THE

BIBLICAL REPERTORY.

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ART. I.—1. *Mr. H. Everett's Report on Indian Affairs. Presented to the House of Representatives of the United States, on the 20th of May*, 1834.

2. *Report from the Office of Indian Affairs. December* 1, 1837.

THE present condition and future destiny of the Indian tribes, who reside within the limits, or on the borders of the United States, must be interesting to every philanthropist, patriot, and Christian. If these aboriginal nations of America should continue to waste away, as they have done since the country was occupied by Europeans, in a few generations to come, they will scarcely be found, except in the pages of history, and in the traditions and monuments which they may leave behind. The causes of this rapid decrease are not difficult to be explored; but it does not comport with our plan, to enter at present into a discussion of the subject. The treatment which these tribes have received from the whites, and from the governments of the United States, and the particular states, would furnish a fruitful subject for declamation; but neither is it our purpose to enter into this perplexed, and painful discussion. What is past cannot be undone, nor effectually remedied. What we have in view is to present to our readers some account of the present condi-

tateuch. Of this investigation we say nothing, partly for the reason before given, that we have not room to do the subject justice; partly because we have not read this chapter with the care which it deserves; and especially because we consider it identical in substance with an article inserted by the author in Tholuck's Anzeiger some five years ago, of which we gave an abstract in our volume for 1834, pp. 490—504.

In conclusion, we have only to express our satisfaction, that the life and intellectual activity of this accomplished scholar, profound thinker, and devoted Christian, are preserved by a kind providence to Germany and Christendom. The spectacle of such a man, surrounded by such circumstances, pleading such a cause, before such judges, and against such adversaries, would be grand in any case; but it acquires new grandeur from the fact, that this man, who is throwing millstones of irrefragable argument upon the skull of rationalism, falsely so called, was once himself a rationalist, and while such, gained precocious reputation as a scholar. His first public academical performance was a defence of the thesis, that to look for Christ in the Old Testament is folly. But mark the event. In this very folly have the best years of the man himself been gloriously spent; and the recantation of his earlier opinions is written in the very title of his great performance, Christologie, or the doctrine of Christ as taught in the Old Testament. Truly may it be said of him, that now, both as a writer and a public teacher, he preacheth the faith which once, at least in purpose, he destroyed. Let us then, like the disciples of old, when they heard Saul of Tarsus preach, "glorify God in him."

Art. IV.—*The Life of William Wilberforce.* By his Sons, Robert Isaac Wilberforce, M. A., Vicar of East Farleigh, late Fellow of Oriel College; and Samuel Wilberforce, M. A., Rector of Brighstone. 5 vols. post 8vo. London, John Murray, 1838.

To many of our readers a faithful outline of these volumes will be more acceptable than the book itself. We cannot, it is true, abstract the three graphic likenesses of Wilberforce, or the facsimiles of his handwriting, or the typography of one of the most celebrated printing houses in the world: but

we can save time for the busy, and money for the frugal, by leaving out a mass of crude and almost unintelligible matter, from journals, memoranda, letters, and the like, which has often no charm but the mention of celebrated names and places, and no merit but that of being Wilberforce's. The book is a good book, or rather might easily be made such, by a judicious use of the knife: as it now is, with all our unfeigned respect for the fidelity, modesty, and filial duty of the authors, we have to lament that their collection had not been rather a selection. But not even for an instant to encourage the notion that we sympathize with the unprincipled critics who have opened in full cry upon these instructive volumes, we proceed to particulars.

William Wilberforce, only son of Robert Wilberforce and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Bird, Esq. of Barton, Oxon, was born at Hull, August 24, A.D. 1759. Of three sisters only one arrived at maturity. The family was one of distinction, under the name of Wilberfoss, as far back as the times of Henry the Second.

The early years of Wilberforce were remarkable chiefly for feebleness of constitution. His stature was always small, and the weakness of his eyes is mentioned from the beginning to the very end of his life. The instances are numerous in subsequent years, in which he records his gratitude for the time and the country of his birth, and that he 'was not born in less civilized times, when it would have been thought impossible to rear so delicate a child.' When seven years old he was sent to the grammar school at Hull, of which Joseph Milner, the historian, was soon afterwards master. 'Even then his elocution was so remarkable,' says Isaac Milner, his friend, afterwards Dean of Carlisle, 'that we used to set him on a table, and make him read aloud as an exercise to the other boys.' The death of his father in 1768 brought him under the charge of an uncle, William Wilberforce, residing by turns at Wimbledon, Surrey, near London, and in St. James's Place. For two years he went to a school of the meanest character: 'it was frequented chiefly by the sons of merchants, and they taught therefore every thing and nothing.'

This transfer to his uncle's care, unimportant as it may appear to the political biographers of Wilberforce, has great interest in our eyes. This it was which gave a direction to the whole religious life. His sons and biographers talk of a 'baptismal seed, which though long dormant was destined to produce at last a golden harvest.' We find it more intel-

ligible to trace the religion of this remarkable man to the blessing of God upon the instructions of his aunt, who was an admirer of Whitefield's preaching, and kept up a friendly connexion with the early Methodists. 'Under these influences,' says he, 'my mind was interested by religious subjects. How far these impressions were genuine I can hardly determine, but at least I may venture to say that I was sincere. There are letters of mine, written at that period, still in existence, which accord much with my present sentiments.' 'How eventful a life,' he says in looking back to this period in his thirty eighth year, 'has mine been, and how visibly can I trace the hand of God leading me by ways which I knew not! I think I have never before remarked, that my mother's taking me from my uncle's when about 12 or 13, and then completely a Methodist, has probably been the means of my being connected with political men and becoming useful in life. If I had staid with my uncle I should probably have been a bigoted despised Methodist:' and he might have added, 'Had I never gone to that uncle, I should probably have been a worldling or a titled debauchee.' For when he returned to his mother's house, at Hull, it was to a new and different scene. 'It was then as gay a place as could be found out of London. The theatre, balls, great suppers and card-parties, were the delight of the principal families in the town.' The religious impressions which he had gained at Wimbledon continued for a considerable time, but his friends spared no pains to obliterate them. 'I might almost say, that no pious parent ever laboured more to impress a beloved child with sentiments of piety, than they did to give me a taste for the world and its diversions.' Much of his time was passed in a round of visits among the neighbouring gentry. A remarkable musical talent, with a voice of exquisite expression and melody, was to him, what it has been to multitudes of young men, a key to many chambers of temptation.

At this early day those tendencies became apparent which predominated in later years. At the age of fourteen he addressed a letter to the editor of the York paper, 'in condemnation of the odious traffic in human flesh.' 'He greatly excelled all the other boys in his compositions, though he seldom began them till the eleventh hour;' and he went to the University 'a very fair scholar.' He entered St. John's College, Cambridge, October 1776, at the age of seventeen years. In this country we happily know nothing by experience of such license in morals as exists on the Isis and the

Cam. 'I was introduced,' says Wilberforce, 'on the very first night of my arrival to as licentious a set of men as can well be conceived. They drank hard, and their conversation was even worse than their lives. I lived amongst them for some time, though I never relished their society, ... often indeed I was horror-struck at their conduct, ... and after the first year shook off in great measure my connexion with them.' For the last two years at Cambridge he was the centre of a higher circle. 'There was always,' says the Rev. T. Gisborne, 'a great Yorkshire pie in his rooms, and all were welcome to partake of it. My rooms and his were back to back, and often when I was raking out my fire at ten o'clock, I heard his melodious voice calling aloud to me to come and sit with him before I went to bed. It was a dangerous thing so to do, for his amusing conversation was sure to keep me up so late, that I was behindhand the next morning.' He was a good classic, but neglected mathematics, which his mind always needed; and he was idle and worldly. 'I certainly did not then think and act as I do now,' he said long afterwards, 'but I was so far from being what the world calls licentious, that I was rather complimented on being better than young men in general.' It is mentioned as an evidence of his conscientiousness, that when unexpectedly required to declare his assent to the Articles of the church, (not being familiar with the modern subscription 'for substance of doctrine') he refused, though the refusal cost him for a time the convenience of a degree.

In this, as in every period of his life, not excepting the portion after three score years and ten, he was characterized by a genial hilarity, which one would, a priori, have considered too elevated to endure. 'May God enable me,' such was his prayer, 'to preserve a constant and a sober mind with a gay exterior.' In childhood, maturity and decline, he was as much distinguished for brilliancy of social talent as for tender benevolence. The smile and the tear proceeded from the same depths of unsophisticated nature; and happily the type neither of his religion nor his philosophy rendered it necessary for him to assume the guise of the anchorite or the cynic. He understood, what few can attempt to learn without peril, the *desipere in loco.* Even at the close of his protracted career, he might have pleaded to the charge of a facetiousness too free for the sourer sort of good people. In 1780 Mr. Wilberforce, scarcely free from the University, came into Parliament, as member

for 'the town and county of Hull.' It is characteristic of the country, that this election 'cost him between £8000 and £9000;' a single vote of a resident elector being bought for two guineas, and the expenses of a freeman's journey from London averaging £10 a piece. This extreme corruption, Mr. Wilberforce afterwards condemned. He was welcomed by the London wits. Conversation, if we may credit Mrs. Hannah More and Sir William Pepys, was not yet extinct in England. "When I went up to Cambridge," he has said, speaking of the risks to which he was then exposed, "I was scarcely acquainted with a single person above the rank of a country gentleman; and even when I left the University, so little did I know of general society, that I came up to London stored with arguments to prove the authenticity of Rowley's Poems; and now I was at once immersed in politics and fashion. The very first time I went to Boodle's I won twenty-five guineas of the Duke of Norfolk. I belonged at this time to five clubs, . . Miles and Evans's, Brookes's, Boodle's, White's, Goostree's. The first time I was at Brookes's, scarcely knowing any one, I joined from mere shyness in play at the Faro table, where George Selwyn kept bank. A friend who knew my inexperience, and regarded me as a victim decked out for sacrifice, called to me, 'What, Wilberforce, is that you?' Selwyn quite resented the interference, and turning to him, said in his most expressive tone, 'O sir, don't interrupt Mr. Wilberforce, he could not be better employed.' Nothing could be more luxurious than the style of these clubs. Fox, Sheridan, Fitzpatrick, and all your leading men, frequented them, and associated upon the easiest terms; you chatted, played at cards, or gambled as you pleased." But his companions were of a group of some twenty five young men, for the most part, who had passed together through the University, and who had come into the new Parliament of 1780. Here we begin to find the names of Pitt and Wilberforce in juxtaposition. These young men met almost nightly at the club at Goostree's in Pall Mall. It may surprise some readers to read from the memoranda of Wilberforce such records as this concerning the stately Pitt. 'He was the wittiest man I ever knew, and what was quite peculiar to himself, had at all times his wit under entire control. . . . . I was one of those who met to spend an evening in memory of Shakspeare, at the Boar's Head, East Cheap. Many professed wits were present, but Pitt was the most amusing of the party, and the readiest and most apt in

the required allusions.' In these clubs great sums were lost at the Faro table. By a providential interposition, he was weaned from a growing attachment to these amusements.

