

girls mingled their tears with the remorseless brine, which now gently came in to caress their feet, as if sorrowing and plaining for its fault. Silently they returned home, and now they all sat together in their little drawing-room. It was their last evening at A——, the scene of *such* happiness, and *such* misery. It was the hour of family prayer, and Mr. Trevor read that divine chapter, the 14th of John's Gospel, which has brought comfort to thousands of mourners—"Let not your heart be troubled;" sweet words, yet sad. His deep, melodious voice quivered as he read them, for he thought of his fair son lying in the cold sea. Mrs. Trevor hid her face in the cushions of the sofa, and her daughters bent over and tried to soothe her. They knelt in prayer—it was their little wonted evening worship which *he* had often shared, and *always enjoyed*. Perhaps they thought of *that* now, and the remembrance might have calmed their spirit.

The old dog had been very nervous for the last few minutes, circling and smelling round the room, and whining at the window. Mr. Trevor threw it up.

"I see a man on the gravel walk," he said, "who, I think, is our new postillion. I hope Carlo will not hurt him;" for the dog had leaped out over the window-sill. The next minute a figure sprang in over the low sash, and with a loud cry precipitated himself toward the party. It was their lost one, whom God had sent them back.

"Mother, mother!—take me to your heart, dearest, dearest, mother! Beloved father, kiss me! Ellen, Susan, I am come again, never more to part in this world!"

Oh! the deep, the unutterable joy of that moment!

"Oh, God of heaven! oh, my merciful Saviour!" exclaimed the transported father, "it is my son—so wan, so worn; but it is indeed my son—my own son!"

All this time the mother could not speak; her face was on her son's shoulder, locked in his tight embrace, and silently straining him again and again to her heart. At length, disengaging herself, and pushing him toward the two fair girls who stood trembling, and all wild and weeping for joy, she turned her to her husband's faithful bosom, saw on his face the old smile come back, which she thought had gone forever, fell into his extended arms, and, lifting up her happy voice, exclaimed—

"Oh, our God, we thank thee for thy unspeakable mercy, for this our 'son was dead and is alive; he was lost, and is found!'"

His tale was soon told; he had been knocked down by the giant wave; his forehead was cut, and he lay senseless under the bulwarks of the deck; a mast had fallen obliquely over him, but had not touched or hurt him. When consciousness returned, he had just time to throw off his coat to swim, when the brig went to pieces, and the recoil of a wave washed him outside the reef into the rapid current which sets strongly there to the north, and completely off the shore. He said

he swam but feebly, only using his feet; for the mast had floated with him, and his hands were locked in the rigging, as they drifted together in the sea. He said the last thing he *thought* he saw, was the light in his father's house on shore; but his eyes were dim; and the last sound he *thought* he heard, was a wail of soft music played on his sister's harp. His head was very much astray, he said, just then, and the music appeared to come floating along the waters, but it was a mere phantasy, though he said it made him smile; and so he committed his soul and his life to Him who once trod the waves to stillness; and then all was a blank, till he awoke faint and feeble in a strange bed, and among strange faces—yet saved, most wonderfully saved. He had been picked up by a Scotch fishing smack (which was returning to the island of Skye) at the first break of light. He was all but exanimate when found, and a fierce fever set in on his exhausted frame at once; but his kind captors took him to their wild but healthy home, where he was tenderly nursed by their women; and though delirious for a long time, his youth finally triumphed, and he was spared for the enjoyment and all the bliss of the present moment. He had written on his recovery twice from Skye, but his letters miscarried, and having had a purse of gold with him, which these honest fishermen never interfered with, he went to Glasgow in a fishing boat, and from thence home, where his presence was hailed as a *resurrection* indeed, and life from the dead.

CHARITY AND HUMOR.

BY W. M. THACKERAY.

AUTHOR OF "VANITY FAIR," "PENDENNIS,"
"HENRY ESMOND," ETC.

SEVERAL charitable ladies of this city, to some of whom I am under great personal obligation, having thought that a Lecture of mine would advance a benevolent end, which they had in view, I have preferred, in place of delivering a Discourse, which many of my hearers no doubt know already, upon a subject merely literary or biographical, to put together a few thoughts which may serve as a supplement to the former Lectures, if you like, and which have this at least in common with the kind purpose which assembles you here, that they rise out of the same occasion and treat of charity.

