

who have asked it, and to some who would rather not have heard it: as I told Moore not very long ago, "we are all wrong except Rogers, Crabbe, and Campbell."¹ Without being old in years, I am old in days, and do not feel the adequate spirit within me to attempt a work which should show what I think right in poetry, and must content myself with having denounced what is wrong. There are, I trust, younger spirits rising up in England, who, escaping the contagion which has swept away poetry from our literature, will recall it to their country, such as it once was and may still be.

In the meantime, the best sign of amendment will be repentance, and new and frequent editions of Pope and Dryden.

There will be found as comfortable metaphysics, and ten times more poetry, in the "Essay on Man," than in the "Excursion." If you search for passion, where is it to be found stronger than in the epistle from Eloisa to Abelard, or in Palamon and Arcite? Do you wish for invention, imagination, sublimity, character? seek them in the Rape of the Lock, the Fables of Dryden, the Ode of Saint Cecilia's Day, and Absalom and Achitophel: you will discover in these two poets only, all for which you must ransack innumerable metres, and God only knows how many writers of the day, without finding a tittle of the same qualities,—with the addition, too, of wit, of which the latter have none. I have not, however, forgotten Thomas Brown the Younger, nor the Fudge Family², nor Whistlecraft; but that is not wit—it is humour. I will say nothing of the harmony of Pope and Dryden in comparison, for there is not a living poet (except Rogers, Gifford, Campbell, and Crabbe,) who can write an heroic couplet. The fact is, that the exquisite beauty of their versification has withdrawn the public attention from their other excellences, as the vulgar eye will rest more upon the splendour of the uniform than the quality of the troops. It is this very harmony, particularly in Pope, which has raised the vulgar and atrocious cant against him:—because his versification is perfect, it is assumed that it is his only perfection; because his truths are so clear, it is asserted that he has no invention; and because he is always intelligible, it is taken for granted that he has no genius. We are sneeringly told that he is the "Poet of Reason," as if this was a reason for his being no poet. Taking passage for passage, I will undertake to cite more lines teeming with imagination from Pope than from any two living poets, be they who they may. To take an instance at random from a species of composition not very favourable to imagination—Satire: set down the character of Sporus³, with all the wonderful play of fancy which is scattered over it, and place by its side an equal number of verses, from any two existing poets, of the same power and the same variety—where will you find them?

I merely mention one instance of many, in reply to the injustice done to the memory of him who harmonised our poetical language. The attorneys' clerks, and other self-

¹ [I certainly ventured to differ from the judgment of my noble friend, no less in his attempts to depreciate that peculiar walk of the art in which he himself so grandly trod, than in the inconsistency of which I thought him guilty, in condemning all those who stood up for particular "schools" of poetry, and yet, at the same time, maintaining so exclusive a theory of the art himself. How little, however, he attended to either the grounds or degrees of my dissent from him will appear by the following wholesale report of my opinion in "Detached Thoughts":—"One of my notions different from those of my contemporaries, is, that the present is not a high age of English poetry. There are more poets (soi-disant) than ever there were, and proportionally less poetry. This thesis I have maintained for some years, but, strange to say, it meeteth not with favour from my brethren of the shell. Even Moore shakes his head, and firmly believes that it is the grand age of British poetry."—MOORE.]

² [In 1812, Mr. Moore published "The Two-penny Post-bag; by Thomas Brown the Younger;" and in 1818, "The Fudge Family in Paris."]

³ "Let Sporus tremble—A. What? that thing of silk Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk? Satire or sense, alas! I can Sporus feel? Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel? P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings, This painted child of dirt, that stinks and sings; Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoy, Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys; So well-bred spaniels civilly delight In muzzling of the game they dare not bite. Eternal smiles his emptiness betray, As shallow streams run dimpling all the way. Whether in flood impotence he speaks, And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;

educated geni, found it easier to distort themselves to the new models than to toil after the symmetry of him who had enchanted their fathers. They were besides smitten by being told that the new school were to revive the language of Queen Elizabeth, the true English; as every body in the reign of Queen Anne wrote no better than French, by a species of literary treason.

Blank verse, which, unless in the drama, no one except Milton ever wrote who could rhyme, became the order of the day,—or else such rhyme as looked still blander than the verse without it. I am aware that Johnson has said, after some hesitation, that he could not "prevail upon himself to wish that Milton had been a rhymist." The opinions of that truly great man, whom it is also the present fashion to decry, will ever be received by me with that deference which time will restore to him from all; but, with all humility, I am not persuaded that the Paradise Lost would not have been more nobly conveyed to posterity, not perhaps in heroic couplets, although even they could sustain the subject if well balanced, but in the stanza of Spenser or of Tasso, or in the terza rima of Dante, which the powers of Milton could easily have grafted on our language. The Seasons of Thomson would have been better in rhyme, although still inferior to his Castle of Indolence; and Mr. Southey's Joan of Arc no worse, although it might have taken up six months instead of weeks in the composition. I recommend also to the lovers of lyrics the perusal of the present laureate's Odes by the side of Dryden's on Saint Cecilia, but let him be sure to read first those of Mr. Southey.

To the heaven-born geni and inspired young scribes of the day much of this will appear paradox: it will appear so even to the higher order of our critics; but it was a truism twenty years ago, and it will be a re-acknowledged truth in ten more. In the meantime, I will conclude with two quotations, both intended for some of my old classical friends who have still enough of Cambridge about them to think themselves honoured by having had John Dryden as a predecessor in their college, and to recollect that their earliest English poetical pleasures were drawn from the "little nightingale" of Twickenham. The first is from the notes to the Poem of the "Friends."⁴

"It is only within the last twenty or thirty years that those notable discoveries in criticism have been made which have taught our recent versifiers to undervalue this energetic, melodious, and moral poet. The consequences of this want of due esteem for a writer whom the good sense of our predecessors had raised to his proper station have been NUMEROUS AND DEGRADING ENOUGH. This is not the place to enter into the subject, even as far as it affects our poetical numbers alone, and there is matter of more importance that requires present reflection."

The second is from the volume of a young person learning to write poetry, and beginning by teaching the art. Hear him:⁵

Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies,
His wit all see-saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbinus have express'd,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest,
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust."