In 1781 Pitt joined him in the house of Commons, and their acquaintance ripened into friendship. But even then, it is observable, that personal attachment did not overwhelm his firmness of principle, for Pitt the second time he spoke in Parliament he voted against. We must refer our readers to the work itself for a great number of minute but interesting sketches of this great statesman and orator: already we are in danger of prolixity. It is almost needless to say that his rise to eminence was rapid without a parallel. 'The papers will have informed you,' writes Wilberforce at the time, 'how Mr. William Pitt, second son of the late Lord Chatham, has distinguished himself; he comes out as his father did, a ready made orator, and I doubt not but I shall one day or other see him the first man in the conntry. His famous speech, however, delivered the other night did not convince me, and I staid with the old fat fellow:* by the way he grows every day fatter, so where he will end I know not.' During this and the succeeding years the house of his late uncle at Wimbledon was a favourite resort; and here Pitt, to whom it was a luxury even to sleep in country air, took up not unfrequently his residence: their easy familiarity permitting him to ride down late at night and occupy his rooms, even though the master of the house was kept in town. The gaiety at Wimbledon almost transcended 'the limits of becoming mirth.' 'We found one morning the fruits of Pitt's earlier rising in the careful sowing of the garden beds with the fragments of a dress hat, in which Ryder had overnight come down from the opera.' The discussions arising out of the American war give peculiar interest to this period; but we must deny ourselves.

In 1783, Mr. Wilberforce accompanied by Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Eliot, afterwards Pitt's brother in law, visited France. The whole history of this six weeks' tour is amusing in the highest degree, but we shall omit all further notice of their incognito, their reception by Louis XVI., and their interviews with Franklin and La Fayette.

Upon the dissolution in 1784, when Pitt became Premier, Mr. Wilberforce somewhat suddenly proposed to represent the county. Here the triumph of his talents, his personal

* Lord North.

popularity, and his eloquence was complete. The support of Pitt's measures was the great test; under this banner at the age of twenty-five, he went into the new parliament, and for more than thirty years continued to be the independent representative of the most important constituency in the kingdom. It is no small attestation to his real abilities that the freeholders of Yorkshire should elect one recommended to them, (by Lord Mulgrave) as 'the bosom friend of the present minister, and second only to him in eloquence, unexampled at their years.' In no period of his life does he seem to have lost his sense of the importance of the charge intrusted to him as representing 'the tenth of all England.'

We are now drawing near the most interesting season of Mr. Wilberforce's life, namely, that in which his mind was brought under the power of evangelical religion. This began to be manifested during a long journey which he made through France, Switzerland and Italy. The chief instrument was the celebrated Isaac Milner, afterwards Dean of Carlisle, but at that time a mere clerical companion. Neither party could then imagine the gracious purpose for which they were thrown together. Milner, though a clergyman, and evangelical in his opinions, seems to have had a carelessness almost amounting to indifference. He appeared in all respects like an ordinary man of the world, mixing with his younger companion in all companies, and joining as readily as others in the prevalent Sunday parties. Still the principles of the young man were fixed, and when on a certain occasion Wilberforce spoke of a Mr. Stillingfleet as a good man, but one who carried things too far, Milner replied, 'Not a bit too far;' and this was the first intimation of his Methodism. Mr. Wilberforce was surprised, and they agreed to talk the matter over at some other time. They read together Doddridge's RISE and PROGRESS of RELIGION with thus much effect, that he determined to search the scriptures. That no decisive change had taken place in his life, is evident from his constant festivities on his return to London. Among the light memorials of singing or dancing 'all night,' or 'till five in the morning,' we read, 'S. and I talked—Strange that most men do not see that their duties increase with their fortune, and that they will be punished for spending it in eating, &c.' At the conclusion of the session in June 1785, he rejoined his family at Genoa, and, again accompanied by Milner, set out on the tour of Switzerland. Travelling in the same coach with Milner, he was induced by the latter to read the Greek Testa-

ment. We shall not spend a word upon the interesting details of the tour. During its whole continuance he was engaged in frequent conversations with Milner. 'By degrees,' says he, 'I imbibed his sentiments, though I must confess with shame, that they long remained merely as opinions assented to by my understanding, but not influencing my heart. My interest in them certainly increased, and at length I began to be impressed with a sense of their importance. In the midst of much that was distracting, and under the appearance of levity, he carried a hidden concern, and began to pray earnestly. When, in November, he returned to Wimbledon, he was another man, and the subject of habitual feelings diametrically opposite to those which had possessed him. 'It was not so much,' he has said in his memoranda, 'the fear of punishment by which I was affected, as a sense of my great sinfulness in having so long neglected the unspeakable mercies of my God and Saviour, and such was the effect which this thought produced, that, for months, I was in a state of the deepest depression, from strong convictions of my guilt. Indeed nothing which I have ever read in the accounts of others exceeded what I then felt.'

From this time until the evening of his life he kept a regular diary of his religious state which is only too minute, and which we must say is cited in this memoir, with a lavish boldness, scarcely compatible with the reverence of sons for a father. No better example could be adduced, than these very journals afford, of the truth that diaries often give a false view of character. If we were to credit what the author says of himself in his record, we should think that his youthful life was one of profligacy: his friends however attest quite the contrary, as we have already declared. But compare what is said in volume fourth, p. 344. Few good things are susceptible of greater abuse than religious diaries. Even to the writers of them, they often prove occasions of daily scrupulosity or spiritual pride, or become the records either on the one hand rather of what ought to be than what is, or on the other of such secrets between the Searcher of hearts and the soul, as should never be judged, before the time, by prurient inquirers. And to the readers, we regard them as offering in many cases the sickliest aspects of the writer's mind, just as an hospital-journal does of the diseased inmates' symptoms, while these morbid and often absurd exercises are erected into examples by unguarded youth. Alas! among how many imitators has the holy Brainerd's

self-neglect and gloom been propagated by his solemn minuting of every change in temperament. But whatever diversity of opinion there may be about religious diaries, no evangelical mind can undervalue that experience which is recorded in those of Mr. Wilberforce. By early rising, by constant prayer and reading, and by recourse to the best men, he advanced rapidly in the knowledge and practice of what was essential. Neither now, nor at any later period, does he seem to have got any clear notions concerning the less obvious truths of theology, which is the more remarkable from the known soundness of Isaac Milner's opinions: but Wilberforce moved in a circle where all hard-thinking was given to politics, and among a class of clergymen and dignitaries who have for some generations affected a genteel and skimming theology. The fear of Calvinism, and the denunciation of some Pauline tenets under the title of 'metaphysics,' is not confined to the court or even the island of Great Britain. To use one of his own happy expressions, 'it would be a sort of Prayer-Book and Homily Society temperature, if the world were made of such.'

Of the conscientiousness and tenderness of young Wilberforce's piety not even enemies could doubt. It is refreshing amidst political details to find such records as these: 'Conversed with Pitt near two hours, and opening myself completely to him. He tried to reason me out of my convictions, but soon found himself unable to combat their correctness, if Christianity be true. The fact is, he was so absorbed in politics that he had never given himself time for due reflection on religion.'

Towards the end of 1785 Mr. Wilberforce introduced himself to good Mr. Newton, from whom he received excellent counsels. It will not be expected that we should go into the particulars of his religious advancement during these earlier years of his Christian life. We find him strenuously labouring to receive and to do good, and earning that title of benevolent enthusiast, or Methodist, which it was his lot to bear through life. In these days he does not appear by any means so much awake to the sin of dissent, and the defiling nature of associations out of 'the church,' as when afterward he somewhat yielded himself, we apprehend, to the statements of priestly acquaintances.

During the years 1786 and 1787 he was making his way by cautious steps to that important place in parlimentary business with which most of us have been accustomed to asso-

ciate his name; but his health had received a blow from which he never fully recovered, and in consequence of this he visited Bath almost every year for the rest of his life. Whether in public affairs however, or in amusement, the bent of his mind was towards the unseen world. This is evinced by his perpetual records, even by such as were most hastily written and most unwisely published. His friends were alarmed at his growing zeal, and seem to have expected manifestations quite rabid, but when in July 1786, he joined his mother at Scarborough, after the close of the session, 'all that she observed was greater kindness and evenness of temper.' Her friend, Mrs. Sykes, who had shared in her suspicions, said when they parted company, 'If this is madness, I hope that he will bite us all'. In the quietude of a summer in the country he gave himself up in great measure to the word of God and prayer; so that there is scarcely a day without the record of some holy exercises.

In the session of 1787, otherwise memorable in parliamentary history, Mr. Wilberforce appears for the first time as a Christian Philanthropist, a character in which he will shine so long as the world endures. We refer to his exertions for the Reformation of Manners. 'He could not wonder,' say his sons, 'that the gay and busy world were almost ignorant of Chrisianity, amidst the lukewarmness and apathy which possessed the very watchmen of the faith. The deadly leaven of Hoadley's latitudinarian views had spread to an alarming extent amongst the clergy; and whilst numbers confessedly agreed with his Socinian tenets, few were sufficiently honest to resign with Mr. Lindsey* the endowments of the church. The zealous spirit which had begun to spread during the reign of Anne,† had been benumbed by this evil influences. No efforts were now making to desseminate in foreign lands the light of Christ's Gospel. At home a vast popululion was springing up around our manufactories, but there was no thought of providing for them church accommodation. Non-residence without cause and without scruple was spreading through the church; and all the cords of moral obligation were relaxed as the spirit of religion slumbered. Against this universal apathy John Wesley had recently arisen with a giant's strength. But his mission was chiefly to the poor, and his measures even from the first

* The Rev. Theophilus Lindsey had resigned the living of Catterick in 1773.

† Vide Nelson's Address to Persons of Quality.

were such as fostered a sectarian spirit. There was needed some reformer of the nation's morals, who should raise his voice in the high places of the land; and do within the church, and near the throne, what Wesley had accomplished in the meeting, and amongst the multitude. This, in its whole extent, was a work which the genius of our church could hardly have committed to the hands of any ecclesiastic; while it required for its proper execution the full devotion of rank, and influence, and talents of the highest order. To this high and self-denying office God put it into the heart of his servant to aspire. God, he says, has set before me as my object the reformation of [my country's] manners.'*

His first great effort was for the formation of a society to resist the spread of open immorality. In furthering this object, his personal labours were surprisingly great. Believing the patronage of the prelates to be indispensable, he set off from London, without revealing his purpose, and visited in succession the episcopal residences of the bishops of Worcester, Hereford, Norwich, Lincoln, York, and Lichfield, besides calling on many laymen. Here he learned to endure hardness. A nobleman said to him, 'So you wish young man to be a reformer of men's morals. Look then (pointing to a picture of the Crucifixion) and see there the end of such reformers !'

Any pretence at a sketch of Wilberforce's life, without some notice of his labours for abolishing the Slave Trade, would be like that famous annunciation of 'the Play of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet omitted by particular desire.' In the book before us, this is the reigning topic, and we feel no disposition from bias of opinion to suppress any portion of the facts which it contains. But the unvarnished truth is, that to do the subject justice, that is not merely to rehearse events but to guard against misapprehensions, would take a volume, rather than the quarterly number of a Review.

