridicu-

lous. However, we all remained silent, and the coach going on, my uncle presently either really fell asleep or pretended to do so ; on which the old lady ventured to hazard a few more anecdotes respecting the Red House, to which we were brought back by an actual rencontre with one of the servants of the family, who, as he rode by the coach, nodded to my companion.

After such an event as this last it was impossible for my companion's ideas to get out of the precincts of the Red House, till the coach began to rattle over the stones of the town to which we were bound, and as my uncle remained perfectly still all this time, I, who was hardly more awake than the old gentleman, amused myself whilst the good lady continued to impart her namby-pamby information, with thinking that this Red House was something of an idol temple, or as the Hindoo would call it, a Bhoot Khanna, to this respectable personage, whom I suspected, after a while, of being what the ladies call a dress maker, and what we should denominate a sempstress, and perhaps one who enjoyed the honour of Mrs. Smith's patronage, and from hence I began to consider whether we, that is, the human race in general and

in particular, have not each our idol temple, or object of veneration, among our fellow-creatures, with whom it is as hard to part as it would have been to have delivered my friend of the stage coach from her prepossessions in favour of the importance of Mr. Smith of the Red House.

My reader will not be surprised to hear, that whilst making these reflections, I suddenly found myself, in fancy, in the centre of the great quadrangle of Christ Church, with my eyes fixed on a procession of heads of colleges, &c. &c. I have, however, before hinted, that the rattling of the stones put an end to the thin lady's discussions, and with them to all our sleeping and waking dreams, and in a few minutes afterwards we found ourselves at the door of the house where we intended to take up our abode.

My father's friend was the rector of one of the parishes in the city, and at the period of which I speak, this gentleman whom I shall call Mr. Simmons, had just succeeded in establishing a Bible Society in the town, and the first meeting being about to take place the next day, several friends of religion of different denominations having at length found a solid spot of ground on which all persons who love the

Lord might safely meet and rejoice together, were assembled in Mr. Simmons's parlour, and were just about to sit down to dinner at the moment, when having laid aside our travelling dresses, my uncle and I were ushered into the company.

Mrs. Simmons and one or two elderly plain-dressed women were the only females of the party, the rest of the company were gentlemen, all of whom wore clerical habits, with the exception of one or two of the society of friends; the dinner was plain and plentiful, the welcome hearty and every one seemed inclined to be pleased with his neighbour.

I had been placed nearly opposite my uncle Timothy, and watched his countenance with some anxiety, for notwithstanding his late defeat, I could not hope that he would fail of finding some subject of argument in a company such as I perceived the present one to be.

I am fully convinced that a disputatious temper will always be found to be the effect of pride; a humble person may be firm where he has made up his mind, but he will have allowances to make for others, and will believe that there may be occasions in which one man's opinions may differ from another without either of the par-

ties being deficient in sense, intelligence, or good principle. Nor would my good uncle have denied this point in theory, though in practice he acted as if he thought every individual little better than a fool, who ventured to differ in the smallest degree from any sentiment which he chose to maintain; he had also a most keen perception of any contrarieties of opinion in another, however deeply involved within the lowest and most perplexed foldings of the heart of his neighbour, and was a very blood-hound in detecting and bringing such to light; but to allow the good gentleman to speak for himself; I proceed to say, that the good things spread upon Mr. Simmons's hospitable board had the happy effect of keeping my uncle very quiet during the first course, though I now and then observed several threatening glances shot from beneath his bent brows at one or other of the respectable gentlemen who occupied different places round the table; for these worthy men supposing themselves to be all met on an occasion of brotherly love, and bound by one tie of christian charity and holy zeal, were not cautious of touching, in the course of conversation, on those slight particulars in which they differed one from another; at length dur-

ing that interval commonly so full of nervous apprehensions to the lady of a house, whose servants have not been fully initiated in the mysteries of giving entertainments, to wit, the critical epocha at which the more savoury dishes are disappearing, and the more delicate trifles are about to take their place, one of the company having made an observation which did not precisely coincide with my uncle's opinions respecting certain forms and ceremonies of our church, he burst forth, and fairly told all the company present, that he thought nothing of any man's religion who did not think in these matters precisely as he did; growing warmer and more warm as his Christian brethren around the table politely and gently pleaded their own causes, and urged the non-importance, as to salvation, of those particulars which had given rise to the argument. My good uncle had now mounted his hobby horse, and, like the hero of Cowper's Ballad, went farther than he intended.