⁴ [Written by Lord Byron's early friend, the Rev. Francis Hodgson.]

⁵ [In a manuscript note on this passage of the pamphlet, dated Nov. 12, 1821, Lord Byron says:—"Mr. Keats died at Rome about a year after this was written, of a decline produced by his having burst a blood-vessel on reading the article on his 'Endymion' in the Quarterly Review. I have read the article before and since; and although it is bitter, I do not think that a man should permit himself to be killed by it. But a young man little dreams what he must inevitably encounter in the course of a life ambitious of public notice. My indignation at Mr. Keats's depreciation of Pope has hardly permitted me to do justice to his own genius, which, malgré all the fantastic fopperies of his style, was undoubtedly of great promise. His fragment of 'Hyperion' seems actually inspired by the Titans, and is as sublime as Æschylus. He is a loss to our literature; and the more so, as he himself, before his death, is said to have been persuaded that he had not taken the right line, and was re-forming his style upon the more classical models of the language.]

"But ye were dead
To things ye knew not of—were closely wed
To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
And compass vile; so that ye taught a school
Of dolls to smooth, inlay, and chip, and fit,
Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
Their verses tallied. Easy was the task:
A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
Of poetry. Ill-fated, impious race,
That blasphem'd the bright lyrist to his face,
And did not know it; no, they went about
Holding a poor decrepit standard out
Mark'd with most flimsy mottoes, and in large
The name of one Boileau!"

A little before, the manner of Pope is termed,

"A scism,²
Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
Made great Apollo blush for this his land."³

I thought "foppery" was a consequence of refinement!
but *n'importe*.

The above will suffice to show the notions entertained by the new performers on the English lyre of him who made it most tuneable, and the great improvements of their own "variazioni."

The writer of this is a tadpole of the Lakes, a young disciple of the six or seven new schools, in which he has learnt to write such lines and such sentiments as the above. He says "easy was the task" of imitating Pope, or it may be of equalling him, I presume. I recommend him to try before he is so positive on the subject, and then compare what he will have then written and what he has now written with the humblest and earliest compositions of Pope, produced in years still more youthful than those of Mr. Keats when he invented his new "Essay on Criticism," entitled "Sleep and Poetry" (an ominous title), from whence the above canons are taken. Pope's was written at nineteen, and published at twenty-two.

Such are the triumphs of the new schools, and such their scholars. The disciples of Pope were Johnson, Goldsmith, Rogers, Campbell, Crabbe, Gifford, Matthias⁴, Hayley, and the author of the Paradise of Coquettes⁵; to whom may be added Richards, Heber, Wrangham, Bland, Hodgson, Merivale, and others who have not had their full fame, because "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," and because there is a fortune in fame as in all other things. Now, of all the new schools—I say all, for, "like Legion, they are many"—has there appeared a single

¹ It was at least a *grammar* "school."

² So spelt by the author.

³ As a balance to these lines, and to the sense and sentiment of the new school, I will put down a passage or two from Pope's earliest poems, taken at random:—

"Envy her own snakes shall feel,
And Persecution mourn her broken wheel,
There Faction roars, Rebellion bite her chain,
And gauding Furies thirst for blood in vain."

"Ah! what avails his glossy varying eyes,
His purple crest, and scarlet-circled eyes;
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold."

"Round broken columns clasping ivy twined,
O'er heaps of ruin stalk'd the stately hind;
The fox obscene to gaping tombs retires,
And savage howlings fill the sacred quires."

"Hail, bards triumphant! born in happier days;
Immortal heirs of universal praise!
Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
Oh may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last, the meaneast of your sons inspire,
(That on weak wings, from far pursues your flights;
Glow while he reads, but trembles as he writes),
To teach vain wit a science little known,
To admire superior sense, and doubt their own!"

"Amphion there the loud creating lyre
Strikes, and behold a sudden Thebes aspire
Cithæron's echoes answer to his call,
And half the mountain rolls into a wall."

"So Zembia's rocks, the beauteous work of frost,
Rise white in air, and glitter o'er the coast;
Pale suns, unfit, at distance roll away,
And on th' impassive ice the lightnings play;
Eternal snows the growing mass supply,
Till the bright mountains prop the incumbent sky,
As Atlas fix'd, each hoary pile appears,
The gather'd winter of a thousand years."

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scholar who has not made his master ashamed of him? unless it be Sotheby, who has imitated every body, and occasionally surpassed his models. Scott found peculiar favour and imitation among the fair sex: there was Miss Holford⁶, and Miss Mitford⁷, and Miss Francis⁸; but, with the greatest respect be it spoken, none of his imitators did much honour to the original, except Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, until the appearance of "The Bridal of Triermain," and "Harold the Dauntless," which in the opinion of some equalled if not surpassed him; and lo! after three or four years they turned out to be the Master's own compositions. Have Southey, or Coleridge, or 't'other fellow, made a follower of renown? Wilson never did well till he set up for himself in the "City of the Plague." Has Moore, or any other living writer of reputation, had a tolerable imitator, or rather disciple? Now, it is remarkable, that almost all the followers of Pope, whom I have named, have produced beautiful and standard works; and it was not the number of his imitators who finally hurt his fame, but the despair of imitation, and the *ease of not imitating* him sufficiently. This, and the same reason which induced the Athenian burgher to vote for the banishment of Aristides, "because he was tired of always hearing him called the *Just*," have produced the temporary exile of Pope from the State of Literature. But the term of his ostracism will expire, and the sooner the better, not for him, but for those who banished him, and for the coming generation, who

"Will blush to find their fathers were his foes."

I will now return to the writer of the article which has drawn forth these remarks, whom I honestly take to be John Wilson, a man of great powers and acquirements, well known to the public as the author of the "City of the Plague," "Isle of Palms," and other productions. I take the liberty of naming him, by the same species of courtesy which has induced him to designate me as the author of Don Juan. Upon the score of the Lake Poets, he may perhaps recall to mind that I merely express an opinion long ago entertained and specified in a letter to Mr. James Hogg⁹, which he the said James Hogg, somewhat contrary to the law of pens, showed to Mr. John Wilson, in the year 1814, as he himself informed me in his answer, telling me by way of apology that "he'd be d—d if he could help it;" and I am not conscious of anything like "envy" or "exacerbation" at this moment which induces me to think better or worse of Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge as poets than I do now,

"Thus, when we view some well-proportion'd dome,
The world's just wonder, and even thine, O Rome!
No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to the admiring eyes:
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear;
The whole at once is bold and regular."