The character and the work of this great man must be rescued from the clutches of officious friends : or we may yet see the bust of Wilberforce in the twin niche with that of Garrison, or Leavitt. It may be observed, that this biography has not been snatched by the Anti-slavery Society with all that avidity which might have been expected. Both in New-York, and in Philadelphia, the work has been announced, but at the time of this writing it has not, so far as we are in-

* Journal.

formed, gone to press. In truth, there is on almost every page (we may notice an exception or two) the greatest possible contrast between the hearts and lives of Wilberforce and the earlier abolitionists and the hearts and lives of those who have since usurped their names; the difference is that which exists between the refinement of the scholar and Christian gentleman, and the gross unmannered insolence of the upstart agitator of *canaille*. The one was warm and productive, but gentle and benevolent, ready to admit facts, weigh defence, and retract errors: the other is hot, heady, meddlesome, too often careless of truth, and seldom anxious to repair the injuries inflicted by a calumny set on fire of hell. The one abolished to a certain extent a nefarious trade, by most legitimate proceedings; the other threatens to carry fire and sword through half a nation, or if this be averted, to rend, without the least prospect of aught to indemnify for the loss, those bonds on which depend the triumphs of religion, truth and peace throughout our hemisphere. The early friends of the black man strenuously and even violently strove to remove a dreadful disease; the abolitionists, knife in hand, are ready to extirpate a cancer, though the patient die upon the table.

We do not forget that the very impulse of a great enterprise tends to evolve some extraordinary glow, and that even in a generous but fallen nature this heat may at times verge towards the malignant: so that even a Wilberforce may write 'One is strongly tempted to wish not merely that the sufferings of the Africans may cease, but that some signal mark of the Divine displeasure may desolate those abhorred islands.'* We do not forget this, but with the exception of this one ebullition, we find no such exacerbation of this gentle mind occurs: and the book has various avowals of the very distinction we are pressing. The early British abolitionists were different men from the terrorists of France, the Amis des Noirs, the Jagots, Simons and Heraults, and the colder, but not less pertinacious fanatics of New England and her colonies. They distinguished between destroying the slave trade, and extirpating slavery. 'I am instigating Fox,' these are the words of Wilberforce in 1802, 'to urge Buonaparte on the abolition, of which probably he knows nothing, *and confounds it with emancipation*.'† In a letter of 1816, quoted by the biographers, he relates that his enemies charged

* Vol. II. p. 228. Letter to Archdeacon Corbett, 1797. † Vol. III. p. 70.

them with the intention of freeing the slaves, and that he and his friends were 'all the time denying it.'* In 1818 he writes; 'Our grand object and our universal language was and is, to produce by abolition a disposition *to breed instead of buying*.'†

Yet obvious as all this is, and exalted as is the character of Wilberforce above the pragmatical malice of his pretended worshippers, his mantle is probably claimed by every man and every woman, black, white and mulatto, of the anti-slavery societies; as well by ex-ministers and ex-quakeresses, pleading for absolute freedom of agitation, as by those who abjure conjugal obedience, and feminine modesty, and deny all coercion of law. The class of irresponsible persons who, in regions north and west of us, are promoting the disunion of these states, may find it good to nestle under the noble shadow of a Wilberforce, but they are with a few great exceptions irresponsible men, of small stake in society. Even their Halls, after provoking the mob, are said to be held by bankrupt associations, and their refugee slaves, after having dictated their autobiography and emigrated to England, are found to have duped their patrons into the stereotyping of unexampled fabrications. The lady-guardians of James Williams will not revere Wilberforce the more for writing thus about Female Anti-Slavery Associations: 'All private exertions for such an object become their character, but for ladies to meet, to publish, to go from house to house stirring up petitions—these appear to me proceedings unsuited to the female character as delineated in Scripture.'‡

We shall not enter into the controversy which has recently engaged the friends of abolition, as to the comparative merits of Wilberforce and Clarkson, in originating and carrying forward this great enterprise: but it is hoped that the fraternity at New York will settle the question, as soon as they have got their hands clear of the interesting matters touching the legend of James Williams, and the slave of Mr. Darg. As early as 1772 Granville Sharp made his philanthropic beginnings. In 1781 Mr. Wilberforce had begun to seek information from the West Indies. In 1783, Bishop Porteus had preached against the trade before the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. In 1784 the Rev. J. Ramsay, who had lived in St. Kitt's, and who was patronised by Sir Charles Middleton, wrote a work on the 'Treatment of and

* Vol. IV. p. 287. † Vol. IV. p. 365. ‡ Vol. V. p. 264.

Traffic in Slaves,' and in 1786, Mr. Wilberforce, at the instance of Sir Charles, took the matter into serious consideration as a parliamentary affair; for which, in1787, Thomas Clarkson was employed to collect evidence. 'God Almighty has set before me,' said Mr. W. 'two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade, and the reformation of manners.'* Let those who charge Wilberforce, as some posthumous opponents have done, of softness and flexibility, remember, that these two objects were selected by him when there was no popular breath in their favour, and were pursued by him with untiring, unabated zeal for the whole remnant of his long life. By the few friends of Abolition his accession to the ranks was considered of good augury: his respectability as member for the largest county, his acknowledged talent and integrity, and the unparalleled fascinations of his private hours, pointed him out as the leader. Mr. Pitt was friendly and even zealous, but the 'white negroes,' as the witty premier dubbed them, viz: Ramsay, Clarkson, Latrobe and Granville Sharpe were the real co-workers. The labours incident to the gigantic investigations were too great, and in his 29th year Mr. Wilberforce was so shaken in constitution, that the vital functions seemed for some weeks to be in decay. A consultation of the chief physicians of England ended in the declaration 'that he had not stamina to last a fortnight.' Yet he not only lasted, but flourished, not indeed in health but in mighty influence, for nearly half a century beyond this. The parliamentary contest, in his absence, was conducted by Mr. Pitt, but in the summer of 1788 Mr. W. was so far restored, by the judicious exhibition of opium, the use of which he continued daily through life, that he prepared to resume his labours. In preparation for the debate on the slave trade, in 1789, his labours were incessant, and he not merely set scores of other men to work, but toiled himself by day and night. But the labours of forty years were only beginning, and of these the portion was inconsiderable which appeared to the public. It was in the closet, the forced journey, and the committee room that the Herculean effort was made. The breaking out of the French Revolution impeded the work, precisely as the disorganizing jacobinism of certain abolitionists among ourselves has hindered the evangelizing of our own negroes. It is no more to be questioned that the suspicion cast on the sacred labours of Wilberforce by the French excesses of the

* Journal, Oct. 28, 1787.

'Amis des Noirs,' retarded the great event, than that the odious misrepresentation and violence of northern abolitionists have rivetted the yoke on thousands of southern slaves.

The year 1789 drew more closely the ties between Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Henry Thornton and Mrs. Hannah More. Of the latter he recorded the excellent remark, that no class of persons has been more improved in condition during the last century than that of unmarried women. 'Formerly there seemed to be nothing useful in which they could be naturally busy, but now they may always find an object in attending to the poor.' In this work Mrs. More and her sisters were, as is well known, largely sustained by Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Thornton. 'Every one (so the former writes to Mrs. More, in 1789) should contribute out of his own proper fund. I have more money than time, and if you, or rather your sister, on whom I foresee must be devolved the superintendence of our infant establishment, will condescend to be my almoner, you will enable me to employ some of the superfluity it has pleased God to give me to good purpose. Sure I am, that they who subscribe attention and industry, &c. furnish articles of more sterling and intrinsic value. Besides, I have a rich banker in London, Mr. H. Thornton, whom I cannot oblige so much as by drawing on him for purposes like these. I shall take the liberty of enclosing a draft for £40; but this is only meant for beginning with.'

Mrs. More heartily sympathized with him in his great work; indeed such was his absorption in this, that none could long have enjoyed his company without some zeal in the same cause. The history of efforts to abolish the trade is henceforth the history of the life of Wilberforce. With the former our readers must be somewhat acquainted. While parliament merely gave a doubtful audience to the eloquent appeals, the work of collecting evidence and throwing open the whole mystery to public view was advancing. The Guinea merchants and others interested in the maintenance of the slave trade, were first supine, as ignorant of the greatness of the coming assault. Aroused by the storm of testimony and eloquence, they sought a suspension not merely of an issue, but of trial, and year after year succeeded in suppressing the evidence. In 1791, however, the question came to a decision; but partly from the decay of fruitless excitement, partly from the odium reflected from France, and chiefly from the increased energy of desperate avarice, the bill was

lost by a great majority. The tragedy of St. Domingo justly alarmed even Mr. Pitt. In 1792 Mr. Dundas's Resolutions for a gradual abolition for Jan. 1, 1796 were carried, the vote standing 151 to 132; but even this was postponed by the Lords.

The aspect of the times was alarming, the prevalence of revolutionary principles in Great Britain caused a temporary revulsion even among the fast friends of liberty. It is not wonderful that in 1793, the motion for abolition was lost in the House of Commons. Other and more imminent evils than that of the slave trade employed every mind. It was a time of change in events and opinions. Abolition became unpopular; its adherents were diverted or discouraged, but Wilberforce, as if to show that the grace of God is the true principle of magnanimity, intrepidity, patience and firmness, bated not one jot. He relaxed in effort, indeed, but did not faint in mind. The germ of his chief publication, the Practical View, was produced amidst this lulling of the tempest. In 1794 the Foreign Slave Trade Bill passed the Commons but was lost in the Lords. The succeeding years were years of successive repulses or defeats. By delay, by chicane, by pretended compromise, by intimidation, the question was kept off till the twenty-third year. For in 1795 the annual motion was rejected in the Commons. In 1796 the motion was introduced, but lost on a third reading. In 1797 the new parliament adopted the plan proposed by Mr. Ellis, of leaving the question to the colonists; and the motion for abolition was lost. In 1798, it was lost. In 1799 the slave limitation bill was carried in the Commons, and the abolition bill lost. In 1800-1 the hope of a national compact for the abolition, and perhaps other reasons caused the motion to be deferred. In 1802 it was renewed. In 1803 the dread of invasion kept it out, and in 1804 it was carried in the House of Commons; the vote being 95 to 83. In the House of Lords a delay took place. In 1805 the trade was abolished with reference to the new colonies. In 1806 the Commons again sanctioned abolition, and the foreign slave trade was abolished, and at length on the 23d of March, 1807, the third reading in the Lords came on, and the bill was passed!