Besides contributing to our stock of happiness, to our harmless laughter and amusement, to our scorn for falsehood and pretension, to our righteous hatred of hypocrisy, to our education in the perception of truth, our love of honesty, our knowledge of life, and shrewd guidance through the world, have not our humorous writers, our gay and kind week-day preachers done much in support of that holy cause which has assembled you in this place—and which you are all abetting, the cause of love and charity, the cause of the poor, the weak, and the unhappy; the sweet mission of love and tenderness, and peace and good-will toward men? That same theme which is urged upon you by the eloquence and exam-

ple of good men to whom you are delighted listeners on Sabbath-days, is taught in his way and according to his power by the humorous writer, the commentator on every-day life and manners.

And as you are here assembled for a charitable purpose, giving your contributions at the door to benefit deserving people who need them without; I like to hope and think that the men of our calling have done something in aid of the cause of charity, and have helped, with kind words and kind thoughts at least, to confer happiness and to do good. If the humorous writers claim to be week-day preachers, have they conferred any benefit by their sermons? Are people happier, better, better disposed to their neighbors, more inclined to do works of kindness, to love, forbear, forgive, pity, after reading in Addison, in Steele, in Fielding, in Goldsmith, in Hood, in Dickens? I hope and believe so, and fancy that in writing, they are also acting charitably, contributing with the means which Heaven supplies them, to forward the end which brings you too together.

A love of the human species is a very vague and indefinite kind of virtue, sitting very easily on a man, not confining his actions at all, shining in print, or exploding in paragraphs, after which efforts of benevolence, the philanthropist is sometimes said to go home, and be no better than his neighbors. Tartuffe and Joseph Surface, Stiggins and Chadband who are always preaching fine sentiments, and are no more virtuous than hundreds of those whom they denounce, and whom they cheat, are fair objects of mistrust and satire; but their hypocrisy, the homage, according to the old saying, which vice pays to virtue, has this of good in it that its fruits are good; a man may preach good morals, though he may be himself but a lax practitioner, a Pharisee may put pieces of gold into the charity-plate out of mere hypocrisy and ostentation, but the bad man's gold feeds the widow and the fatherless as well as the good man's. The butcher and baker must needs look not to motives, but to money, in return for their wares.

I am not going to hint that we of the Literary calling resemble Monsieur Tartuffe, or Monsieur Stiggins, though there may be such men in our body, as there are in all.

A literary man of the humoristic turn is pretty sure to be of a philanthropic nature, to have a great sensibility, to be easily moved to pain or pleasure, keenly to appreciate the varieties of temper of people round about him, and sympathize in their laughter, love, amusement, tears. Such a man is philanthropic, man-loving by nature, as another is irascible, or red-haired, or six feet high. And so I would arrogate no particular merit to literary men for the possession of this faculty of doing good which some of them enjoy. It costs a gentleman no sacrifice to be benevolent on paper; and the luxury of indulging in the most beautiful and brilliant sentiments never makes any man a penny the poorer. A literary man is no better than another, as far as my experience goes; and a man writing a book,

no better nor no worse than one who keeps accounts in a ledger, or follows any other occupation. Let us, however, give him credit for the good, at least, which he is the means of doing, as we give credit to a man with a million for the hundred which he puts into the plate at a charity-sermon. He never misses them. He has made them in a moment by a lucky speculation, and parts with them, knowing that he has an almost endless balance at his bank, whence he can call for more. But in esteeming the benefaction, we are grateful to the benefactor, too, somewhat; and so of men of genius, richly endowed, and lavish in parting with their mind's wealth, we may view them at least kindly and favorably, and be thankful for the bounty of which Providence has made them the dispensers.