A thousand similar passages crowd upon me, all composed by Pope before his two-and-thirtieth year; and yet it is contended that he is no poet, and we are told so in such lines as I beg the reader to compare with these youthful verses of the "no poet." Must we repeat the question of Johnson, "If Pope is not a poet, where is poetry to be found?" Even in descriptive poetry, the lowest department of the art, he will be found, on a fair examination, to surpass any living writer.

⁴ [Thomas James Matthias, Esq., the well-known author of the Pursuits of Literature, Imperial Epistle to Kien Long, &c. In 1814, Mr. M. edited an edition of Gray's Works, which the University of Cambridge published at its own expense. Lord Byron did not admire this venerable poet the less for such criticism as the following:—"After we have paid our primal homage to the bards of Greece and of ancient Latium, we are invited to contemplate the literary and poetical dignity of modern Italy. If the influence of their persuasion and of their example should prevail, a strong and steady light may be relumined and diffused amongst us, a light which may once again conduct the powers of our rising poets from wild *whirling words, from crude, rapid, and uncorrected productions*, from an overweening presumption, and from the delusive conceit of a pre-established reputation, to the labour of thought, to patient and repeated revision of what they write, to a reverence for themselves and for an enlightened public, and to the fixed unbending principles of legitimate composition."

⁵ [Dr. Thomas Brown, professor of moral philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, who died in 1820.]

⁶ [Author of "Wallace, or the Fight of Falkirk," "Margaret of Anjou," and other poems.]

⁷ [Miss Mary Russell Mitford, author of "Christina, or the Maid of the South Seas," "Wallington Hall," "Our Village," &c. &c.]

⁸ [Miss Eliza Francis published, in 1815, "Sir Willibert de Waverley; or, the Bridal Eve."]

⁹ ["Oh! I have had the most amusing letter from Hogg, the Ettrick minstrel and shepherd. He wants me to recommend him to Murray; and, speaking of his present bookseller, whose 'hills' are never 'lifted,' he adds, *totidem verbis*, 'God d—n him, and them both.' I laughed, and so would you too, at the way in which this excretion is introduced. The said Hogg is a strange being; but of great, though uncounted, powers. I think very highly of him as a poet; but he, and half of these Scotch and Lake troubadours are spoilt by living in little circles and petty societies."—Byron Letters.]

although I do know one or two things more which have added to my contempt for them as individuals.

And, in return for Mr. Wilson's invective¹, I shall content myself with asking one question; Did he never compose, recite, or sing any parody or parodies upon the Psalms (of what nature this deponent saith not), in certain jovial meetings of the youth of Edinburgh?² It is not that I think any great harm if he did; because it seems to me that all depends upon the intention of such a parody. If it be meant to throw ridicule on the sacred original, it is a sin; if it be intended to burlesque the profane subject, or to inculcate a moral truth, it is none. If it were, the *Unbelievers' Creed*, the many political parodies of various parts of the Scriptures and liturgy, particularly a celebrated one of the Lord's Prayer, and the beautiful moral parable in favour of toleration by Franklin, which has often been taken for a real extract from Genesis, would all be sins of a damning nature. But I wish to know if Mr. Wilson ever has done this, and if he has, why he should be so very angry with similar portions of Don Juan?—Did no "parody profane" appear in any of the earlier numbers of Blackwood's Magazine?

I will now conclude this long answer to a short article, repenting of having said so much in my own defence, and so little on the "crying, left-hand fallings off and national deflections" of the poetry of the present day. Having said this, I can hardly be expected to defend Don Juan, or any other "living" poetry, and shall not make the attempt. And although I do not think that Mr. John Wilson has in this instance treated me with candour or consideration, I trust that the tone I have used in speaking of him personally will prove that I bear him as little malice as I really believe at the bottom of his heart he bears towards me; but the duties of an editor, like those of a tax-gatherer, are paramount and pre-emptory. I have done.

BYRON.

Note [C].—LORD BACON'S APOPHTHEGMS. See p. 665.³

BACON'S APOPHTHEGMS.

OBSERVATIONS.

91. Michael Angelo, the famous painter, painting in the pope's chapel the portraiture of hell and damned souls, made one of the damned souls so like a cardinal that was his enemy, as everybody at first sight knew it: whereupon the cardinal complained to Pope Clement, humbly praying it might be defaced. The pope said to him, Why, you know very well I have power to deliver a soul out of purgatory, but not out of hell.

155. Alexander, after the battle of Granicum, had very great offers made him by Darius. Consulting with his captains concerning them, Parmenio said, Sure, I would accept of these offers, if I were as Alexander. Alexander answered, So would I, if I were as Parmenio.

¹ [This is one of the many mistakes into which his distance from the scene of literary operations led him. The gentleman, to whom the hostile article in the Magazine is here attributed, has never, either then or since, written upon the subject of the noble poet's character or genius, without giving vent to a feeling of admiration as enthusiastic as it is always eloquently and powerfully expressed.—MORSE.]

² [The allusion here is to some now forgotten calumnies which had been circulated by the radical press, at the time when Mr. Wilson was a candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.]

158.

Antigonus, when it was told him that the enemy had such volleys of arrows that they did hide the sun, said, That falls out well, for it is hot weather, and so we shall fight in the shade.

162.

There was a philosopher that disputed with Adrian the Emperor, and did it but weakly. One of his friends that stood by afterwards said unto him, Methinks you were not like yourself last day, in argument with the Emperor: I could have answered better myself. Why, said the philosopher, would you have me contend with him that commands thirty legions?

164.

There was one that found a great mass of money digging under ground in his grandfather's house and being somewhat doubtful of the case, signified it to the emperor that he had found such treasure. The emperor made a rescript thus: Use it. He writ back again, that the sum was greater than his state or condition could use. The emperor writ a new rescript thus: Abuse it.

173.

One of the seven was wont to say, that laws were like cobwebs: where the small flies were caught, and the great break through.

209.