'To speak' (wrote Sir James Mackintosh, from India, and we commend his words to those few hardy minds who have stigmatized the subject of this memoir as almost an imbecile) —'to speak of fame and glory to Mr. Wilberforce, would be to use a language far beneath him; but he will surely consi-

der the effect of his triumph on the fruitfulness of his example. Who knows whether the greater part of the benefit that he has conferred on the world, (the greatest that any individual has had the means of conferring,) may not be the encouraging example that the exertions of virtue may be crowned by such splendid success? We are apt petulantly to express our wonder that so much exertion should be necessary to suppress such flagrant injustice. The more just reflection will be, that a short period of the short life of one man is, well and wisely directed, sufficient to remedy the miseries of millions for ages. Benevolence has hitherto been too often disheartened by frequent failures; hundreds and thousands will be animated by Mr. Wilberforce's example, by his success, and (let me use the word only in the moral sense of preserving his example) by a renown that can only perish with the world, to attack all the forms of corruption and cruelty that scourge mankind. Oh what twenty years in the life of one man those were, which abolished the slave trade! How precious is time! How valuable and dignified is human life, which in general appears so base and miserable! How noble and sacred is human nature, made capable of achieving such truly great exploits!' We add his own private record: it needs no comment. 'Oh what thanks do I owe the Giver of all good, for bringing me in His gracious providence to this great cause, which at length, after almost nineteen years' labour, is successful!'

It may not be out of place, even here, to recur to the debate of February 23d in the House of Commons, and to the speech of Sir Samuel Romilly. When the learned member alluded to the vote just given, he entreated the young members of parliament to let this day's event be a lesson to them, how much the rewards of virtue exceed those of ambition. He then contrasted the feelings of the Emperor of the French in all his greatness with those of that honoured man who would this day lay his head upon his pillow and remember that the slave trade was no more; and the whole house, burst into acclamations of applause. It was such a plaudit, says Bishop Porteus, 'as was scarcely ever before given to any man sitting in his place in either House of parliament.' And not less interesting is the reply of Wilberforce himself to a friend's inquiry as to this occurrence. 'I can only say that I was myself so completely overpowered by my feelings, ... that I was insensible to all that was passing around me.'

We might now go back, and run through the same course

of years, so as to show that in the whole of this perplexing, exciting, and ungracious employment, Mr. Wilberforce was not merely acting under a good motive, but living in the exercise of the warmest piety. Not only his general course, but every step of it, may be said to have been under the light of another world. The records of this have not escaped the peevish acumen of the London Reviewer, who, 'difficilis, querulus,' and in every trait realizing the senile picture given by Horace, is pleased to be severely witty on such entries as the following: 'I thank God I am arrived at this place in safety, making up near 350 miles which I have travelled, full 100 of them at night, without a single accident. How grateful ought I to be for this protecting providence of a gracious God.' No wonder therefore that he is disgusted at the way in which Wilberforce introduces the thought and mention of God, amidst the bustle of parliament. 'We think,' says he, 'that the mixing in alternate *layers*, as it were ascetic meditations and worldly business, is, to say the least of it, very awkward.' For our part we have, ever and anon, in reading these pages, been ready to lift our hands in thanks for the gift of such an example to legislators of the age. The sight is so rare in the memoranda of statesmen of such records, that even the fastidiousness of the atrabilious reviewer might have allowed what follows: 'Alas, how sadly do I still find myself beset by my constitutional corruptions! I trust the grief I felt on the defeat of my Bill [1805] proceeded from sympathy for the wretched victims, whose sufferings are before my mind's eye, yet I fear in part also less pure affections mixed and heightened the smart—regret that I had not made a greater and better fight in the way of speaking; vexation at the shame of defeat. O Lord purify me. I do not, God be merciful to me, deserve the signal honour of being the instrument of putting an end to this atrocious and unparalleled wickedness. But O Lord, let me earnestly pray Thee to pity these children of affliction, and to terminate their unequalled wrongs; and O direct and guide me in this important conjuncture, that I may act so as may be most agreeable to Thy will. Amen.' On another occasion, when he had administered a richly merited reprimand, keen with wit, yet courtly and Christian, to Mr. Courtenay, he thus records his private reflections: 'I hope I feel no ill will to any, and I pray and strive against it. O what are the little reproaches and assaults I encounter, compared with those

under which Stephen could say, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!'

This mingling of heavenly with earthly things is to our reviewer, a 'see-saw' which 'confuses history and disturbs devotion.' He would therefore, in his dislike of the mixture, prefer the omission of one ingredient, and which of the two, we need not long inquire. To such critics, passages like the following must be ridiculous in an extreme: 'Dec. 10, 1797, I sparred with Pitt, and he negatived several exempting clauses. I much cut and angry.—Alas! Alas! with what shame ought I to look to myself! What conflicting passions yesterday in the House of Commons—mortification—anger—resentment, from such conduct in Pitt; though I ought to expect it from him . . . . . When I got home I prayed to God, and looked to him for help through Christ, and have in some measure found my heart restored to peace and love, &c.'*

Such secret exercises as these are not rare in his history. Through all his political career—and there was scarcely any great measure agitated for forty years, in which he took not some part—he acted as the steward of Christ. He did so with an increasing devotion. He seemed jealous of aught which resembled self-seeking. Upon the suggestion that he

* The disgust of the Quarterly towards cant and asceticism is avowed and notorious; so is its favour for Oxford religion. What models of chaste and Laudian journalizing may we not expect from the classic pupils of Pusey and Newman! But, hold—we have the ipsissima verba of one of themselves, published under their own auspices, in the 'Remains of the Rev. Richard Hurrell Froude, M. A., Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford;' being the first specimen of a truly Oxonian, Puseyan, anti-evangelical diary. Compare Wilberforce's *see saw* with that of the almost canonized Froude:

'Sept. 20. To day, says Froude, I had determined to fast strictly, and went out in the morning with the resolution of passing away my time in drawing and religion; but was staggered in my intention by the appearance of ———, who very kindly asked us to dinner. The invitation seemed put in my way by fate; so I accepted it.' p. 10, ff.

'Nov. 12. Felt great reluctance to sleep on the floor last night, and was nearly arguing myself out of it.'— '——— was sitting under me in chapel, and I was actually prevented from giving my mind to a great deal of the early part of the service, by the thought crossing me at response, that he must be thinking I was become a Don, and was affecting religious out of compliance.' p. 44.

'Felt ashamed that my trowsers were dirty whilst I was sitting next ———, but resolved not to hide them.' ib.

'Yesterday I was much put out by an old fellow chewing tobacco and spitting across me; also bad thoughts of various kinds, &c.'

'Looked with greediness to see if there was a goose on the table for dinner'— 'Meant to have kept a fast, and did abstain from dinner, but at tea eat buttered toast.' This is not asceticism or cant, or evangelical scruple, but Oxford Catholic piety. Mr. Southey will doubtless explain all.

might be more useful as a private man and an author, he uses an expression which was very often on his lips, 'I am deterred from yielding to the impulse I feel thus to secede, by the fear of carving for myself.' But we shall recur to this pleasing topic.

Next in importance to the labours last mentioned was Mr. Wilberforce's activity in favour of the evangelization of India. There are few readers of our pages who may not be presumed to bear in mind the struggle which was occasioned by the renewal of the Company's charter in 1797, and the resolutions for the moral improvement of the native Indians. The Apology of Dr. Buchanan may be referred to, by such as need farther information. He lost all the effective part of his resolutions; and this, as he thought, through the duplicity of Dundas. 'Oh may not this have been,' he writes, 'because one so unworthy as I undertook this hallowed cause, (Uzzah and the ark,) and carried it on with so little true humility, faith, self-abasement and confidence in God through Christ? Yet where can I go but to the blessed Jesus. Thou hast the words of eternal life—I am no more worthy to be called Thy son; yet receive me, and deliver me from all my hinderances, and by the power of Thy renewing grace, render me meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.'

It was during the rare pauses in his whirl of business, that Mr. Wilberforce found time to write his celebrated work on 'Practical Christianity,' which was issued April 12th, 1797. Within six months five editions (75,000 copies) had been called for. I am truly thankful to Providence, wrote Bishop Porteus, 'that a work of this nature has made its appearance at this tremendous moment.' 'I deem it,' wrote Mr. Newton, 'the most valuable and important publication of the present age, especially as it is yours;' and again: 'Such a book, by such a man, and at such a time!' Perhaps a greater commendation, either of book or author, could not have been given, than that of J. B. S. Morritt, Esq. as entered in a blank page of the work; 'That he (Mr. Wilberforce) acted up to his opinions as nearly as is consistent with the inevitable weakness of our nature, is a praise so high that it seems like exaggeration; yet in my conscience I believe it, and I knew him for at least forty years.' The book received unexpected favour, not only from Methodists, but from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishops of London, Durham, Rochester, and Llandaff. Men of the first rank and

highest intellect, clergy and laity, traced to it their serious impressions of religion. 'Have you been told,' Mr. Henry Thornton asks Mrs. Hannah More, 'that Burke spent the two last days of his life in reading Wilberforce's book, and said that he derived much comfort from it, and that if he lived he should thank Wilberforce for having sent such a book into the world?' Before his death Mr. Burke summoned Dr. Laurence to his side, and specially charged him to express these thanks. Towards the very close of Mr. W's. life Dr. Chalmers thus addressed him, 'May that book which spoke powerfully to myself, and has spoken powerfully to thousands, represent you to future generations, and be the instrument of converting many who are yet unborn.'

In this connexion may be mentioned the part he took in 1799 in establishing that great source of Christian light to many nations, for which we shall never cease to bless God, the Christian Observer. It appears that he contributed largely to its pages, especially in the earlier volumes. Indeed there was no good word or work for which his benevolent soul was not ready. In 1802 we find him concerning himself in behalf of factory children. In 1803, he appears among the founders of the Bible Society. In 1806 he laboured for the suppression of Sunday Drilling.

In 1807, the change of ministers, and dissolution of parliament, brought on a great contest for Yorkshire. As in other instances he presented himself at various leading points to the electors; it was in this instance, almost a triumphant progress. An American who has not witnessed the crowd, turmoil and phrensy of an English hustings scene can scarcely imagine the sea of distractions into which a candidate is plunged.* We make this remark for the purpose of introducing, with-

* Take such entries as these: "Then the mob-directing system—twenty bruisers sent for, Firby the young ruffian, Cully, and others."—The *expenses* of his two opponents, Lord Milton and Mr. Lascelles were £200,000: the sum paid by the friends of Mr. Wilberforce, £28,600. After the first few days it was only by great skill in managing a most unruly audience, that he could ever gain a hearing. "While Wilberforce was speaking the other day," writes Mr. Thornton, "the mob of Milton interrupted him: he was attempting to explain a point which had been misrepresented; he endeavoured to be heard again and again, but the cry against him always revived. 'Print, print,' cried a friend of Wilberforce in the crowd, 'print what you have to say in a hand-bill, and let them read it, since they will not hear you.' 'They read indeed,' cried Wilberforce; 'what, do you suppose that men who make such a noise as those fellows can read?' holding up both his hands; 'no men that make such noises as those can read, I'll promise you. They must hear me now, or they'll know nothing about the matter.' Immediately there was a fine Yorkshire grin over some thousand friendly faces."

out curtailment, the following letter to Mrs. Wilberforce, penned during election week. It will better paint the man, than could a volume of comment:

"I am robbed of the time I meant to spend in writing to you, at least of a great part of it; but you will be glad to hear that I have spent on the whole a very pleasant Sunday, though this evening is of necessity passed in my committee room. I have been twice at the Minster, where the sublimity of the whole scene once nearly overcame me. It is the largest and finest Gothic building probably in the world. The city is full of freeholders, who came in such numbers as to cover the whole area of the place (a very large one) where the service is performed, and every seat and pew were filled. I was exactly reminded of the great Jewish Passover in the Temple, in the reign of Josiah. It is gratifying to say that there was the utmost decency, and not the smallest noise or indecorum; no cockades or distinctive marks. Indeed, I must say, the town is wonderfully quiet, considering it is an election time. I am now writing in a front room, and I sat in one for two hours last night, and there was not the smallest noise or disturbance; no more I declare than in any common town at ordinary times.