I have said myself somewhere, I don't know with what correctness (for definitions never are complete), that humor is wit and love; I am sure, at any rate, that the best humor is that which contains most humanity, that which is flavored throughout with tenderness and kindness. This love does not demand constant utterance or actual expression, as a good father, in conversation with his children or wife, is not perpetually embracing them, or making protestations of his love; as a lover in the society of his mistress is not, at least as far as I am led to believe, forever squeezing her hand, or sighing in her ear, "My soul's darling, I adore you!" He shows his love by his conduct, by his fidelity, by his watchful desire to make the beloved person happy; it lightens from his eyes when she appears, though he may not speak it; it fills his heart when she is present or absent; influences all his words and actions; suffuses his whole being; it sets the father cheerily to work through the long day, supports him through the tedious labor of the weary absence or journey, and sends him happy home again, yearning toward the wife and children. This kind of love is not a spasm, but a life. It fondles and caresses at due seasons, no doubt; but the fond heart is always beating fondly and truly, though the wife is not sitting hand-in-hand with him, or the children hugging at his knee. And so with a loving humor, I think; it is a genial writer's habit of being; it is the kind, gentle spirit's way of looking out on the world—that sweet friendliness, which fills his heart and his style. You recognize it, even though there may not be a single pathetic touch in the page; though you may not be called upon to salute his genius by a laugh or a tear. That collision of ideas, which provokes the one or the other, must be occasional. They must be like papa's embraces, which I spoke of anon, who only delivers them now and again, and can't be expected to go on kissing the children all night. And so the writer's jokes and sentiment, his ebullitions of feeling, his outbreaks of high spirits must not be too frequent. One tires of a page of which every sentence sparkles with points; of a sentimentalist who is always pumping the tears from his eyes or your

own. One suspects the genuineness of the tear, the naturalness of the humor; these ought to be true and manly in a man, as every thing else in his life should be manly and true; and he loses his dignity by laughing or weeping out of place, or too often.

When the Reverend Lawrence Sterne begins to sentimentalize over the carriage in Monsieur Dessein's court-yard, and pretends to squeeze a tear out of a rickety old shandrydan; when, presently, he encountered the dead donkey on his road to Paris, and snivels over that asinine corpse, I say: "Away you driveling quack: do not palm off these grimaces of grief upon simple folks who know no better, and are misled by your hypocrisy." Tears are sacred. The tributes of kind hearts to misfortune, the mites which gentle souls drop into the collections made for God's poor and unhappy, are not to be tricked out of them by a whimpering hypocrite, handing round a begging-box for your compassion, and asking your pity for a lie. When that same man tells me of Lefèvre's illness and Uncle Toby's charity; of the noble at Rennes coming home and reclaiming his sword, I thank him for the generous emotion which, springing genuinely from his own heart, has caused mine to admire benevolence, and sympathize with honor; and to feel love, and kindness, and pity.

If I don't love Swift, as, thank God, I do not, however immensely I may admire him, it is because I revolt from the man who placarded himself as a professional hater of his own kind; because he chisels his savage indignation on his tombstone, as if to perpetuate his protest against being born of our race—the suffering, the weak, the erring, the wicked, if you will, but still the friendly, the loving children of God our Father: it is because, as I read through Swift's dark volumes, I never find the aspect of nature seems to delight him; the smiles of children to please him; the sight of wedded love to soothe him. I don't remember in any line of his writing a passing allusion to a natural scene of beauty. When he speaks about the families of his comrades and brother clergymen, it is to assail them with gibes and scorn, and to laugh at them brutally, for being fathers and for being poor. He does mention in the *Journal to Stella*, a sick child, to be sure—a child of Lady Masham, that was ill of the small-pox—but then it is to confound the brat for being ill, and the mother for attending to it, when she should have been busy about a court intrigue, in which the Dean was deeply engaged. And he alludes to a suitor of Stella's, and a match she might have made, and would have made, very likely, with an honorable and faithful and attached man. Tisdall, who loved her, and of whom Swift speaks in a letter to this lady, in language so foul, that you would not bear to hear it. In treating of the good the humorists have done, of the love and kindness they have taught and left behind them, it is not of this one, I dare speak. Heaven help the lonely misanthrope! be kind to that mul-

titude of sins with so little charity to cover them!