In vain did I wink, and nod, and exclaim, and mollify, and qualify; in vain did Mr. Simmons hem and cough, and begin and break off, and soothe, and soften; in vain did Mrs. Simmons recommend the pudding and the jellies, and use all those sun-

dry arts of interruption so well understood by ladies when they wish to change a subject. All was to no purpose; my uncle was fairly set a going, and having unfortunately fallen foul of a certain little gentleman in a long cravat and strait hair, on the other side of the table, who was himself a little tinctured with the same demon of dispute as possessed my uncle, we were at length, that is, the rest of the company, compelled to sit quietly and eat our pudding and crack our nuts at our leisure, whilst the adverse parties discussed with no small vehemence and pertinacity, the whole complicated business of church government, and the various merits of the Scots and English religious establishments. The two champions, in the mean time, continually acquiring new heat and vigour as they proceeded, and making stronger and more decided assertions, till, on the one hand it might have been questioned by a stranger whether my uncle was not a Jesuit in disguise, and his adversary a pupil of one of those well meaning persons of former times, who could discern heresy in a Gothic window, and symptoms of all that was evil in the figure of a pointed arch-way.

In the mean time every countenance round the table, to use a strong expres-

sion, seemed to gather blackness, and I believe, if I may judge by my own feelings, there were few persons present who did not feel some irritation, and something like the wish to side with one of the parties with a view to giving discomfort to the other; for such is human nature, which is as incapable of retaining perfect composure amid scenes of discord, as the sea to preserve a state of tranquillity when the winds of heaven are in a ferment.

The storm however did not rise so high, considering the nature of the subject, and the positiveness of the disputants, as might have been expected, till after the ladies had left the room, when one or two of the company, who had hitherto been nearly silent, attempting to put in a word, my uncle raised his voice to a higher key than he had used at any time during the former part of the argument, and roundly asserted that he did not consider any of the company present competent to the argument, giving such reasons for his extraordinary assertion as savoured less of politeness than of party spirit, and hinting pretty plainly that he thought very little of any man's acquirements, either in general knowledge or divinity, who had not precisely gone through the same process of education as himself.

I saw more than one cheek in the company flush at this remark, and can answer for my own, that they were all in a flame; but whilst I was really kept silent by shame and the very strength of my feelings, an elderly gentleman at the farther end of the table took upon himself to speak, and though repeatedly interrupted by my good uncle, seemed determined to make himself heard, and at length, by dint of perseverance, the rest of the party assisting his efforts, delivered himself somewhat to the following purpose; and first he alluded to the object for which the company was met that day, namely, that of promoting the dispersion of the sacred Scriptures, and the cause of the holy Gospel throughout all lands, and thence proceeded to enumerate the various points, and those of the most infinite importance, in which all the party had, as it were, but one mind and one heart. "Have we not all," said he, "the same hope in Christ our Saviour, do we not all desire the sanctification of the same Holy Spirit? do we not all seek to become members of the same Head, to be equally blessed in death, and raised in the same glory? do we not all partake of the same nature? have we not all one Bible, one rule of life, one subject of hope, one cause

of fear, and wherefore then should we, who are, we trust, the children of one Master, seek occasion for these [little bickerings, these endless disputes and discussions on matters of no present moment, and thus introduce discord where all should be harmony and brotherly love?" For shame, my brethren, for shame," added the good man, looking round him, "how shall the children of this world know that we are his disciples, unless we love one another? I hate these disputations," added he, "My experience, an experience of three-score and ten years, has taught me that they are more productive of rancour and bitterness among Christians than any other cause whatever, and tend more to the hardening the mind in error than can be well conceived by those who have not maturely considered the subject, and accurately observed what is passing among men." The determination which the elderly gentleman had evinced that he would be heard, had for the moment silenced my uncle, who sat turning his glass up-side down, and preparing an answer for the adversary who had thus suddenly sprung up, an answer in which I knew that every imaginable argument in favour of arguments would be mustered in their full force and with logical

precision, in order that all gainsayers might at once be put to silence ; when foreseeing the renewal of the warfare, I thought it best, if possible, to cut the matter short by hinting that the hour was at hand which the bishop's chaplain had appointed for seeing us, and that we should barely have time to walk to the palace, and in order to give my plea its full weight, I took my watch from my pocket, and declared that we had lingered in this agreeable company to a much later hour than I had at all suspected.