"How beautiful Broomfield must be at this moment! Even here the lilacs and hawthorn are in bloom in warm situations. I imagine myself roaming through the shrubbery with you and the little ones; and indeed I have joined you in spirit several times to-day, and have hoped we were applying together at the throne of grace. How merciful and gracious God is to me! Surely the universal kindness which I experience, is to be regarded as a singular instance of the goodness of the Almighty. Indeed no one has so much cause to adopt the declaration, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days. I bless God my mind is calm and serene, and I can leave the event to Him without anxiety, desiring that in whatever state I may be placed, I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour, and do honour to my Christian profession. But all is uncertain, at least to any human eye. I must say good night. May God bless you. Kiss the babes, and give friendly remembrances to all family and other friends. If it has been as hot to-day with you as with us, (the wind east, thermometer 77, in the shade, about twelve) you must have suffered greatly. Every blessing attend you and ours in time and eternity.

Yours ever most affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

All this time he was going on with slave-trade studies, and preparing himself to espouse the Christian enterprise in India: he was retarded by a violent inflammation on the lungs in 1808; but on recovery returned with vigour to the defence of the East India Missions. The War with America seems to have given Mr. Wilberforce the sincerest sorrow. Failing of all attempts at reconciliation, he reverted to the East India subject, and made strenuous exertions to interest all classes of religionists in the Christian education of the Hindoos. The murder of Mr. Perceval gave occasion to a display of grace such as our readers will pardon us for introducing, even at the risk of breaking the continuity of the article. 'O wonderful power of Christianity,' Mr. Wilberforce adds upon the following Sunday! 'Never can it have been seen, since our Saviour prayed for His murderers, in a more lovely form than in the conduct and emotions it has produced in several on the occasion of poor dear Perceval's death. Stephen, who had at first been so much overcome by the stroke, had been this morning, I found, praying for the wretched murderer, and thinking that his being known to be a friend of Perceval's might affect him, he went and devoted himself to trying to bring him to repentance. He found honest Butterworth trying to get admittance, and obtained it for him and Mr. Daniel Wilson, whom at my recommendation he had brought with him. The poor creature was much affected, and very humble and thankful, but spoke of himself as unfortunate rather than guilty, and said it was a necessary thing—strange perversion—no malice against Perceval. Poor Mrs. Perceval after the first grew very moderate and resigned, and with all her children knelt down by the body, and prayed for them and for the murderer's forgiveness.'

After the age of fifty Mr. Wilberforce assumed many of the appearances of age, and though he was destined to live more than a score of years, we find him complaining from year to year of defect of hearing and of memory, added to his long standing infirmity of sight, and an increasing unfitness for walking or riding. His family was arriving at an age which required parental attention. He determined therefore to resign his seat for Yorkshire. This he proceeded to accomplish to the great regret of his constituents and of many friends. He however continued in the House of Commons as member for Bramber. The state of India now had his warmest efforts, and if he strove with less concentration of energy for this than for his earlier enterprise, the wisdom

of mature age made up for the loss of fire. Here the opposition was even more formidable than in the case of the slave trade. The evils were less obvious, and the defence of them less odious, and the enemies of evangelical religion were rallied under some of the first men in the House. But when it came to the decisive moment, and Mr. Wilberforce got 'into his old vein' for some two hours, the house was carried away and the result was most successful. In 1813 we find him, with generous zeal, vindicating the missionary Dr. Carey, whose character had been aspersed. 'Dr. Carey,' says Mr. Wilberforce, 'had been especially attacked, and a few days afterwards the member who made this charge came to me, and asked me in a manner which in a noted duellist could not be mistaken, 'Pray, Mr. Wilberforce, do you know a Mr. Andrew Fuller, who has written to desire me to retract the statement which I made with reference to Dr. Carey?' 'Yes,' I answered with a smile, 'I know him perfectly, but depend upon it you will make nothing of him in your way; he is a respectable Baptist minister at Kettering.' In due time there came from India an authoritative contradiction of the slander. It was sent to me, and for two whole years did I take it in my pocket to the House of Commons to read it to the House whenever the author of the accusation should be present; but during that whole time he never once dared show himself in the House.'

In Barnes's Political Portraits, there is a high tribute to Mr. Wilberforce's eloquence; all, it is there said, were pleased; some with the ingenious artifices of his manner, but most with the glowing language of his heart. The same shrewd and caustic writer may be supposed to represent the common sentiment of too many in his party, when he says, 'I wish most heartily that the Hindoos might be left *to their own Trinity.*'

As we pass gently on through these volumes from year to year, we observe the wise and lovely subject of them advancing in piety and abiding in strength. What remained to be done for the slave, he was still zealous to do, especially in reference to foreign abolition. With Mrs. More, and Venn, Macauley and Stephens, Babington, and a host of less familiar friends, he was perpetually devising liberal things. Some more splendid personages diversified the scene. In 1814 Madame de Stael was in England, and sought out Mr. Wilberforce with a species of pertinacity. For the sake of her conversation he saw more mixed companies than it was

his custom to enter. His estimate of these should not be omitted. After an assembly he writes: 'The whole scene was intoxicating even to me.—Something in my own case may be fairly ascribed to natural high spirits, and I fear, alas! much to vanity, and a good deal to my being unaccustomed to such scenes: yet after allowing for these weaknesses and peculiarities, must not the sobriety of my age, my principles, my guard, (prayer preceding my entering into the enchanted ground) be fairly considered as abating the effect, so much as that I may be a fair average sample of the effect of such scenes on young people in general of agreeable manners, and at all popular ways and characters? I am sure I durst not often venture into these scenes.'

Soon after this he employed himself upon letters to the emperor Alexander, to Talleyrand, and to Sismondi. He had arrived at the age when the loss of friends betokens the wane of earthly comforts: first John Bowdler, then Henry Thornton and his wife, and then his only sister Mrs. Stephens left him a mourner. By such dispensations of providence his thoughts were carried forward into eternity. 'I have often heard,' wrote he to his brother-in-law, 'that sailors on a voyage will drink *friends astern* till they are half way over, then *friends ahead*. With me it has been *friends ahead* this long time.'

The years which followed were quiet though not inactive. The great victories which Mr. Wilberforce had sought were gained, and succeeding events have less power to interest us; yet the steady light of his postmeridian sun was no less delightful and beneficent than its morning ray. In some respects he was even more busy than ever. From year to year he continued to lead the assault whenever vice was to be conquered, and the defence when infidelity was to be repelled. A great increase in the number and importance of benevolent societies, and the novel mode of awakening interest by their meetings, naturally opened a new field for the most persuasive religious orator of Britain: and his ready acquiescence gave double grace to his favours on such occasions. 'I really know no way,' said he, 'in which you do so much good in a little time, as when by a few words of congratulation on an anniversary, you give action and efficiency to those who bear the labour and heat of the year.' The anniversary week of 1819, though far inferior for condensation of effort to the corresponding period in later times, may be taken as a specimen of Mr. Wilberforce's labours, at sixty years of age. On the third of May, the bustling season began, and breakfasts,

dinners, visits, sermons, and anniversaries succeeded one another with a rapidity scarcely to be imitated; while every evening he was engaged in the active business of the house. In the morning his diaries are full of Owen, Kieffer, and Chalmers, in the evening of Tierney, Huskisson, and Canning. 'O how glad I am,' he writes on the 15th, 'that the tenth meeting is this day over.' Yet he was then as always, in very feeble health, and open to extraordinary interruptions. A man more accessible probably never lived in any public station, and his time was consequently the prey of every invader. He speaks of a house crouded with 'inmates,' whose number was every morning swelled by a tide of 'breakfasters,' and 'callers;' then of thronged anniversary meetings, at each of which he made long and sometimes an animated speech; then of a budget of letters to be read and answered; then of a hasty cold dinner from a 'canister;' then of the House, where he sat long, and sometimes spoke again, not getting home till all were gone to rest. 'Would it had been my favoured lot,' writes Hannah More, 'to hear one of twelve speeches in ten days!'

After these labours he was accustomed to fly to the country, in token of his love for which, he was often quoting Cowper's line, 'God made the country, but man made the town.' Yet as he did not escape interruptions by going out of the metropolis, so he did not allow himself to forego all his sacred pleasures while in it. We find him learning the whole of the 119th Psalm, in all his London bustle, and repeating it, 'in great comfort, as he walked from Hyde Park corner:' and this amidst great complaints of decaying memory. In comparing himself with a friend, perhaps Milner, he writes thus, 'How unspeakably am I humbled! In every particular he excels; in every one I fall short: natural powers make some difference, but the want of Christian exertion makes ten times more. O God, forgive me! I find my body, as well as mind indicating weakness; soon tired, and requiring rest. I should despair, but for the precious promises of Holy Scripture.'

A long and useful article might be written upon no other subject than Mr. Wilberforce's domestic relations. His great anxiety for his sons was that they might become useful clergymen; and three of them are now in orders. Nothing in relation to his family strikes us with more surprise or admiration than the wisdom with which he sought to guard his children against the evils incident to high life. The sons of

a man to whose access no door, not even the most lofty, was closed, could not but be in danger from the seductions of wealth, rank and fashion. In consideration of this Mr. Wilberforce wrote thus: 'No one who forms his opinions from the word of God can doubt that in proportion to a man's rank and fortune the difficulty of his progress in the narrow road and his ultimate admission into heaven is augmented; and no Christian can possibly doubt its being a parent's first duty to promote his children's spiritual advancement and everlasting happiness, but were their comfort in this life only the object in view, no one at my time of life who has contemplated life with an observant eye, and has looked into the interior of family life, can entertain a doubt that the probability of passing through the world with comfort, and of forming such connexions as may be most likely to ensure the enjoyment of domestic and social happiness, is far greater in the instance of persons of the rank of private gentlemen, than of that of noblemen who are naturally led to associate with people of their own rank—the sons being led to make fortune the primary object in the forming of matrimonial connexions, that they may be able to maintain their stations in society.' And he says to one of his sons at Oriel College, Oxford, 'Believe me on the credit of my long experience, that though Christians who wish to maintain the spiritual life in vigour and efficiency, (fervent, ζέοντες, in spirit in serving the Lord) may without injury mix and associate with worldly people for the transaction of business; yet they cannot for recreation, still less for intimate friendship and society.' The death of a beloved daughter, his eldest, in 1821, inflicted a deep wound; but neither now nor under any similar infliction do we find him evincing a single emotion which can be considered morbid. With a truly tender heart, he united such a view of the invisible world, as effectually guarded him against the unchristian transports of grief, into which even good people sometimes think it a sort of virtue to fall.