Of Mr. Congreve's contribution to the English stock of benevolence, I don't speak; for, of any moral legacy to posterity, I doubt whether that brilliant man ever thought at all. He had some money, as I have told; every shilling of which he left to his friend the Duchess of Marlborough, a lady of great fortune and the highest fashion. He gave the gold of his brains to persons of fortune and fashion, too. There's no more feeling in his comedies, than in as many books of Euclid. He no more pretends to teach love for the poor, and goodwill for the unfortunate, than a dancing-master does; he teaches pirouettes and *flic-flacs*; and how to bow to a lady, and to walk a minuet. In his private life Congreve was immensely liked—more so than any man of his age, almost; and to have been so liked, must have been kind and good-natured. His good-nature bore him through extreme bodily ills and pain, with uncommon cheerfulness and courage. Being so gay, so bright, so popular, such a grand seigneur, be sure he was kind to those about him, generous to his dependents, serviceable to his friends. Society does not like a man so long as it liked Congreve, unless he is likeable; it finds out a quack very soon; it scorns a poltroon or a curmudgeon; we may be certain that this man was brave, good-tempered, and liberal; so, very likely, is Monsieur Pirouette, of whom we spoke; he cuts his capers, he grins, bows, and dances to his fiddle. In private, he may have a hundred virtues; in public, he teaches dancing. His business is cotillions, not ethics.

As much may be said of those charming and lazy Epicureans, Gay and Prior, sweet lyric singers, comrades of Anacreon, and disciples of love and the bottle. "Is there any moral shut within the bosom of a rose?" sings our great Tennyson. Does a nightingale preach from a bough, or the lark from his cloud? Not knowingly; yet we may be grateful, and love larks and roses, and flower-crowned minstrels, too, who laugh and who sing.

Of Addison's contributions to the charity of the world, I have spoken before, in trying to depict that noble figure; and say now, as then, that we should thank him, as one of the greatest benefactors of that vast and immeasurably spreading family which speaks our common tongue. Wherever it is spoken, there is no man that does not feel and understand and use the noble English word, "gentleman." And there is no man that teaches us to be gentlemen better than Joseph Addison. Gentle in our bearing through life; gentle and courteous to our neighbor; gentle in dealing with his follies and weaknesses; gentle in treating his opposition; deferential to the old; kindly to the poor, and those below us in degree; for people above us and below us we must find, in whatever hemisphere we dwell, whether kings or presidents govern us; and in no republic or monarchy that I know of, is a citizen exempt from the tax of befriending

poverty and weakness, of respecting age, and of honoring his father and mother. It has just been whispered to me—I have not been three months in the country, and, of course, can not venture to express an opinion of my own—that, in regard to paying this latter tax of respect and honor to age, some very few of the Republican youths are occasionally a little remiss. I have heard of young Sons of Freedom publishing their Declaration of Independence before they could well spell it; and cutting the connection between father and mother before they had learned to shave. My own time of life having been stated by various enlightened organs of public opinion, at almost any figure from forty-five to sixty, I cheerfully own that I belong to the Foggy interest, and ask leave to rank in, and plead for, that respectable class. Now a gentleman can but be a gentleman, in Broadway or the backwoods, in Pall-Mall or California; and where and whenever he lives, thousands of miles away in the wilderness, or hundreds of years hence, I am sure that reading the writings of this true gentleman, this true Christian, this noble Joseph Addison must do him good. He may take Sir Roger de Coverley to the Diggings with him, and learn to be gentle and good-humored, and urbane, and friendly in the midst of that struggle in which his life is engaged. I take leave to say that the most brilliant youths of this city may read over this delightful memorial of a by-gone age, of fashions long passed away; of manners long since changed and modified; of noble gentlemen, and a great, and a brilliant and polished society; and find in it much to charm and polish, to refine and instruct him. A courteousness, which can be out of place at no time, and under no flag. A politeness and simplicity, a truthful manhood, a gentle respect and deference, which may be kept as the unbought grace of life, and cheap defense of mankind, long after its old artificial distinctions, after periwigs, and small-swords, and ruffles, and red-heeled shoes, and titles, and stars and garters have passed away. I'll tell you when I have been put in mind of two of the finest gentlemen books bring us any mention of. I mean *our* books (not books of history, but books of humor). I'll tell you when I have been put in mind of the courteous gallantry of the noble knight Sir Roger de Coverley of Coverley Manor, of the noble Hidalgo Don Quixote of La Mancha: here in your own omnibus-carriages and railway-cars, when I have seen a woman step in, handsome or not, well-dressed or not, and a workman in hob-nail shoes, or a dandy in the height of the fashion, rise up and give her his place. I think Mr. Spectator, with his short face, if he had seen such a deed of courtesy, would have smiled a sweet smile to the doer of that gentlemanlike action, and have made him a low bow from under his great periwig, and have gone home and written a pretty paper about him.