My uncle had a peculiar talent of throwing off at once one set of feelings and entering with eagerness into any other which might present themselves ; the moment I brought forward the bishop's chaplain, he seemed at once to forget all that had but a moment before occupied his mind ; all his mustered arguments now took flight, he rose in haste, bowed courteously to the company, thanked Mr. Simmons for his hospitality, and the next minute we found ourselves in the street ; whilst I secretly congratulated myself on having effected so skilful a manœuvre, and brought away my good uncle on such easy terms.

CHAP. IV.

Our visit to the cathedral—My uncle's argumentative attack upon the verger—He is offended by a note from the chaplain—The crowd in the street, and my uncle's remarks upon the restless nature of youth; with the accident which quickly followed.

WHEN got into the street I was quite at a loss what was to be done with the odd hour which hung upon our hands, for the fact was, that we were not to see the chaplain till seven o'clock, and it was actually little more than five at the moment Mr. Simmons's door was shut upon us.

Nevertheless, as I did not choose to acknowledge what I had done, I made no hesitation in accompanying my uncle towards the cathedral, near which the bishop's palace was situated.

I shall not trouble my friends with what passed between us as we sauntered along the great street of the city. Nor with the various manœuvres which I used to wear out the two hours which hung upon our hands, manœuvres which, notwithstanding the skill which I had acquired in the art of lounging, stood me in so little stead, that

Just as we were passing beneath an ancient Gothic gateway, by which we entered into the cathedral yard, we were saluted by the iron tongue of the clock in the great tower announcing the hour of six.

“Seven o’clock!” exclaimed my uncle, looking appalled, for he had a mighty way of looking amazed without occasion, “we shall be too late, Charles; make haste boy, lead the way, you are at home here;” and the good gentleman pushed on right to the north, whereas the palace lay precisely in a southern direction.

“Stop, stop, sir!” I said, “through the cloisters if you please, but there is no need of haste, we have mistaken the hour, it is only six.” As I expected, my uncle charged me with inaccuracy, and asked me what could have induced me to disturb the agreeable party which we had just left, an hour before it was necessary. I soon, however, appeased his anger by proposing a visit to the interior of the cathedral, and the next moment all was as it should be, or at least I hoped so.—Now there are about all public buildings of any celebrity, certain persons who appropriate to themselves all the importance which is due to the building itself, or whatever is to be seen therein, either of antiquity, beauty, mag-

nificence, honour, or dignity, whether real or imaginary. An individual of this class in a nobleman's house generally appear in the characters of a gouty butler, or superannuated house-keeper. In a royal dwelling, of some antiquated major domo, and in a cathedral, he assumes the form of a verger, having commonly somewhat of the gothic and venerable in his appearance, with as little sympathy with the feelings of those to whom he does the honours of the place, as if he were one of the images which adorned the walls in the days of papal magnificence.

Such a person as I have above described accosted us as soon as we entered within the time-honoured walls, and following our steps through every deviation, did all that in him lay to destroy the fine illusion and disturb the dreams of ancient days which places of this kind are apt to inspire.