In 1822, the melancholy close of Lord Londonderry's worldly course, led Mr. Wilberforce to make a memorable observation. 'I must say that the occurrence of the same catastrophe, to Whitbread, Romilly, and Londonderry, has strongly forced on my mind the unspeakable benefit of the institution of the Lord's day.' 'It gives us back on the Monday to the contemplation of our week-day business cooled and quieted, and it is to be hoped with resentments abated, and prejudices softened.' His love and reverence forthe Lord's

day was however by no means a new state of his mind. Frequent were the endeavours which he made to prevent the profanation of the sacred day by Sunday drilling, by court-dinners, and by travelling to or from parliament: and at intervals, at every proper time for thirty years, he was promoting endeavours to obtain some additional legislative protection for the Lord's day. As it regards his own private exercises, from his earliest religious life, he called the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable. Thus, on an April day in the year 1786, 'I have been all day basking in the sun: on any other day I should not have been so happy. But the Sabbath is a season of rest, in which we may be allowed to unbend the mind and give a complete loose to those emotions of gratitude and admiration, which a contemplation of the works, and a consideration of the goodness of God cannot fail to excite in a mind of the smallest sensibility.' Again, two years later, 'A Sunday spent in solitude spreads and extends its fragrance.' Again, in 1792, 'How infinitely grateful I ought to feel for the frequent recurrence of a day of undisturbed quiet, when it becomes a duty to retire, and which leaves me not the embarrassment of having to decide, on each particular occasion, between the comparative advantages of continuing in the busy scene or absconding from it.' In 1798, on successive Lord's days, 'I feel the comfort of Sunday very sensibly to day.' 'O it is a blessed thing to have the Sunday devoted to God.' And ten years afterwards; 'O blessed days these, which call us from the bustle of life, and warrant us in giving up our studies and our business, and cultivating communion with God.' In 1814, he spent some Sabbath hours upon a letter to the Emperor Alexander; but in the next week he says, 'I will not quit the peculiar duties of the day for my abolition labours. Though last Sunday I set about them with a real desire to please God, yet it did not answer.' In 1821, he writes to a son at college, 'Sursum corda is the Christian's Sunday motto. In the higher region to which he on that day endeavours to obtain access, he meets in idea that Saviour who died for him. Before I married, when I used to spend my Sundays alone, I used after dinner to call up in idea around me my absent relatives and friends, and thus hold converse with the objects of my affection.' His last day on earth previous to his entering into rest, was a Sabbath day, and from first to last his records remind us of 'holy Herbert's' quaint but precious verses,

"Thou art a day of mirth:
And, where the week-days trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth.
O let me take thee at the bound,
Leaping with thee from seven to seven;
Till that we both, being tossed from earth,
Fly hand in hand to heaven!"

Mr. Wilberforce's last speech in parliament was made in 1824, nine years before the close of his life. Ten days afterwards he was seized with an attack of illness, on his way to Lord Gambier's seat at Iver. He reached the place, but lay in an alarming state for almost a month. During his partial convalescence he lamented that he had not been able to accomplish his purpose of writing two projected works, one political the other religious. He was however submissively free from impatience. 'There is no particular,' he wrote to Dr. Chalmers, 'in which my estimate of things has been more corrected than in my judgment of the comparative usefulness of different individuals. To express my sentiments briefly, I may say that I more and more enter into the spirit of that beautiful sonnet of Milton's on his blindness, ending,

Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best—
They also serve who only stand and wait.'

In 1825 he finally retired from public affairs, and in the retrospect of life, or rather the prospect of a better life, he thus writes to the excellent Lady Olivia Sparrow. 'We are not told that Moses was to experience after death any thing different from mankind in general; and we know that he took part in the events of this lower world, and on the mount of transfiguration talked with Christ concerning his death which he was to undergo at Jerusalem. And I love, my dear friend, to dwell on this idea, that after our departure from the scene of our earthly pilgrimage, we shall witness the developement of the plans we may have formed for the benefit of our fellow-creatures; the growth and fruitage of the good principles we have implanted and cultivated in our children; and above all, the fulfilment of the prayers we have poured forth for them, in the large effusions on them of that heavenly grace, which above all things we have implored as their portion.'

In following Mr. Wilberforce through his declining progress, it is painful to be under the necessity of recording that almost at the close of life he lost the greater part of his ample fortune. If the Quarterly Reviewer may be credited in a

mere matter of fact admitting of easy contradiction, and we suppose he may be, Mr. Wilberforce had, when he came of age, an income little, if any thing, short of ten thousand pounds sterling a year. With such means, it is obvious, he might have been generous without risk. Yet by great neglect and mismanagement, by lavish expenditure in the way of charity, and by an ill-judged attempt to embark his eldest son in a large farming speculation, he so entirely precluded his children from the object of their natural expectations, that, within a few months, this very son has been obliged to relinquish the representation of his father's native place, for the want of a qualification of £300 a year. This, we readily acknowledge, is of evil example, a serious blemish in a lovely character, and fitted to bring the wisdom of Christian benevolence into question. Yet even in this, we observe the gracious workings of providence, weaning the aged Christian from the world, ensuring long sought seclusion to the evening of his day, and shutting out from his sons a host of temptations which he had devoutly deprecated. Two days after the calamity, the good old man, now three score and ten, records his 'solitary walk with the psalmist.' And it was of this very period, that Sir James Mackintosh has left a remarkable account, which we lay before those who stigmatize evangelical religion in general, and Wilberforce's religion in particular, as lowering and morose: 'Do you remember,' he writes, 'Madame de Maintenon's exclamation, Oh the misery of having to amuse an old King, qui n'est pas amusable! Now if I were called upon to describe Wilberforce in one word, I should say he was the most 'amusable' man I ever met with in my life. Instead of having to think what subjects will interest him, it is perfectly impossible to hit on one that does not. I never saw any one who touched life at so many points; and this is the more remarkable in a man who is supposed to live absorbed in the contemplation of a future state. When he was in the House of Commons, he seemed to have the freshest mind of any man there. There was all the charm of youth about him. And he is quite as remarkable in this bright evening of his days, as when I saw him in his glory many years ago.'

The houses of the two affectionate sons, who have written his life, afforded the refuge for his last days. For one of these livings the incumbent was indebted to the delicate and seasonable favour of Lord Brougham. Though there were numerous tokens of mental as well as bodily decay, Mr.

Wilberforce's thoughts and conversation savoured more and more of the things of heaven. 'It is,' he used to say, 'the peculiarity of the Christian religion, that humility and holiness increase in equal proportions.' His departure was a tranquil sunset, without either the gloom or the gorgeousness of clouds. He died at three o'clock on the morning of Monday, July 29th, aged seventy-three years and eleven months. His remains were interred in Westminster Abbey, in compliance with a request originating with the Lord Chancellor Brougham and signed by thirty six leading peers, as also with a similar request signed by almost one hundred members of all parties in the House of Commons.

Among the ancients a man was praised when he was called happy; this was accordingly the cognomen of many great Romans. Wilberforce was a happy man. Nothing in his long life is more remarkable than its almost uninterrupted sunshine. A few exceptions have been already noticed, but in general he had success in his plans, favour among his coevals, and best of all, the peace of God in his home and heart. It is when we follow him to his retreat, that we behold the man in his true character. Here every trait was attractive. In early life he had the gayety of a bird, which was afterwards chastised into a benignant cheerfulness. To children, friends, and even strangers, his house was a paradise. When he fled from the senate and the court, it was to enjoy the scenes of nature. 'I allow myself,' he writes from Lyme in 1804, 'two or three hours open air daily, and have enjoyed more than one solitary stroll with a Testament, a Cowper, or a Psalter, for my companion. If the presence of some friends would be a most valuable addition, the absence of the multitude of callers is a most valuable loss.' He adds, that he read much out of doors, with pencil in hand, and had many a walk along the hoarse resounding shore, meditating on better things than poor blind Homer knew or sung of.

He sometimes, in his odd way, would characterize a season as a 'Cowperizing summer,' and when he spent some weeks at Newport-Pagnell, Bucks, the chief charm of the neighbourhood was that it offered him the track of his beloved Cowper. The constant mention of out-of-door objects shows his zest for rural life; as thus: 'Went out and sat under walnut-tree, where now writing.' To our countryman John Jay, he writes in 1810, from Kensington Gore. 'We are just one mile from the turnpike-gate at Hyde Park Corner, which I think you will not have forgotton yet, having about

three acres of pleasure-ground around my house, or rather behind it, and several old trees, walnut and mulberry, of thick foliage.'

Such retirement was made necessary by the bustle of his common life. By mere selections we can give no idea of his perpetual hurry. It endured till the close of his public career. 'I cannot invite you here,' he writes in 1790 to a friend, 'for during the sitting of Parliament my house is a mere hotel.' It was no better fifteen years after: 'This living in Palace Yard,' he complains, 'is destructive to my time. In the morning I rise between eight and nine (being useless if I have not had my full *dose* of sleep). I dress, hearing Terry [his reader] from halfpast nine to ten. Prayers and breakfast at a quarter after ten. From thence constant callers, or breakfasters—proper people—and my house not clear commonly, and I able to get out, till near one. Then I have often to call at the public offices, and if a committee morning, I have scarce any writing time before dinner. Then after House, friends—Babington, Grant, Henry Thornton, and others drop in, so that I get scarcely any time for thinking on political topics, or preparing for debates.' Even in his vacations there was what Dr. Johnson used to call a plentiful lack of time. For the sake of his infirm eyes he usually employed a reader and amanuensis, and often despatched scores of letters in single days. Well might he speak of his 'hunted state,' and consider it a 'delightful idea of the future blessedness that it is the rest which remaineth for the people of God.' Who that ever joined him in it, say his sons, cannot see him as he walked round his garden at Highwood? Now in animated and even playful conversation, and then drawing from his copious pockets (to contain Dalrymple's State Papers was their standard measure) some favourite volume or other; a Psalter, a Horace, a Shakespeare, or Cowper, and reading, and reciting, or 'refreshing' passages; and then catching at long-stored flower-leaves as the wind blew them from the pages, or standing before a favourite gum cistus to repair the loss. Then he would point out the harmony of the tints, the beauty of the pencilling, the perfection of the colouring, and run up all into those ascriptions of praise to the Almighty which were ever swelling forth from his grateful heart. He loved flowers with all the simple delight of childhood. He would hover from bed to bed over his favourites; and when he came in,

even from his shortest walk, deposited a few that he had gathered, safely in his room before he joined the breakfast table. Often would he say as he enjoyed their fragrance, 'How good is God to us! What should we think of a friend who had furnished us with a magnificent house and all we needed, and then coming in to see that all had been provided according to his wishes, should be hurt to find that no scents had been placed in the rooms? Yet so has God dealt with us. Surely flowers are the smiles of His goodness.' But we must tear ourselves away from these pictures of domestic peace and Christian old age.