An orator of Athens said to Demosthenes, The Athenians will kill you if they wax mad. Demosthenes replied, And they will kill you, if they be in good sense.

221.

There was a philosopher about Tiberius that, looking into the nature of Caius, said of him, That he was mire mingled with blood.

97.

There was a king of Hungary took a bishop in battle, and kept him prisoner: whereupon the pope writ a monitory to him, for that he had broken the privilege of holy church and taken his son: the king sent an embassy to him, and sent withal the armour wherein the bishop was taken, and this only in writing—*Vide nam hæc sit vestis filii tui?* Know now whether this be thy son's coat?

267.

Demetrius, king of Macedon, had a petition offered him divers times by an old woman, and answered he had no leisure; whereupon the woman said aloud, Why then give over to be king.

³ "Ordered Fletcher (at four o'clock this afternoon) to copy out seven or eight apophthegms of Bacon, in which I have detected such blunders as a schoolboy might detect, rather than commit. Such are the sages! What must they be, when such as I can stumble on their mistakes or mis-statements? I will go to bed, for I find that I grow cynical."—*Byron Diary*, Jan. 5. 1821.

⁴ ["If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined, The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind."—*Pope*]

This was *not* said by Antigonus, but by a Spartan, previously to the battle of Thermopylae.

This happened under Augustus Cæsar, and *not* during the reign of Adrian.

This happened to the father of Herodes Atticus, and the answer was made by the Emperor *Nerva*, who deserved that his name should have been stated by the "greatest—wisest—meanest of mankind."⁴

This was said by Anacharsis the Scythian, and *not* by a Greek.

This was *not* said by Demosthenes, but to Demosthenes by *Phocion*.

This was *not* said of Caius (Caligula, I presume, is intended by Caius), but of *Tiberius* himself.

This reply was *not* made by a king of Hungary, but sent by Richard the First, Cœur de Lion, of England to the Pope, with the breast-plate of the bishop of Beauvais.

This did *not* happen to Demetrius, but to Philip King of Macedon.

VOLTAIRE.

Having stated that Bacon was frequently incorrect in his citations from history, I have thought it necessary in what regards so great a name (however trifling), to support the assertion by such facts as more immediately occur to me. They are but trifles, and yet for such trifles a schoolboy would be whipped (if still in the fourth form); and Voltaire for half a dozen similar errors has been treated as a superficial writer, notwithstanding the testimony of the learned Warton:—"Voltaire, a writer of *much deeper research* than is imagined, and the first who has displayed the literature and customs of the dark ages with *any degree of penetration and comprehension*."¹ For another distinguished testimony to Voltaire's merits in literary research, see also Lord Holland's excellent Account of the Life and Writings of Lope de Vega, vol. i. p. 215. edition of 1817.²

Voltaire has even been termed "a shallow fellow," by some of the same school who called Dryden's Ode "a drunken song;"—a school (as it is called, I presume, from their education being still incomplete) the whole of whose filthy trash of Epics, Excursions, &c. &c. &c. is not worth the two words in Zaire, "*Vous pleurez*," or a single speech of Tancred:—a school, the apostate lives of whose renegades, with their tea-drinking neutrality of morals, and their convenient treachery in politics—in the record of their accumulated pretences to virtue can produce no actions (were all their good deeds drawn up in array) to equal or approach the sole defence of the family of Calas, by that great and unequalled genius—the universal Voltaire.

I have ventured to remark on these little inaccuracies of "the greatest genius that England, or perhaps any other country, ever produced,"³ merely to show our national injustice in condemning generally the greatest genius of France for such inadvertencies as these, of which the highest of England has been no less guilty. Query, was Bacon a greater intellect than Newton?

CAMPBELL.⁵

Being in the humour of criticism, I shall proceed, after having ventured upon the slips of Bacon, to touch upon one or two as trifling in their edition of the British Poets, by the justly celebrated Campbell. But I do this in good will, and trust it will be so taken. If any thing could add to my opinion of the talents and true feeling of that gentleman, it would be his classical, honest, and triumphant defence of Pope, against the vulgar cant of the day, and its existing Grub-street.

The inadvertencies to which I allude are,—Firstly, in speaking of *Anstey*, whom he accuses of having taken "his leading characters from *Smollett*." *Anstey's Bath Guide* was published in 1766. *Smollett's Humphry Clinker* (the only work of *Smollett's* from which *Tabitha*, &c. &c. could have been taken) was written during *Smollett's last residence* at Leghorn in 1770—"Argal," if there has been any borrowing, *Anstey* must be the creditor, and not the debtor. I refer Mr. Campbell to his *own* data in his lives of *Smollett* and *Anstey*.

Secondly, Mr. Campbell says in the life of Cowper (note to page 358. vol. vii.) that he knows not to whom Cowper alludes in these lines:—

"Nor he who, for the bane of thousands born,
BUILT God a church, and laugh'd his word to scorn."

1 Dissertation I.

² [Full Voltaire appeared, there was no nation more ignorant of its neighbours' literature than the French. He first exposed, and then corrected, this neglect in his countrymen. There is no writer to whom the authors of other nations, especially of England, are so indebted for the extension of their fame in France, and, through France, in Europe. There is no critic who has employed more time, wit, ingenuity, and diligence in promoting the literary intercourse between country and country, and in promoting the triumphs of another. Yet, by a strange fatality, he is constantly represented as the enemy of all literature but his celebrating in one language the triumphs of another. Those who feel such indignation against his occasional exaggeration of faulty passages; the authors of which, till he pointed out their beauties, were hardly known beyond the country in which their language was spoken. Those who feel such indignation at his misrepresentations and oversights, would find it difficult to produce a critic in any modern language, who, in speaking of foreign literature, is better informed or more candid than Voltaire; and they certainly

The Calvinist meant Voltaire, and the church of Ferney, with its inscription "Deo erexit Voltaire."

Thirdly, in the life of Burns, Mr. Campbell quotes Shakspeare thus:—

"To gild refined gold, to paint the rose,
Or add fresh perfume to the violet."

This version by no means improves the original, which is as follows:—

"To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet," &c.—*King John*.