My uncle for some time seemed to be wholly lost in his own speculations, and as I did not wish to disturb him I took upon me to make what replies were absolutely necessary to the sundry impertinencies of our persecutor (whose ideas of religion being composed of what little he knew of the truth, together with certain old traditions of less enlightened periods with which the ancient building was connected, offered

as curious a specimen of spiritual darkness as well might be conceived in this enlightened age.) Nevertheless, all passed on very smoothly till my uncle, awakening from his reverie, and overhearing some blunder from our guide, suddenly burst forth, and, as it were, taking his text from what he had heard, began such an attack upon spiritual pride and sacerdotal pomp, that a stander by might almost have fancied that the good gentleman was addressing the Pope himself, and all the Cardinals to boot. The verger stood in mute astonishment, and as I plainly saw, took all that was said as an offence to himself; so that I really was considering how I could make my escape, and leave my uncle to carry on the war by himself, for I certainly felt that some dire disgrace would befall us before we were clear of the precincts of the cathedral. However, whilst meditating on these matters, a servant, whose livery marked him to belong to the family of the bishop, appeared at the farther end of the choir, looking round as if in search of some particular persons, and on seeing my uncle immediately advanced and delivered a note to him. This note was no sooner perused by the old gentleman than he handed it to

me, exclaiming, "How very unfortunate we are, Charles; Mr. ——— cannot see us this evening; and he has fixed the very hour to-morrow when I wish to be at the meeting." What more he would have added in the plenitude of his displeasure, against what he afterwards called the insolence of office, I know not, for taking him suddenly by the arm, and turning him round somewhat perhaps too roughly, considering our relative situation as uncle and nephew, I took upon me to deliver a very polite message, to be conveyed to the chaplain, and hurried the good old gentleman out of the cathedral and through the gateway with all possible expedition, scarcely taking breath till I was out of hearing of the very jackdaws which inhabit the Gothic towers. "Bless me, Charles," said the good old gentleman, "how you speed it away, whither are you bound my boy? you move as if you had the wings of Mercury attached to the heels of your boots." And then, exalting his voice, he began to make certain comments on what had passed in the cathedral, to which I thought it best to turn a deaf ear, and in order to turn the discourse looked up to the gateway through which we had just passed,

and, for want of something better to say, compared it with some edifice of the same kind at Oxford.

When my uncle was not in the full-tide of argument, it was very easy to give a new turn to his thoughts; and indeed it was not altogether impossible for a person of address to turn him, even on these occasions, out of one direction into another, or, as the old proverb says, to "throw a tub to the whale," on which, whilst the monster vented his malice, an opportunity of escape might be afforded to those whom he before held in terror.

On the present occasion I had no other motive in throwing out this tub, than that of preventing my uncle from inflaming himself against the bishop's chaplain, whom we expected to see the next day, by pursuing the subjects which he had commenced with the verger, and which by the by had no more to do with the chaplain, than it had with the Doge of Venice. Nevertheless I was presently made to tremble at my own rashness, for having by my unfortunate comparison, presented old Oxford, with all her stately towers and Gothic halls, to the imagination of my uncle, he immediately began to descant on his affectionate remembrance of these scenes where so many

of his youthful days had passed, and actually declared that it was his full purpose to make me a visit during the next term, and to renew my company and his acquaintance with all these beloved scenes.

It was with difficulty that I prevented myself from calling upon Fortune to avert this calamity; but recollecting that my parents would not easily excuse any want of respect on my part to my uncle, I made no reply to his proposal, but affected to be suddenly attracted by a concourse of persons who were just visible at the end of the very long street which extended itself from the gate of the cathedral yard into the heart of the town, and failed not to express a desire to know the occasion of this collection of the ignobile vulgus. My uncle accordingly obeyed the gentle impulse which I gave him in the direction of this concourse, for which by the by I cared as little as I should have done for an assembly of motes playing in a sunbeam; but, be this as it may, as we marched down the street the good man delivered sundry very excellent maxims on the restless nature of youth, on its love of action, its hatred of quiet, its aptness to meddle and make in all scenes of confusion, and its natural incapacity of deriving pleasure from retire-

ment, reflection, and tranquillity; neither did he fail to make the application (as might be expected) to his nephew, who happened at that moment to be the only young person at hand to receive it. Thus the time wore away till we drew near the place where the people were assembled and found that it was the theatre, and that the concourse consisted of persons who were waiting for admittance.