I am sure Dick Steele would have hailed him, were he dandy or mechanic, and asked him to

a tavern to share a bottle, or perhaps half-a-dozen. Mind, I don't set down the five last flasks to Dick's score for virtue, and look upon them as works of the most questionable super-erogation.

Steele, as a literary benefactor to the world's charity, must rank very high, indeed, not merely from his givings, which were abundant, but because his endowments are prodigiously increased in value since he bequeathed them, as the revenues of the lands, bequeathed to our Foundling-Hospital at London, by honest Captain Coram, its founder, are immensely enhanced by the houses since built upon them. Steele was the founder of sentimental writing in English, and how the land has been since occupied, and what hundreds of us have laid out gardens and built up tenements on Steele's ground! Before his time, readers or hearers were never called upon to cry except at a tragedy; and compassion was not expected to express itself otherwise than in blank verse, or for personages much lower in rank than a dethroned monarch, or a widowed or a jilted empress. He stepped off the high-heeled cothurnus, and came down into common life; he held out his great hearty arms, and embraced us all; he had a bow for all women; a kiss for all children; a shake of the hand for all men, high or low; he showed us heaven's sun shining every day on quiet homes; not gilded palace-roofs only, or court processions, or heroic warriors fighting for princesses and pitched-battles. He took away comedy from behind the fine lady's alcove, or the screen where the libertine was watching her. He ended all that wretched business of wives jeering at their husbands, of rakes laughing wives, and husbands too, to scorn. That miserable, rouged, tawdry, sparkling, hollow-hearted comedy of the Restoration fled before him, and, like the wicked spirit in the Fairy-books, shrank, as Steele let the daylight in, and shrieked, and shuddered, and vanished. The stage of humorists has been common-life ever since Steele's and Addison's time; the joys and griefs, the aversions and sympathies, the laughter and tears of nature.

And here, coming off the stage, and throwing aside the motley-habit, or satiric disguise, in which he had before entertained you, mingling with the world, and wearing the same coat as his neighbor, the humorist's service became straightway immensely more available; his means of doing good infinitely multiplied; his success, and the esteem in which he was held, proportionately increased. It requires an effort, of which all minds are not capable, to understand Don Quixote; children and common people still read Gulliver for the story merely. Many more persons are sickened by Jonathan Wyld, than can comprehend the satire of it. Each of the great men who wrote those books was speaking from behind the satiric mask I anon mentioned. Its distortions appall many simple spectators; its settled sneer or laugh is unintelligible to thousands, who have not the wit to interpret the meaning of the visored sat-

irist preaching from within. Many a man was at fault about Jonathan Wyld's greatness, who could feel and relish Allworthy's goodness in Tom Jones, and Doctor Harrison in Amelia, and dear Parson Adams, and Joseph Andrews. We love to read; we may grow ever so old, but we love to read of them still—of love and beauty, of frankness, and bravery, and generosity. We hate hypocrites and cowards; we long to defend oppressed innocence, and to soothe and succor gentle women and children. We are glad when vice is foiled, and rascals punished; we lend a foot to kick Bliffl down stairs; and as we attend the brave bridegroom to his wedding on the happy marriage day, we ask the grooms-man's privilege to salute the blushing cheek of Sophia. A lax morality in many a vital point I own in Fielding, but a great hearty sympathy and benevolence; a great kindness for the poor; a great gentleness and pity for the unfortunate; a great love for the pure and good; these are among the contributions to the charity of the world with which this erring but noble creature endowed it.

As for Goldsmith, if the youngest and most unlettered person here has not been happy with the family at Wakefield; has not rejoiced when Olivia returned, and been thankful for her forgiveness and restoration; has not laughed with delighted good humor over Moses's gross of green spectacles; has not loved with all his heart the good Vicar, and that kind spirit which created these charming figures, and devised the beneficent fiction which speaks to us so tenderly—what call is there for me to speak? In this place, and on this occasion, remembering these men, I claim from you your sympathy for the good they have done, and for the sweet charity which they have bestowed on the world.