A great poet quoting another should be correct: he should also be accurate, when he accuses a Parnassian brother of that dangerous charge "borrowing:" a poet had better borrow any thing (excepting money) than the thoughts of another—they are always sure to be reclaimed; but it is very hard, having been the lender, to be denounced as the debtor, as is the case of Anstey versus Smollett.

As there is "honour amongst thieves," let there be some amongst poets, and give each his due,—none can afford to give it more than Mr. Campbell himself, who, with a high reputation for originality, and a fame which cannot be shaken, is the only poet of the times (except Rogers) who can be reproached (and *in him* it is indeed a reproach) with having written too little.

Ravenna, Jan. 5. 1821.

CONVERSATIONS OF LORD BYRON, AS RELATED BY THOMAS MEDWIN, ESQ., COMPARED WITH A PORTION OF HIS LORDSHIP'S CORRESPONDENCE.

The volume of "Lord Byron's Conversations" with Mr. Medwin contain several statements relative to Mr. Murray, his lordship's publisher, against which, however exceptionable they might be, he was willing to trust his defence to the private testimony of persons acquainted with the real particulars, and to his general character, rather than resort to any kind of public appeal, to which he has ever been exceedingly averse. But friends, to whose judgment Mr. Murray is bound to defer, having decided that such an appeal upon the occasion is become a positive duty on his part, he hopes that he shall not be thought too obtrusive in opposing to those personal allegations extracts from Lord Byron's own letters, with the addition of a few brief notes of necessary explanation.

CAPT. MEDWIN, p. 167.

"Murray offered me, of his own accord, 1000*l.* a canto for Don Juan, and afterwards reduced it to 500*l.* on the plea of piracy, and complained of my dividing one canto into two, because I happened to say something at the end of the third canto of having done so."

LORD BYRON'S LETTER.

Ravenna, February 7. 1820.

"Dear Murray,
"I have copied and cut the third canto of Don Juan INTO TWO, because it was too long, and I tell you this before—

never would be able to discover one who to those qualities unites so much sagacity and liveliness. His enemies would fain persuade us that such exuberance of wit implies a want of information; but they only succeed in showing that a want of wit by no means implies an exuberance of information.—*LORD HOLLAND*.]

⁵ "Il est trop vrai que l'honneur me l'ordonne,
Que je vous adorai, que je vous abandonne,
Que je renonce à vous, que vous le désirez,
Que sous une autre loi . . . Zaire, vous PLEUREZ?" —*Zaire*, acte iv. sc. ii.

⁴ Pope, in Spence's Anecdotes, p. 158. Malone's edition.

⁵ [Read Campbell's Poets. Corrected Tom's slips of the pen. A good work, though—style affected—but his defence of Pope is glorious. To be sure, it is his *own* cause too,—but no matter, it is very good, and does him great credit."—*Byron Diary*, Jan. 10. 1821.]

hand, because, in case of any reckoning between you and me, these two are only to go for ONE, as this was the original form and in fact the two together are not longer than one of the first; so remember, that I have not made this division to DOUBLE upon you, but merely to suppress some tediousness in the aspect of the thing. I should have served you a pretty trick if I had sent you, for example, cantos of fifty stanzas each."

CAPT. MEDWIN, p. 169.

"I don't wish to quarrel with Murray, but it seems inevitable. I had no reason to be pleased with him the other day. Galignani wrote to me, offering to purchase the copyright of my works, in order to obtain an exclusive privilege of printing them in France. I might have made my own terms, and put the money in my own pocket; instead of which, I enclosed Galignani's letter to Murray, in order that he might conclude the matter as he pleased. He did so, very advantageously for his own interest; but never had the complaisance, the common politeness, to thank me, or acknowledge my letter."

LORD BYRON'S LETTER.

Ravenna, 9bre 4. 1820.

"I have received from Mr. Galignani the enclosed letters, duplicates, and receipts, which will explain themselves. As the poems are your property by purchase, right, and justice, ALL MATTERS OF PUBLICATION, &c. &c. ARE FOR YOU TO DECIDE UPON. I know not how far my compliance with Mr. G's request might be legal, and I doubt that it would not be honest. In case you choose to arrange with him, I enclose the permits to you, and in so doing I wash my hands of the business altogether. I sign them merely to enable you to exert the power you justly possess more properly. I will have nothing to do with it further, except in my answer to Mr. Galignani, to state that the letters, &c. &c. are sent to you, and the causes thereof. If you can check these foreign pirates do; if not, put the permissive papers in the fire. I can have no view nor object whatever but to secure to you your property."

NOTE.—Mr. Murray derived no advantage from the proposed agreement, which was by no means of the importance here ascribed to it, and therefore was never attempted to be carried into effect: the documents alluded to are still in his possession.

CAPT. MEDWIN, pp. 169—171.

"Murray has long prevented the 'Quarterly' from abusing me. Some of their bullies have had their fingers itching to be at me; but they would get the worst of it in a set-to.

"Murray and I have dissolved all connection: he had the choice of giving up me or the Navy List. There was no hesitation which way he should decide: the Admiralty carried the day. Now for the Quarterly: their batteries will be opened; but I can fire broadsides too. They have been letting off lots of squibs and crackers against me, but they only make a noise and ***."

"'Werner' was the last book Murray published for me, and three months after came out the Quarterly's article on my Plays, when 'Marino Faliero' was noticed for the first time."

LORD BYRON'S LETTER.

Genoa, 10bre 25. 1822.

"I had sent you back the Quarterly without perusal, having resolved to read no more reviews, good, bad, or indifferent; but who can control his fate? 'Galignani,' to whom my English studies are confined, has forwarded a copy of at least one half of it in his indefatigable weekly compilation, and as, 'like honour, it came unlooked for,' I have looked through it. I must say that upon the WHOLE—that is, the whole of the HALF which I have read (for the other half is to be the segment of Gal's

next week's circular)—it is certainly handsome, and any thing but unkind or unfair."

NOTE.—The passage about the Admiralty is unfounded in fact, and no otherwise deserving of notice than to mark its absurdity; and with regard to the "Quarterly Review," his lordship well knew that it was established, and constantly conducted, on principles which absolutely excluded Mr. Murray from all such interference and influence as is implied in the Conversations."

CAPT. MEDWIN, p. 168.