We had scarcely entered within the sphere of these pleasure-seeking persons, before a dirty boy pushed a play-bill into our hands, shouting in a voice of no small shrillness, "For two nights only, gentlemen! Mr. Cooke and Miss ——, from Covent Garden Theatre. Hamlet to-night by Mr. Cooke himself, and Ophelia by Miss ——: doors to be opened immediately, gentlemen." "Pshaw!" said my uncle, rejecting the bills; "push on, Charles: give way, good people!"—and, instead of turning back, as might have been the most prudent plan on such an occasion, considering my uncle's appearance in his bushy old-fashioned wig, his coal skuttle hat, and clerical habit, he pushed on into the very heart of the mob, (for my uncle was not a man to be intimidated by opposition, and it was no business of mine to forsake him

on such an occasion,) and by dint of elbowing and jostling, we at length succeeded so far that we found ourselves completely jammed into the very centre of the crowd, in a direct line with one of the chief avenues of the court of Thespus.

We soon discovered that it was as utterly impracticable to extricate ourselves from this situation, as it would have been to have torn the sun from the centre of the solar system; and as the noise was such that no arguments of my uncle could prevail, it seemed that we must be content to remain at least for some time where we were, though jolted and pushed on all sides.

To describe the indignation of my uncle in finding himself thus situated, is past my power; I hoped at least, however, that he would have been silent, and wait quietly till he should be extricated from this ridiculous and not very creditable situation, but I hoped in vain, things were not to pass off quite so easily. It was a moment too full of excitement to allow the good gentleman to be silent, and he actually, as soon as he could obtain breath, began to expatiate upon the absurdity of this eagerness displayed by those around him, for amusements of a nature so dangerous and destructive as those of the theatre; ad-

vising the people to go home and attend to their families and save their money; with sundry other arguments, of which no worse could be said, but that they had certainly fallen in a wrong place, and stood no other chance than that of "pearls which are cast before swine." In return for his good advice, my uncle was assailed with several discordant bursts of laughter; but I did not hear any distinct reply of a rude or grossly affronting nature, as might have been expected, till a shrill female voice issuing from beneath the very door-way of the theatre, reached our ears, and on looking in that direction, I beheld our female companion of the stage coach, the lady of the flaxen wig, who, triumphing in our situation, had already begun such an attack on my good uncle, as might be expected from such a one as we have described this person to be; but the doors at that instant being opened from within, every discussion was suddenly put an end to.

Situated as we were, we had nothing to do but to have allowed ourselves to have been pushed forward by the crowd and to have extricated ourselves afterwards as we could, as the multitude spread themselves through the inner passages into the different parts of the theatre, and in this manner I was

prepared to act, but not so had my uncle determined. Feeling the press of the crowd he stood still, and holding me firmly, he did his utmost to keep his ground, answering to all those who came in contact with him and desired him to give way, that he was not going to partake of the heathenish amusement within, that his business called him another way, that he was an Englishman, that no one had a right to compel him, &c. his words becoming thicker and more interrupted as the press became stronger, till at length, being separated from me by the very force of the crowd, which were pushed on from behind, I saw him turned completely round, as if upon a pivot, and then lost sight of him.

A rush, like the rush of the sea, to which a multitude is most aptly compared in Scripture, then took place, and was suddenly followed by loud and appalling shrieks, amidst which I could distinctly hear these words.—“The goor gentleman will be killed: he will be trod to death.” What followed I scarcely know, till I found myself extricated from the crowd, and standing before the door of the theatre with a few humane persons, who had remained without, the mass of the people having taken refuge within, where the horrors

they had left behind would soon be forgotten amid those scenes of delusive pleasure with which these places so fatally abound.

Extended on the pavement, pale as death, and besmeared with blood, lay my unfortunate uncle; and at the moment I first beheld him, two persons who were nearest him were attempting to raise him from the ground. I could not move—I could not speak—I dared not ask if he were alive—and such were my feelings, that when I heard that he still breathed, though his leg was dreadfully fractured, I was relieved. Still, however, I was incapable of speaking; and when the humane persons above-mentioned asked who he was and whither he was to be conveyed I could make no reply; and he would probably have been carried, without further inquiry, to the next public-house, had not two persons suddenly appeared running from an opposite house, in the first of whom I recognized the other companion of our journey, to wit, the thin lady; in the second, a stout elderly gentleman, who came puffing and blowing behind her, whilst his comely visage perfectly glowed with anxiously compassionate feelings.