When humor joins with rhythm and music, and appears in song, its influence is irresistible; its charities are countless, it stirs the feelings to love, peace, friendship, as scarce any moral agent can. The songs of Beranger are hymns of love and tenderness; I have seen great whiskered Frenchmen warbling the "*bonne Vieille*," the "*Soldats au pas, au pas*," with tears rolling down their mustaches. At a Burns's Festival, I have seen Scotchmen singing Burns, while the drops twinkled on their furrowed cheeks: while each rough hand was flung out to grasp its neighbors; while early scenes and sacred recollections, and dear and delightful memories of the past came rushing back at the sound of the familiar words and music, and the softened heart was full of love, and friendship, and home. Humor! if tears are the alms of gentle spirits, and may be counted, as sure they may, among the sweetest of life's charities. Of that kindly sensibility, and sweet sudden emotion, which exhibits itself at the eyes, I know no such provocative as humor. It is an irresistible sympathizer; it surprises you into compassion: you are laughing and disarmed, and suddenly forced into tears. I heard a humorous balladist not long since, a minstrel with wool on his head,

and an ultra-Ethiopian complexion, who performed a negro ballad, that I confess moistened these spectacles in the most unexpected manner. They have gazed at dozens of tragedy queens, dying on the stage, and expiring in appropriate blank verse, and I never wanted to wipe them. They have looked up, with deep respect be it said, at many scores of clergymen in pulpits, and without being dimmed; and behold a vagabond with a corked face and a banjo sings a little song, strikes a wild note which sets the whole heart thrilling with happy pity. Humor! humor is the mistress of tears; she knows the way to the *fons lachrymarum*, strikes in dry and rugged places with her enchanting wand, and bids the fountain gush and sparkle. She has refreshed myriads more from her natural springs, than ever tragedy has watered from her pompous old urn.

Popular humor, and especially modern popular humor, and the writers, its exponents, are always kind and chivalrous, taking the side of the weak against the strong. In our plays, and books, and entertainments for the lower classes in England, I scarce remember a story or theatrical piece, in which a wicked aristocrat is not be-pummeled by a dashing young champion of the people. There was a book which had an immense popularity in England, and I believe has been greatly read here, in which the Mysteries of the Court of London were said to be unveiled by a gentleman, who I suspect knows about as much about the court of London as he does of that of Pekin. Years ago I treated myself to sixpennyworth of this performance at a railway station, and found poor dear George the Fourth, our late most religious and gracious king, occupied in the most flagitious designs against the tradesmen's families in his metropolitan city. A couple of years after, I took sixpennyworth more of the same delectable history: George the Fourth was still at work, still ruining the peace of tradesmen's families; he had been at it for two whole years, and a bookseller at the Brighton station told me that this book was by many, many times the most popular of all periodical tales then published, because, says he, "it lashes the aristocracy!" Not long since, I went to two penny-theatres in London; immense eager crowds of people thronged the buildings, and the vast masses thrilled and vibrated with the emotion produced by the piece represented on the stage, and burst into applause or laughter, such as many a polite actor would sigh for in vain. In both these pieces there was a wicked lord kicked out of the window—there is always a wicked lord kicked out of the window. First piece:—"Domestic drama—Thrilling interest!—Weaver's family in distress!—Fanny gives away her bread to little Jacky, and starves!—Enter Wicked Lord: tempts Fanny with offer of Diamond Necklace, Champagne Suppers, and Coach to ride in!—Enter sturdy Blacksmith.—Scuffle between Blacksmith and Aristocratic minion: exit Wicked Lord out of the window." Fanny, of course, becomes Mrs. Blacksmith.