"Because I gave Mr. Murray one of my poems, he wanted to make me believe that I had made him a present of two others, and hinted at some lines in 'English Bards' that were certainly to the point. But I have altered my mind considerably upon that subject: as I once hinted to him, I see no reason why a man should not profit by the sweat of his brain as well as that of his brow, &c.; besides, I was poor at that time, and have no idea of aggrandizing booksellers."

LORD BYRON'S LETTER.

January 2. 1816.

"Dear Sir,
"Your offer is liberal in the extreme, and much more than the two poems can possibly be worth—but I cannot accept it, nor will not. You are most welcome to them, as additions to the collected volumes, without any demand or expectation on my part whatever."

BYRON.

"P. S.—I have enclosed your draft TORN, for fear of accidents by the way.—I wish you would not throw temptation in mine; it is not from a disdain of the universal idol—nor from a present superfluity of his treasures—I can assure you, that I refuse to worship him—but what is right is right, and must not yield to circumstances."

To J. Murray, Esq."

NOTE.—The above letter relates to a draft for 1,000 guineas, offered by Mr. Murray for two poems, the Siege of Corinth and Parisina, which his lordship had previously, at a short interval, presented to Mr. Murray as donations.—Lord Byron was afterwards induced by Mr. Murray's earnest persuasion, to accept the 1,000 guineas, and Mr. Murray has his lordship's assignment of the copyright of the two pieces accordingly.

CAPT. MEDWIN, p. 166.

"Murray pretends to have lost money by my writings, and pleads poverty; but if he is poor, which is somewhat problematical to me, pray who is to blame?

"Mr. Murray is tender of my fame. How kind in him! He is afraid of my writing too fast. Why? because he has a tender regard for his own pocket, and does not like the look of any new acquaintance in the shape of a book of mine, till he has seen his old friends in a variety of new faces; ID EST, disposed of a vast many editions of the former works. I don't know what would become of me without Douglas Kinnaird, who has always been my best and kindest friend. It is not easy to deal with Mr. Murray."

NOTE.—In the numerous letters received by Mr. Murray yearly from Lord Byron (who, in writing them, was not accustomed to restrain the expression of his feelings), not one has any tendency towards the imputations here thrown out: the incongruity of which will be evident from the fact of Mr. Murray having paid at various times, for the copyright of his lordship's poems, sums amounting to upwards of 15,000*l.*, viz.

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Childe Harold, I. II. | £ 600 |
| III. | 1,575 |
| IV. | 2,100 |
| Giaour | 525 |
| Bride of Abydos | 525 |
| Corsair | 525 |
| Lara | 700 |
| Siege of Corinth | 525 |
| Parisina | 525 |
| Lament of Tasso | 315 |
| Manfred | 315 |
| Beppo | 525 |
| Don Juan, I. II. | 1,525 |
| III. IV. V. | 1,525 |
| Doge of Venice | 1,050 |
| Sardanapalus, Cain, and Foscari | 1,100 |
| Mazeppa | 525 |
| Chillon | 525 |
| Sundries | 450 |
| | £ 15,455 |

CAPT. MEDWIN, p. 170.

"My differences with Murray are not over. When he purchased 'Cain,' 'The Two Foscari,' and 'Sardanapalus,' he sent me a deed, which you may remember witnessing. Well; after its return to England it was discovered that

* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *

But I shall take no notice of it."

NOTE.—Mr. Murray of course cannot answer a statement which he does not see; but pledges himself to disprove any inculpation the suppressed passage may contain, whenever disclosed. He has written twice to Captain Medwin's publisher, desiring, as an act of justice, to have the passage printed entire in any new edition of the book, and in the mean time to be favoured with a copy of it. As this has not yet been obtained, and as the context seems to imply that it accuses him of endeavouring to take some pecuniary advantage of Lord Byron, he thinks he shall be forgiven for stating the following circumstances.

Mr. Murray having accidentally heard that Lord Byron was in pecuniary difficulties, immediately forwarded 1,500*l.* to him, with an assurance that another such sum should be at his service in a few months; and that, if such assistance should not be sufficient, Mr. Murray would be ready to sell the copyright of all his lordship's works for his use.

The following is Lord Byron's acknowledgment of this offer.

November 14th, 1815.

Dear Sir,

"I return you your bills not accepted, but certainly not UNHONOURED. Your present offer is a favour which I would accept from you if I accepted such from any man. Had such been my intention, I can assure you I would have asked you fairly and as freely as you would give; and I cannot say more of my confidence or your conduct. The circumstances which induce me to part with my books, though sufficiently are not IMMEDIATELY pressing. I have made up my mind to them, and there is an end. Had I been disposed to trespass on your kindness in this way, it would have been before now; but I am not sorry to have an opportunity of declining it, as it sets my opinion of you, and indeed of human nature, in a different light from that in which I have been accustomed to consider it."

Believe me, very truly,

Your obliged and faithful servant,
BYRON.

To John Murray, Esq."

NOTE.—That nothing had occurred to subvert these friendly sentiments will appear from the three letters sub-

joined, the second of them written by Lord Byron a few weeks before his death, and the last addressed by his lordship's valet to Mr. Murray as one of his deceased master's most confidential friends.

LORD BYRON'S LETTERS.

May 8th, 1819.

"I have a great respect for your good and gentlemanly qualities, and return your personal friendship towards me. ***** You deserve and possess the esteem of those whose esteem is worth having, and of none more (however useless it may be) than

Yours, very truly,
BYRON."

Missolonghi, Feb. 25. 1824.

"I have heard from Mr. Douglas Kinnaird that you state a report of a satire on Mr. Gifford having arrived from Italy, said to be written by me, but that you do not believe it; I dare say you do not, nor any body else, I should think. Whoever asserts that I am the author or abettor of any thing of the kind on Gifford, lies in his throat: I always regarded him as my literary father, and myself as his prodigal son. If any such composition exists, it is none of mine. You know, as well as any body, upon whom I have or have not written, and you also know whether they do or did not deserve the same—and so much for such matters."

"You will, perhaps, be anxious to hear some news from this part of Greece (which is most liable to invasion), but you will hear enough through public and private channels, on that head. I will, however, give you the events of a week, mingling my own private peculiar with the public, for we are here jumbled a little together at present."