My new friend, for such indeed she

proved to be, exclaimed with unaffected horror when she found that the person whose accident she had witnessed from her window, was no other than my poor uncle. She looked at him as he lay without motion in the arms of the persons who were lifting him up; and understanding that they were about to convey him to the next inn, expostulated against such a measure, and made a hearty and truly friendly offer of a room in her own house, which, as I before said, was only on the other side of the street. This kindness, so unexpected, and indeed so little deserved by us, unloosed my tongue, and I expressed my thankfulness in terms of the warmest gratitude. The poor sufferer was accordingly conveyed to the hospitable house, where he was laid on a comfortable bed in a neat apartment, where a surgeon being sent for, every relief was presently administered which circumstances would admit; and after a scene of much hurry and agitation, I had the satisfaction of finding that my poor uncle had fallen into a deep sleep, thoroughly worn out with the exertions of the former, and the anguish of the latter part of the last twelve hours, and having taken a draught which had been prepared for him by his medical attendant.

CHAP. V.

Miss Tristram recognized as our kind hostess, and Mr. Smith of the Red House introduced—Mr. Burns also visits my uncle Timothy, who recovers and is removed—The gradual alteration in his character—Account of his last days and happy death.

AND now being somewhat relieved from the miserable feelings which I had experienced from the moment of my uncle's accident, I had leisure to attend to the kind invitation of my hostess, who had requested me to partake of a roasted fowl and sausages, then set out in a small parlour, which I perceived communicated with a shop. And now, for the first time, I found that the person to whom we were so much obliged, was a Miss or Mistress Tristram, a venerable spinster who maintained herself as I had suspected, by her needle, and who, though she possessed little that could attract or interest on an accidental rencontre, was one of the most worthy and tender-hearted of the human race. In company with her I found the respectable gentleman who had assisted in bringing my uncle over to her

house, and had ever since been busying himself in performing such little services for us as lay in his power. To this gentleman Miss Tristram, after having explained her own name, and rank in life, next introduced me, informing me that he was a no less person than Mr. Smith of the Red House himself; adding, with a certain look of importance, "You have not forgotten the Red House to be sure, sir. I shewed it to you this morning when I was so happy as to meet you and the good gentleman above stairs, in the coach." It was not merely by way of compliment that I replied, that the good fortune which attended our meeting was undoubtedly all on our side, and I took this occasion to express, what I really felt, my deep sense of her very great kindness to perfect strangers. Neither can I think it necessary to add, that I informed her who we were, and gave her all requisite information respecting our family. On which Mr. Smith kindly undertook, when he returned home the next day, to prolong his ride, and inform my father in person of the accident which had befallen his brother, in order that he might soften the intelligence as much as truth would admit.

And now the smoking fowl being placed

on the table, with a bottle of port wine, I enjoyed, with no small appetite, the refreshments so hospitably tendered; and, though Mr. Smith, who had evidently risen into a higher rank in life than he was originally intended for, and my good hostess, as I before remarked, could boast of nothing which in any way might attract the eye or win the ear, yet I could not help making many reflections to this purpose, that he who despises another because he does not possess the same intellectual advantages of which he may be conscious in himself, is perhaps looking down upon a fellow creature in many respects his superior, and trampling under his feet such valuable qualities as may render their possessor beloved in the eyes of his Maker, and precious in those of some one or other of his fellow-creatures; hence the folly and even the sin of that arrogance with which the wise in their own eyes condemn and criticise the sentiments and actions of their neighbours, and set up their own words and actions as the standards of human perfection.—It is true that there are not many who carry their dogmatizing and disputatious spirit to the extreme which my poor uncle did; in polished society, indeed, there are few who contradict flatly, or

who openly pour unqualified contempt on their neighbour's sentiments, yet I have too much reason to fear that the spirit which inspired this conduct in my revered uncle, reigns with too much sway in many a heart, and that even amongst those of whom we might hope better things, there is frequently a very predominant feeling of dislike for all those who differ from them in lesser matters, and a strong sentiment of contempt for such persons as betray an inferiority of education, or any incapacity of expressing their sentiments in a style as refined and elegant as that which they are themselves accustomed to use.— Few of us have the candor to discern and to love merit wherever it appears, in however ordinary or extraordinary a form, and few of us are capable of making allowances for the little defects or varieties which are occasioned either by want of education or a mode of instruction which has differed from our own. Pride and arrogance will meet with their punishments; and perhaps there is no error into which frail man may fall, which is so liable to encounter constant mortifications as that of a disputatious spirit.