We are not willing to leave the impression that Wilberforce was immaculate. In intellect and in heart he undoubtedly had some defects; he was, it is true, an earthborn creature, but surely never was there one tempered of choicer clay. So gentle, so frank, so pure and transparent, so almost free from malice, envy and every morbid tendency, he was, even before grace received, a lovely being, and when renewed, became illustriously an ornament of Christ's church. We pass lightly over his narrow and exclusive attachment to the externals of the establishment; we never saw High Church prudery so harmlessly displayed. As we can smile at the pious Friend's zeal for the brimmed hat and the 'plain language,' so we can forgive the churchman's complaints about the evils of dissent, and only smile at his scruples about going to hear William Jay, or Robert Hall, and his penitence for once, only once, communicating in a dissenting chapel; especially when we find both the '*Doctor*' and the Quarterly handling him as a Calvinist, and when we read such messages as this addressed to him, 'Some persons call you a Calvinist; and every man a Methodist who says his prayers.' The old Duke of Bridgewater invariably called Bishop Porteus 'that confounded Presbyterian;' about as exact were Mr. Wilberforce's notions of Calvinism. He was much distressed when a preface written by him for another book of Dr. Witherspoon's was prefixed to this divine's essay on Justification;* though he had never read the

* It would be unjust to the memory of a great man, not to notice a misrepresentation which has crept into this work, through the ignorance or the oscitancy of the compilers. It occurs in the Diary for 1796, and relates to Dr. Witherspoon. After relating that Mr. King, the American minister, had dined with him, he records, as on the authority of this gentleman. 'Witherspoon's memory is not held in high respect—thought turbulent, and to have left his proper functions.' Vol. ii. p. 179. It is almost needless for Americans to say that this is wholly unfounded. As a theologian, a scholar, and a patriot, the memory of Witherspoon

latter; and he seems to have taken the semi-antinomian Dr. Hawker as a fair specimen of the old non-conformists. And in the very paragraph in which he declares himself 'no predestinarian,' dear good man! he adds, 'I can only lift up my hands and eyes in silent adoration, and recognise the providence of God, disposing all things according to the counsel of his own will.' The kind providence which brought him acquainted with Venn, Newton, Milner, Cecil, and Fuller, and made him for so many years a hearer of Scott, and an intimate friend of Simeon, was not the less really adored by him, because he did not in every point see how much more intelligently it was descried by them than by himself. Such evangelical clergymen, as the Bishop of Lincoln tried to make Pitt believe were men without even moral goodness, Mr. W. throughout his life preferred to what Mr. Southey humorously denominated in a letter to him 'marrying and christening machines.' But we leave a part of our subject which is the least agreeable, and pursue the better work of vindication and praise.

It may be said without exaggeration that no name of our day will more certainly go down to posterity, than that of Wilberforce. From the perusal of his biography we have risen deeming him a better and a greater man than we had thought. We knew indeed, as all the world knows, that he was eminently a good man, a friend of God, and a benefactor of millions; but we were not prepared for manifestations of a piety so inward, humble, spiritual, and heavenly. We knew that he was a distinguished statesman, but we had not duly appreciated the compass of his endeavours or the power of his eloquence. We utter this strong conviction with the greater heartiness, because other and contrary opinions are beginning to circulate in newspapers, and to be heard in public places, and especially because the enemies of piety and of the man have gained the ear of thousands through the periodical press.

has ever been held 'in high respect.' That he was ever 'thought turbulent,' by any but the enemies of his country, we now learn for the first time. And that he 'left his proper function,' can be charged by no one who knows the facts, and remembers that his political counsels were imperatively demanded, especially in what regarded finance; that he was one of the most grave, wise and assiduous legislators our country ever possessed; and that the season in which he engaged in public affairs was one in which the discharge of his ministry was sometimes precluded by the agitation of war; yet that in fact Dr. Witherspoon never did abandon his clerical offices or his clerical habit, but was eminently useful as a minister of the gospel, among his political associates. This error, having all the ill consequences of calumny, should be corrected.

The two leading critical works of Great Britain differ on this point by the widest distance. The Edinburgh Review presents an able, candid, and most favourable criticism of the book and its subject. The London Quarterly Review, on the other hand, as we have already hinted, contains an article fraught with misrepresentation and malice. If the spiteful suggestions of this detractor may be credited in what he rather hints than asserts, Wilberforce was feeble and undisciplined in understanding, wavering in judgment and action; in politics all but a fool, in religion a Pharisee and a fanatic; ambitious, selfish, and sanctimonious. It will at once appear that envy has here overshot its mark. By no process of garbling can the people of this age be made to believe that such a man could have had such influence, or wrought such results. In our own national legislature an attempt was once made to represent Mr. Wilberforce as a kind but feeble meddler, whose abilities had been far overrated. Now these are paradoxes too violent even for the gallery of the senate, or the court-yards of the counties. And our readers have scarcely yet to learn that such an assertion would be received in England with utter derision.

Let it be explained, if it can be, how a man of no more than ordinary parts, should, in a new and unpopular cause, have gained the marked consideration and applause of such minds as those of Pitt, Burke, Fox, Erskine, Canning, Wellington, De Stael, Sismondi, Southey, and Chalmers; should moreover have succeeded, in an age distracted beyond parallel by other excitements, in carrying on to their accomplishment measures affecting ages and generations; and should finally have acquired a name and renown second to that of no one who ever engaged in the work of philanthropy. Let this, we say, be explained. And when this problem shall have been solved, let those who state as a defect of Wilberforce's mind, 'want of firmness—a wavering, theoretical and visionary temper,' make known to us how, withs uch a trait, he should have been courted by every administration, listened to with rapture by every party, and cheered on to triumph by every electoral assemblage, for forty years; and, still harder task, teach us, how fickleness, sloth, and imbecility of purpose and act should ever have been crowned with such a meed as the abolition of the slave-trade and the reformation of manners. Mark the mingled assurance and cowardice of the following charges and concessions: it is in a sort the obituary no-

tice of Mr. Wilberforce*. He was according to this *judge*, 'one of the most honest and amiable, yet—considering his station and talents—least practically useful, members [of the House] that it ever possessed. In his whole public life there are but two points to which we concede the praise of distinguished practical utility'—let the reader pause, and guess the small exception which the writer allows from the charge of universal uselessness—what are these two points? They are *only* two—' the one the Slave-Trade—the other the Reformation of Manners, and that extension of religious feeling, with which his example and his authority improved his own age, and, we confidently hope, future generations.' Against such censors, and especially against this anonymous, and (though aged) this unwise reviewer, we are able to adduce the judgments of men whose penetration and whose impartiality are alike acknowledged. The life of Wilberforce was not spent in a corner. His early efforts were in the same arena with Lord North, Dunning, Wedderburne, and Barré, and then of Burke, Fox, Pitt, and Windham. It was no equivocal testimony which Erskine gave, when in 1789 he applauded his exertion of 'very great talents in a very great cause.' His celebrated oration in the same year Bishop Porteus characterized as 'one of the ablest and most eloquent speeches that was ever made in this or any other place.' And Mr. Burke went so far as to declare 'that the House, the nation and Europe, were under great and serious obligations to the gentleman, for having brought forward the subject in a manner the most masterly, impressive and eloquent. The principles,' he added, 'were so well laid down, and supported with so much force and order, that it equalled any thing he had heard in modern times, and was not perhaps to be surpassed in the remains of Grecian eloquence.'

Even from the cold and sarcastic Mathias, the heartiest and most enthusiastic praise was extorted, as may be seen in the notes to the Pursuits of Literature. Mr. Wilberforce perhaps carried to an extreme his independence of party, but not to so disastrous an extreme as that, in the language of the Review, he 'seemed in doubtful cases to be decided by a bias *against* those whom he called his political friends.' That the orator of three score years and ten should not be as fresh as the orator of thirty, may be a strong fact for the venerable reviewer, who should however not forget, among his

* Quarterly Review, No. lxvii. p. 154. Lewer's Edition.

reminiscences of the years of Pitt, that this great statesman used to say repeatedly, 'Of all the men I ever knew, Wilberforce has the greatest natural eloquence;' and that Romilly esteemed him, 'the most efficient speaker in the House of Commons.'* We have, in the course of our narrative, quoted many similar testimonies; we shall now cite one of the chief supporters, perhaps the oldest living aid, of this Review, who cannot but feel (one would readily suppose) the most poignant chagrin at seeing its pages made the vehicle of posthumous calumny towards one whom he called his friend: Mr. Southey, on Wilberforce's retirement, addressed him thus, 'I will not say that I am sorry for it, because I hope you have retired in time, and will therefore live the longer as well as more for yourself, but the House will not look upon your like again.'

And here, by a very natural association, we are reminded of 'those clever rhapsodies entitled *the Doctor*,' from which the critic in the Quarterly quotes a paragraph to show that Pitt regarded Mr. Wilberforce as disposed to adapt his speeches, so as 'to *tell* in such and such quarters.' Now we have been long enough advised of the danger of receiving second-hand quotations, to have adopted the method of looking at the original for ourselves; and accordingly we have found, immediately after the paragraph thus given in the Review, the following remarks, which however the critic, for some reason, saw fit to withhold: 'Observe, reader, that I call him simply Wilberforce, because any common prefix would seem to disparage that name, especially if used by one who regarded him with admiration; and with respect, which is better than admiration, because it can be felt for those only whose virtues entitle them to it; and with kindliness, which is better than both, because it is called forth by those kindly qualities that are worth more than any talents, and without which a man, though he may be both great and good, never can be amiable. No one was ever blessed with a larger portion of those gifts and graces which make up the measure of an amiable and happy man. *It will not be thought, then, that I have repeated with any disrespectful intention what was said of Wilberforce by Mr. Pitt.*†'

It was this union of intellectual and moral greatness which gave to Wilberforce a dignity before which even the debauched mind of the Prince Regent could not altogether maintain its wonted haughtiness and effrontery. On a certain occasion,

* Vol. v. p. 241. † The Doctor, Vol. ii. p. 99, ed. New York, 1836.

when asking Mr. Wilberforce to dine with him, he was careful to say that he should hear nothing in the palace to give him pain.* And the following pleasing fact is related, that when after the battle of Waterloo a special messenger was despatched by Blucher to carry the tidings, he was asked by the Prince Regent, 'Did Marshal Blucher give you any other charge?' 'Yes, sir,' replied the aide-de-camp, 'he charged me to acquaint Mr. Wilberforce with all that had passed.' 'Go to him then yourself by all means,' said the Prince, 'you will be delighted with him.' He doubtless was delighted, as every impartial foreigner of distinction seems to have been. 'Mr. Wilberforce,' said Madame de Stael to Sir James Mackintosh, 'is the best converser I have met with in this country. I have always heard that he was the most religious, but I now find that he is the wittiest man in England.' And even in that decline of life which the Quarterly Reviewer represents as almost contemptible, Count Pecchio could say, 'When Mr. Wilberforce passes through the crowd on the day of the opening of Parliament, every one contemplates this little old man, worn with age, and his head sunk on his shoulders, as a sacred relic, as the *Washington of humanity.*'