"On Sunday (the 15th, I believe), I had a strong and sudden convulsive attack which left me speechless, though not motionless, for some strong men could not hold me; but whether it was epilepsy, catalepsy, cachezy, apoplexy, or what other exy or epsy, the doctors have not decided, or whether it was spasmodic or nervous, &c., but it was very unpleasant, and nearly carried me off, and all that. On Monday they put leeches to my temples, no difficult matter, but the blood could not be stopped till eleven at night (they had gone too near the temporal artery for my temporal safety), and neither styptic nor caustic would cauterize the orifice till after a hundred attempts."

"On Tuesday, a Turkish brig of war ran on shore. On Wednesday, great preparations being made to attack her, though protected by her consorts, the Turks burned her, and retired to Patras. On Thursday, a quarrel ensued between the Suliotes and the Frank guard at the arsenal; a Swedish officer was killed, and a Suliote severely wounded, and a general fight expected, and with some difficulty prevented. On Friday, the officer buried, and Captain Parry's English artificers mutinied, under pretence that their lives were in danger, and are for quitting the country—they may. On Saturday, we had the smartest shock of an earthquake which I remember (and I have felt thirty, slight or smart, at different periods; they are common in the Mediterranean), and the whole army discharged their arms, upon the same principle that savages beat drums or howl, during an eclipse of the moon: it was a rare scene altogether. If you had but seen the English Johnnies, who had never been out of a Cockney workshop before, nor will again if they can help it! And on Sunday we heard that the Vizier is come down to Larissa with one hundred and odd thousand men."

"In coming here I had two escapes, from the Turks (one of my vessels was taken, but afterwards released), and the other from shipwreck; we drove twice on the rocks near the Scrophes (islands near the coast)."

"I have obtained from the Greeks the release of eight and twenty Turkish prisoners, men, women, and children, and sent them to Patras and Prevesa at my own charges. One little girl of nine years old, who proposes remaining with me, I shall (if I live) send with her mother, probably, to Italy, or to England, and adopt her. Her name is Halo Hatagee; she

is a very pretty lively child. All her brothers were killed by the Greeks, and she herself and her mother were spared by special favour, and owing to her extreme youth, she being then but five or six years old.

"My health is rather better, and I can ride about again. My office here is no sinecure — so many parties and difficulties of every kind; but I will do what I can. Prince Mavrocordati is an excellent person, and does all in his power; but his situation is perplexing in the extreme: still we have great hopes of the success of the contest. You will hear, however, more of public news from plenty of quarters, for I have little time to write. Believe me,

"Yours, &c. &c.
"N. B.

'To John Murray, Esq.'

LETTER OF LORD BYRON'S VALET.

"Missolonghi, April 21. 1824.

"Sir,

"Forgive me for this intrusion which I now am under the painful necessity of writing to you, to inform you of the melancholy news of my Lord Byron, who is no more. He departed this miserable life on the 19th of April, after an illness of only ten days. His lordship began by a nervous fever, and terminated with an inflammation on the brain, for want of being bled in time, which his lordship refused till it was too late. I have sent the Hon. Mrs. Leigh's letter inclosed in yours, which I think would be better for you to open and explain to Mrs. Leigh, for I fear the contents of the letter will be too much for her. And you will please to inform Lady Byron and the Honourable Miss Byron, whom I am wished to see when I return with my lord's effects, and his dear and noble remains: Sir, you will please manage in the mildest way possible, or I am much afraid of the consequences. Sir, you will please give my duty to Lady Byron; hoping she will allow me to see her, by my lord's particular wish, and Miss Byron likewise. Please to excuse all defects, for I scarcely know what I either say or do, for after twenty years' service with my lord, he was more to me than a father, and I am too much distressed to now give a correct account of every particular, which I hope to do at my arrival in England. — Sir, you will likewise have the goodness to forward the letter to the Honourable Captain George Byron, who, as the representative of the family and title, I thought it my duty to send him a line. But you, Sir, will please to explain to him all particulars, as I have not time, as the express is now ready to make his voyage

day and night till he arrives in London. — I must, Sir, praying forgiveness, and hoping at the same time that you will so far oblige me as to execute all my wishes, which I am well convinced you will not refuse.

"I remain, Sir,
"Your most obedient and very humble servant,
"W. FLETCHER,
"Valet to the late L. B. for twenty years.

"P. S. — I mention my name and capacity that you may remember and forgive this, when you remember the quantity of times I have been at your house in Albemarle-street.

"To John Murray, Esq."

NOTE. — Other letters from Lord Byron, of the same tenor and force with these now produced, might have been added. But it is presumed that these are sufficient to demonstrate in the present case, what has been demonstrated in many others, that desultory, ex-parte conversations, even if accurately reported, will often convey imperfect and erroneous notions of the speaker's real sentiments.

JOHN MURRAY.

Albemarle Street,
30th Oct. 1824.

CAPT. MEDWIN, p. 170.

"My differences with Murray are not over. When he purchased 'Cain,' 'The two Foscari,' and 'Sardanapalus,' he sent me a deed, which you may remember witnessing. Well; after its return to England, it was discovered that it contained a clause which had been introduced without my knowledge, a clause by which I bound myself to offer Mr. Murray all my future compositions. But I shall take no notice of it."

NOTE. — The words in italic are those which were suppressed in the two first editions of Captain Medwin's book, and which Mr. Murray has received from the publisher after the foregoing statement was printed. He has only to observe upon the subject, that on referring to the deed in question, no such clause is to be found; that this instrument was signed in London by the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird, as Lord Byron's procurator, and witnessed by Richard Williams, Esq., one of the partners in Mr. Kinnaird's banking-house; and that the signature of Captain Medwin is not affixed.

2nd Nov.

J. M.

Index.