Such were the reflections which occupied my mind whilst I sat in Miss Tristram's parlour, and conversed with that

kind woman and good Mr. Smith; and when I retired to rest the same train of thought occupied my mind till I fell into a deep sleep. Having been extremely fatigued when I laid down to rest, and fallen into that very heavy slumber which is often the consequence of violent agitation of the mind, I lay longer than usual, and when I awoke found that it was broad day-light. I arose in haste, and dressing myself as expeditiously as possible, made what speed I could to my uncle's chamber, where I found the old gentleman extended on his bed as I had left him, in a state of perfect composure, though low, and, to my surprise, a stranger in a clerical habit sitting by his bed. This person was no other than the worthy man who had addressed my relation with so much Christian sincerity the day before at Mr. Simmons's table. This gentleman, who was, as I afterwards found, a venerable minister of the church of Scotland, bearing the name of Burns, had heard of my uncle's accident, and had hastened to render him the consolation and condolence which one brother in Christ is ever ready to administer to another. Early as it was, he had found my uncle awake, and had already been engaged with him in prayer; and, as I afterwards heard, had acknowledged him-

self much pleased on being assured, that although my uncle had met with his accident at the door of the theatre, nothing had been farther from his intention than to have partaken of the amusements of that place.

Were I to give a full account of all the acts of kindness which I and my uncle received, whilst we remained under Miss Tristram's roof, not only from the good old lady herself, but also from that excellent man Mr. Burns, who was paying a visit of considerable length in the town, my little narrative would swell into an extensive folio, I must therefore restrain the effusions of my grateful recollections, and content myself with simply stating, that many weeks passed before my uncle could be removed—that during that time I seldom left him—that I was enabled without difficulty to settle his affairs with the bishop's chaplain, who, by the bye, appeared to be as obliging and amiable a man as I ever met with—that good Mr. Burns daily visited the poor sufferer, for my uncle suffered very much—that Mrs. Tristram proved herself the kindest of nurses—and that I verily believe the pious discourse of the venerable minister, with the divine blessing, produced such an effect on the mind of my uncle as never

was effaced; though I by no means presume to say that the effect was immediate, or that in consequence of the humble and pious tendency of Mr. Burns' discourse, he suddenly and decidedly ceased from his dogmatical and disputatious habits, but of this I am assured, that Mr. Burns was enabled to convince him of the evil of this habit, of its inconsistency with the character of the humble Christian, and of its decidedly evil influence on the enemies of religion. Never shall I forget the earnest and affectionate manner in which this excellent man pleaded the cause of humility, and described 'the character of a true Christian. "Where," said he, "is the place of the Christian? Where only is he safe? Where does his honour abide? Where is his hope, and where his resting place, but at the foot of the cross. Is it not written, 'The servants of the Lord should not strive.' And again, *Rom. xiv. 1, 2, 3.* "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things; another who is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth, for God hath received him."

To such purpose did this good man continually converse whilst sitting by my un-

cle's bed, continually filling his mind with those calm and soothing doctrines of our blessed religion which are so peculiarly calculated to allay the fever of the passions, and regulate the high thoughts of the human heart.

At length the time arrived when my uncle might be removed, and having taken an affectionate leave of our truly kind friends in the city, I had the pleasure of once more beholding my good uncle in his own study, surrounded by his books and pictures, and in a state to enjoy all the comforts of his friends' society.

The long vacation being now at an end, I returned to Oxford, not the worse, I trust, for the events of the few past months, at any rate improved with respect to my knowledge of the truth from the conversation which I had heard, and somewhat humbled by having been brought to see that no talents or education could palliate the offensiveness of a disputatious and arrogant mode of conversation.