Thus it was both in private and in public that Wilberforce exerted the persuasive powers which bound together his band of philanthropists. On his retirement from their ranks, Mr. Buxton felicitously applied the inscription on the tomb of Hannibal, 'We vehemently desired him in the day of battle.' Those who are familiar with the life of Sir Walter Scott, know how to value the opinion of Mr. Morritt of Rokeby. 'Wilberforce,' such are Mr. Morritt's expressions as late as 1836, 'held a high and conspicuous place in oratory, even at a time when English oratory rivalled whatever we read of in Athens or in Rome. His voice itself was beautiful; deep, clear, articulate, and flexible.' 'He often rose unprepared in mixed debate, on the impulse of the moment, and seldom sat down without having struck into that higher tone of general reasoning and vivid illustration, which left on his hearers the impression of power beyond what the occasion had called for.' The able author of the article in the Edinburgh Review, after withholding from Mr. Wilberforce the praise of the very highest requisites for parliamentary eloquence, namely, perspicuity of statement, statistical information, and

* Vol. iv. 277.

dialectical acumen, candidly adds, 'With these disadvantages, he was still a great parliamentary speaker, and there were occasions when, borne by some sudden impulse, or carried by diligent preparation over the diffuseness which usually encumbered him, he delighted and subdued his hearers. His reputation in the House of Commons rested, however, chiefly upon other grounds. In that assembly, any one speaks with immense advantage whose character, station, or presumed knowledge is such as to give importance to his opinions. The dogmas of some men are of incomparably more value than the logic of others; and no member except the leaders of the great contending parties, addressed the house with an authority equal to that of Mr. Wilberforce.'

The writer in the Quarterly, apparently eager to tarnish every leaf of Wilberforce's laurel, ventures the assertion, in speaking of the slave-trade abolition, 'that much of the delay and something of the imperfect success which have hung about this great principle, might have been sooner obviated if Mr. Wilberforce to his virtues and his eloquence had added clearer and longer views of the consequences of his measures, with a greater firmness and a more *concentrated* industry in pursuing them.'* Let it here be observed that the writer saves himself from conscience of falsehood only by his italics. Want of firmness and want of industry are the last charges which a prudent foe would bring against William Wilberforce. Even our own meager sketch will, we think, justify this statement. We might place assertion against assertion, the Edinburgh against the Quarterly, and say that 'Providence had gifted Mr. Wilberforce with great nervous energy,' and as compared with Clarkson, that he had 'labours not less severe, and a responsibility incomparably more anxious than that under which the health of his colleague had given way.' We might recount, from these volumes, the instances of his persistency in toil and in bold invective amidst personal dangers. But we choose rather to record a conversation in which he was engaged after his memorable defeat in 1805. Shortly after the division, he was addressed by Mr. Hatsell, the sagacious and experienced clerk of the House of Commons—'Mr. Wilberforce, you ought not to expect to *carry* a measure of this kind. You have a turn for business, and this is a very creditable employment for you; but you and I have seen enough of life to know that people are not induced

* Page 139.

to act upon what affects their interests by any abstract arguments.' 'Mr. Hatsell,' he replied, 'I *do* expect to carry it, and what is more, I feel assured I shall carry it speedily. I have observed the gradual change which has been going on in men's minds for some time past, and though the measure may be delayed for a year or two, yet I am convinced that before long it will be accomplished.' Even the reviewer, an unwilling witness, concedes that his course was always 'clear and consistent when he was forced to decide on fundamental principles.' As to the charge that by vacillation and political eccentricity he had embarrassed Mr. Pitt's measures, we have nothing to say touching the question of state, but would point out the repeated dissent of Wilberforce from the policy of his first friend and the greatest statesman of his age, as any thing but a symptom of effeminate temper.

The inconsistencies of the reviewer are somewhat startling. At one moment he treats as a pecadillo Mr. Wilberforce's 'holding a Faro bank on a Sunday;' this was one of the 'frivolities and errors' of his worldly career: at another, he charges as a crime his puling sanctimony and Pharisaic scruple; this was one of the plague-spots of his Methodism. He gathers from his diary every secret expression which savoured of asceticism or timidity of conscience (for of sourness there are none), but afterwards acknowledges, with regard to his private devotion, that 'his manner and conversation exhibit no ostentatious trace of it to the world;' and elsewhere in anticipating a surmise that his temper was as grave and serious as his doctrine, and that religion wore with him, if not a forbidding, at least a severe aspect, he so far forgets himself as to say, 'Nothing could be more distant from the fact; his Christianity was of the most amiable and attractive character; his temper was cheerful even to playfulness; his pleasantry, though measured, was copious, and his wit, though chastened, ready and enlivening.' Detractors should look to their memories.

The genial hilarity of Wilberforce lay among the deep foundations of his character. It is to be lamented that of his brilliant conversation scarcely any thing has been preserved. It is even provoking, to find one of his family, in the seventy-second year of the patriarch's age, saying for the first time, 'It would be quite worth while, some evening, to put down notes of his conversation.' O for the memory and the pen of an attendant Boswell! might be a natural excla-

mation.* We shall not therefore rehearse these facetiae of his last year: suffice it to say, that if we were not, by concurrent and repeated testimony from every side, informed of Mr. Wilberforce's astonishing power and fascination in private intercourse, we should scarcely have learned it from these volumes; so meager and jejune are the reports they contain. Through all his life he made conscience of avoiding gloom, complaining however that while his judgment prescribed cheerfulness, his temper seduced him into volatility.† For the wit of others Mr. Wilberforce had a strong relish. Especially that of Canning, as exhibited in the House, held him fascinated. In his sixty-fifth year, he used to return home quite full of it; yet he would not allow himself the use of these effective weapons in debate. In 1809 Mr. John Bowdler wrote as follows from Newport-Pagnell; 'I arrived here last Saturday morning at breakfast time, having been kept by Mr. Wilberforce much longer than I intended; but he is like the old man in Sinbad's Voyage—woe be to the traveller that falls into his grasp! It required a considerable effort to disengage myself, and I have promised another short visit on my return, which will be greatly to my inconvenience and delight. Mr. W. I think enjoys his parsonage as much as possible: to say that he is happier than usual is being very bold; but certainly he is as happy as I ever beheld a human being. He carried me one day to Weston, and we wandered over many a spot which Cowper's feet had trod, and gazed on the scenes which his pen has immortalized. On another day we visited Stowe—a work to wonder at, for we were still in the land of poetry, and of music too, for Mr. Wilberforce made the shades resound to his voice, singing like a blackbird wherever he went. He always has the spirits of a boy, but here not little Sam himself can beat him, though he does his best.'‡

This is the more remarkable in a man whose health was

* It is singularly pleasant to have a hint of Mr. Wilberforce's popular eloquence at York in 1784, from that mirror of biography. 'I saw,' said Boswell, describing this meeting to Dundas, 'what seemed a mere shrimp mount upon the table; but as I listened, he grew, and grew, until the shrimp became a whale.'

† If on any occasion these sallies gave offence, it probably arose from neglect of the caution implied in the poet's desipere *in loco*. It is related, says Boswell, of the great Dr. Clarke, that when in one of his leisure hours he was unbending himself with a few friends in the most playful and frolicsome manner, he observed Beau Nash approaching; upon which he suddenly stopped;—'My boys (said he) let us be grave: here comes a fool.'

‡ Bowdler's Remains, i. 106.

always so imperfect that it was only by perpetual changes of air and of abode that he could maintain an ordinary degree of strength. This frequent journeying with its attendant expenses affords occasion to one of the choice passages of the Quarterly Review. 'His life,' says the critic, 'was that of the Arabs, who spend their existence in wandering and squandering, and think they have fulfilled their duties, provided they turn themselves to the east, at the prescribed hours, and say their prayers three times a day.'* This of William Wilberforce; of whom the very same writer says a few pages after, 'The fact is he could not have existed without such diversions.' Quite analogous is the reviewer's notice of a fact concerning his aunt's funeral recorded in the memoranda, in these terms, 'Stayed in the carriage on account of the frost and snow while the service was performed. Dined at Lord Chatham's.' On this is founded a sneering charge of heartless coldness. Can the petty malice of a thwarted opponent be at the bottom of this impotent carping? The philanthropist of the age needs not our feeble vindication; but it may be gratifying to expend a few sentences on the graceful tenderness of his heart and manner. His freedom from every harsh or malign feeling was proverbial. About a year before the death of Lord Melville, whom he had been so active in bringing to a public censure, they met in the stone passage which leads from the Horse Guards to the Treasury. 'We came suddenly upon each other,' says Wilberforce, 'just in the open part, where the light struck upon our faces. We saw one another, and at first I thought he was passing on, but he stopped and called out, Ah Wilberforce, how do you do? and gave me a hearty shake by the hand. *I would have given a thousand pounds for that shake.* I never saw him afterwards.' Such a note as the following speaks volumes, in regard to his private friendships.

"My dear Stephen,

You appeared to me to look unhappy last night, as if something was giving you pain either in body or mind. It will be a pleasure to me to hear that this was not so, or if it was, and I can help to remove it, let me try.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. Wilberforce."

It is affecting to find him noticing in his diary, at intervals during many years, the simple circumstance that his weak

* Page 123.

eyes had suffered increase of pain from the tears shed during mental struggles. His sympathy for the feelings of others often led him to undue labours at public meetings. 'To give pain,' said he, 'to a man who lives quietly, and whose spirits are not naturally high, is a very different thing from inflicting the same stroke on any one circumstanced in all respects as I am, when it is only like a shove received in a crowd: you forget it in a moment as it is succeeded by another.'

We must desist with abruptness from our pleasant work; and we do so with the sincere desire that the excellent and amiable authors of this biography may find encouragement to issue many improved editions. Much of the incoherent and unsatisfactory diaries might be left out; and to render what may remain intelligible, some morsels of contemporary history might be added. A judicious abridgment of the book would promise permanent usefulness in our own country.

ART. V.—1. *An account of the present state of the Island of Puerto Rico.*—By Colonel Flinter, *Knight Commander of the Royal order of Isabel the Catholic*, &c. London. 1834. pp. 392.

2. *Emancipation in the West Indies. A six months tour in Antigua, Barbadoes and Jamaica, in the year* 1837. By Jas. A. Thome, and J. Horace Kimball, New-York. 1838. pp. 489.

3. *Letters from the West Indies relating especially to the Danish Island of St. Croix and to the British Islands Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica.* By Sylvester Hovey, *late Prof. of Mat. and Nat. Phil. Amherst College.* New-York. 1838. pp. 210.

THE great event of the present century is the emancipation of the slaves in the British Colonies. Is is one of those social revolutions which, at distant intervals, form distinct eras in the history of our race. The transition of 800,000 human beings from slavery to freedom must necessarily be attended with consequences so important, that no friend of his species can contemplate it with indifference. In the present case, however, it is not so much the effects of this change on the immediate subjects of it, as its influence on other countries and on the state of the world, which gives it its peculiar