- A.
- ABELARD, 173.
Abencerrage, 529. 566.
Aberdeen, town of, 705.
Aberdeen (George Hamilton Gordon), fourth earl of, 17. 428. 436.
Abernethy, John, surgeon, 707.
Abruzzi, 485.
Absalom and Achitophel, 639. 806.
Absence, results of, 631.
Absent friend, pleasure of defending, 759.
Abydos, Bride of, 77. 651.
Acarmania, 24.
Achelous, river, 24.
Acheron, lake, 21.
Acherusia, lake, 21.
Achilles, his person, 303. -741. Tomb of, 648. 650.
Achitophel, 806.
Achmet III., 122.
Acroeraunian mountains, 50.
Acropolis of Athens, 16. 712. 761.
Actium, 20, 21. Sea-fight of, 21. 668.
Ada. See Byron, Augusta-Ada.
Adams, John, a carrier, who died of drunkenness, epitaph on, 537.
Addison, 713. His account of a remarkable dream, 643. His 'faint praise,' 759.
'Address, spoken at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre,' 552.
'Address intended to be recited at the Caledonian Meeting,' 558.
'Adieu, the; written under the impression that the author would soon die,' 534.
'Adieu, adieu! my native shore,' 4.
Admiration, 629. 661.
'Adrian's Address to his Soul when dying,' translation of, 379.
Adriatic, the, 43.
Adversity, 723. 739.
Advice, 606. 745.
Aegean sea, 101. 453.
Egina, 46. 101.
Eschylus, his 'Prometheus,' 192. His 'Seven before Thebes,' 192. Translation from his 'Prometheus Vincutus,' 380. His 'Persians' quoted, 637.
Esietes, tomb of, 82.
Esop, 530.
Etna, 56.
Etolia, 24.
Africa and Africans, described, 645.
Agamemnon, 591.
Age, 28. 217.
'Age of Bronze; or, Carmen Seclulare et Annus haud Mirabilis,' 526.
Age of Gold, 672.
Ages, changes produced by the lapse of, 641.
Agesilaus, 169.
Agis, King of Sparta, 230.
Agilulf, Duke of Turin, 775.
- Aglietti, Dr., 42. 230.
Agostini, Leonard, 776.
Agrarian law, 706.
Ajax, 16. Sepulchre of, 83. 648.
Alamanni, 231.
Alaric, 18. 454.
Alban Hill, description of the, 60. 785.
Albania, 20. 762.
Albanian dialect of the Illyric, specimens of, 763.
Albanians, their character and manners, 22, 23. 763. Their resemblance to the highlanders of Scotland, 763.
Albano, 60.
Albano, Francesco, 732.
Albion, sensations at the first sight of her chalky belt, 709.
Albrizzi, Countess, 230. 568.
Albrizzi, Giuseppe, 568.
Albuera, battle of, 9. 15.
Alcibiades, beauty of his person, 303. General charm of his name, 303. His character, 315. 744.
Alexander the Great, his visit to the tomb of Ajax, 82. 647. His sarcophagus, 526. His chastity, 625. 655. His reply to Parmenio after the battle of Issus, 808.
Alexander, Emperor of Russia, 530. 675. 742.
Alexander III., submission of Barbarossa to, 771.
Alfieri, Vittorio, his life quoted, 42. His tomb in the church of Santa Croce, 48. His memory dear to the Italians, 776.
Alfonso III., 45. 46. 107. 479. 480. His wife Isabella, 107.
Algiers, 604. 776.
Alhama, 566.
Ali Pacha of Yanina, portrait of, 21. 23. His letter in Latin to Lord Byron, 23. His assassination, 23. His murder of Giaffar, Pacha of Argyro Castro, 84. The original of Lambro, 644.
'ALL is vanity, saith the Preacher,' 466.
Alla Hu! 70. 685.
Allegra (Lord Byron's natural daughter), 418.
Alliance, the Holy, 530. 668.
Alpheus, river, 22.
Alpinula, Julia, her death, 35. Her affecting epitaph, 35. n.
Alps, the, 35. 50.
Alterkirchen, 34.
Alypius, 784.
Amber, susceptible of a perfume, 82.
Ambition, 32, 33. 52. 188. 304. 702.
Ambracian Gulf, Stanzas written in passing the, 544. Reflections on the past and present state of, 21.
Ambrosian library at Milan, 773.
America, 52. 481. 746.
'Amitié est l'Amour sans Ailes,' 412.
Amulets, the belief in, universal in the East, 83.
- Anacreon, his 'Θεῶν λεγέειν Ἀτρεΐδας;' translated, 380. His *Μεσονοκταίαι πῶθ' ὄρασι;* translated, 380. His morals worse than those of Ovid, 595.
Anastasius Macedon, 792.
Anastasius, Hope's, 438.
Ancestry, 675.
'And wilt thou weep when I am low,' 540.
'And thou art dead, as young and fair,' 551.
'And thou wert sad!' 472.
Andalusian nobleman, adventures of, 594.
Andernach, 34.
Andrews, Bishop, a punster, 440.
Andrews, Miles Peter, esq., his prodigues, 431. Some account of, 431. n.
Andromache, 533.
Anent, 715.
Angelo, Michael, his tomb in the church of Santa Croce, 48. His Statue of Moses, 502. His Last Judgment, 503. His copy of Dante, 593. Treatment of, by Julius II., 298. Neglect of, by Leo X., 503. Anecdote of, 808.
Angelo, St., Castle of, 58. 313.
Angiolini, dancer, 430.
Anger, 65. 97. 607.
Angling, 'the cruellest and stupidest of sports,' 735.
Anne, Lines to, 535.
Annesley, hill near, 475.
Annuitants, alleged longevity of, 616.
Anstey's Bath Guide, 755. 809.
Anteros, 182.
Anthony, St., his recipe for hot blood, 597.
Antigonus, 808.
Anti Jacobin, 514.
Antiloehus, tomb of, 82. 648.
Antinous, his heroic death, 16.
Antoninus Pius, 782.
Antony, 21. His person described, 303. The slave of love, 628. 668.
Apelles, 502.
Apennines, 50. 499.
Apicius, 519.
Apollo, 641.
Apollo Belvidere, 59.
Appearances, 'the joint on which good society hinges,' 733.
Appetite, 657.
Applause, popular, 636.
Arabs, life of the, 86.
Ararat, Mount, 232.
Arcadia, 764.
Archidamus, 169.
Archimedes, 742.
Archipelago, 36. 172.
Ardennes, forest of, 31.
Aretino, Pietro, 779.
Aretino, Leonardo, 499.
Argos, 120.
Argus, Ulysses' dog, 631.
Argyle Institution, 431.