And here I had intended to have closed my little narrative, but my sister Maria, who is now become a respectable matron, assures me that I shall lose the good opinion of all my young readers, unless I conclude my short history with some account of the last days of my uncle Timothy, and in-

form them whether the good old gentleman ever ceased to dogmatize.

In obedience, therefore, to my sister, I shall add a few more little anecdotes of the old gentleman, and I shall do this with the more pleasure because the particulars I have to relate are of a sweet and consoling nature.

From the period of our adventures in the city of——, I was not often at home, and in consequence saw little of my uncle, as he never put his proposed journey to Oxford into execution, (for which, by the bye, I was not sorry;) a short time, however, before I left the university, and was about to take orders, I was informed, by a letter from home, that my poor uncle had had a slight paralytic stroke; and, as he was no longer able to perform divine service, my parents wished me, as soon as possible, to come and reside with him.

Before my ordination he had a second attack, and when at length I arrived at the rectory, I perceived that he was become quite an old man, if not so in years, yet decidedly so in constitution. I found him walking in his garden, leaning on the arm of his man-servant; he was pale and emaciated, yet, as I heard with pleasure, free from pain. The disease had affected his understanding in a slight degree, insomuch

so that he talked more like a child than a person of mature age; but, notwithstanding which, there was such a simplicity in his manner, such a softness and tenderness in his feelings, and such an expression of benevolence in his countenance, that he never before appeared to me to be half so amiable as he did at that time. He addressed me in the words of a tender father who sees a son again from whom he has been long separated; "you are come, dear boy," he said, "to help an old man who cannot help himself; this house is your's—all that is in it is your's—take care of my servants and poor people." He took me into his study and shewed me his books, told me "they were all mine," and added, "I have done reading, I shall read no more, I want no book but one, I made a bad use of my knowledge, and now I have lost it all, and he put his hand to his forehead," adding, "but I am better without it."

"You have not lost that knowledge, Sir," I answered, "which is alone worth having; you know the Saviour, and are acquainted with the goodness of God."

"True Charles," he replied, "I thank God that I have been brought to know the Father through the Son, and I desire to know nothing else. I was arrogant, proud,

conceited, foolish, when you first knew me, nephew, nor am I better now in any other respect than this, that I have been made to know myself better, and to find that all the boasted wisdom of man is no more than folly." The old gentleman would, probably, have added more, but we were summoned to the dining-room, where, to my great astonishment, I beheld Mrs. Tristram seated at the head of the table.

I was glad to see my old friend, though I suppose that my looks betrayed some surprise, for my uncle immediately said, "what, Charles, were you not informed that Mrs. Tristram has, for some weeks past, been so kind as to take upon her the control of my household. It was an arrangement made by my sister, your good mother, who is you know ever anxious for my comfort." The old lady smiled, and recommended a fricassee made by her own hands, adding, with considerable humility, "that, as she had given up her business in town, and had not wherewithal to provide herself with a comfortable home, she had considered the introduction into my uncle's family as a kind interference of Him in whom the friendless ever find mercy." I shall conclude all mention of Miss Tristram by saying, that she continued to be a tender nurse and faithful housekeeper till

her services were no longer required by my uncle, and after his death she still found a home in the rectory, rendering herself dear to all by her blameless conduct and unassuming piety, and never giving me occasion to repent of my allowing her to retain her station at my table, excepting on certain occasions, in which she now and then indulged herself in expatiating somewhat too largely on the never-failing subject of the Red House.

My uncle Timothy languished some years under the repeated attacks of his disorder, his intellects in the mean time gradually becoming more debilitated, yet, amidst this ruin of intellect, I had the satisfaction, the infinite satisfaction, of observing the triumph of faith, of hope, and of charity; and all who knew the good old man were compelled to acknowledge that he was far more amiable in these his days of second childhood, than he had ever been when the powers of his mind and his reasoning faculties were in the acmé of their perfection; for such is the grace of humility, that without it all other qualities are of little value, and, indeed, where this is wanting, learning and science only administer to contention, and intellectual excellence only serves to the enhancement of pride.

THE END.



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