The second piece was a nautical drama, also

of thrilling interest, consisting chiefly of horn-pipes, and acts of most tremendous oppression on the part of certain earls and magistrates toward the people. Two wicked lords were in this piece the atrocious scoundrels: one aristocrat, a deep-dyed villain, in short duck-trowsers and Berlin-cotton gloves; while the other minion of wealth enjoyed an eye-glass with a blue ribbon, and whisked about the stage with a penny cane. Having made away with Fanny Forester's lover, Tom Bowling, by means of a press-gang, they meet her all alone on a common, and subject her to the most opprobrious language and behavior: "Release me, villains!" says Fanny, pulling a brace of pistols out of her pocket, and crossing them over her breast so as to cover wicked lord to the right, wicked lord to the left; and they might have remained in that position ever so much longer (for the aristocratic rascals had pistols too), had not Tom Bowling returned from sea at the very nick of time, armed with a great marine spike, with which—whack! whack! down goes wicked lord, No. 1—wicked lord, No. 2. Fanny rushes into Tom's arms with an hysterical shriek, and I dare say they marry, and are very happy ever after.—Popular fun is always kind: it is the champion of the humble against the great. In all popular parables, it is Little Jack that conquers, and the Giant that topples down. I think our popular authors are rather hard upon the great folks. Well, well. Their lordships have all the money, and can afford to be laughed at.

In our days, in England, the importance of the humorous preacher has prodigiously increased; his audiences are enormous; every week or month his happy congregations flock to him; they never tire of such sermons. I believe my friend Mr. Punch is as popular to-day as he has been any day since his birth; I believe that Mr. Dickens's readers are even more numerous than they have ever been since his unrivaled pen commenced to delight the world with its humor. We have among us other literary parties; we have Punch, as I have said, preaching from his booth; we have a Jerrold party very numerous, and faithful to that acute thinker and distinguished wit; and we have also—it must be said, and it is still to be hoped—a Vanity-Fair party, the author of which work has lately been described by the London Times newspaper as a writer of considerable parts, but a dreary misanthrope, who sees no good any where, who sees the sky above him green, I think, instead of blue, and only miserable sinners round about him. So we are; so is every writer and every reader I ever heard of; so was every being who ever trod this earth, save One. I can't help telling the truth as I view it, and describing what I see. To describe it otherwise than it seems to me would be falsehood in that calling in which it has pleased heaven to place me; treason to that conscience which says that men are weak; that truth must be told; that fault must be owned; that pardon must be prayed for; and that Love reigns supreme over all.

I look back at the good which of late years the kind English humorists have done; and if you are pleased to rank the present speaker among that class, I own to an honest pride at thinking what benefits society has derived from men of our calling. That "Song of the Shirt," which Punch first published, and the noble, the suffering, the melancholy, the tender Hood sang, may surely rank as a great act of charity to the world, and call from it its thanks and regard for its teacher and benefactor. That astonishing poem, which you all of you know, of the "Bridge of Sighs," who can read it without tenderness, without reverence to Heaven, charity to man, and thanks to the beneficent genius which sang for us so nobly?

I never saw the writer but once; but shall always be glad to think that some words of mine, printed in a periodical of that day, and in praise of these amazing verses (which, strange to say, appeared almost unnoticed at first in the magazine in which Mr. Hood published them):—I am proud, I say, to think that some words of appreciation of mine reached him on his death-bed, and pleased and soothed him in that hour of manful resignation and pain.

As for the charities of Mr. Dickens, multiplied kindnesses which he has conferred upon us all; upon our children; upon people educated and uneducated; upon the myriads here, and at home, who speak our common tongue; have not you, have not I, all of us reason to be thankful to this kind friend who soothed and charmed so many hours, brought pleasure and sweet laughter to so many homes; made such multitudes of children happy; endowed us with such a sweet store of gracious thoughts, fair fancies, soft sympathies, hearty enjoyments. There are creations of Mr. Dickens's, which seem to me to rank as personal benefits; figures so delightful, that one feels happier and better for knowing them, as one does for being brought into the society of very good men and women. The atmosphere in which these people live is wholesome to breathe in; you feel that to be allowed to speak to them is a personal kindness; you come away better for your contact with them; your hands seem cleaner from having the privilege of shaking theirs. Was there ever a better charity-sermon preached in the world than Dickens's Christmas Carol? I believe it occasioned immense hospitality throughout England; was the means of lighting up hundreds of kind fires at Christmas-time; caused a wonderful outpouring of Christmas good-feeling; of Christmas punch-brewing; an awful slaughter of Christmas-turkeys, and roasting and basting of Christmas beef. As for this man's love of children, that amiable organ at the back of his honest head must be perfectly monstrous. All children ought to love him. I know two that do, and read his books ten times for once that they peruse the dismal preachments of their father. I know one who when she is happy reads Nicholas Nickleby; when she is unhappy reads Nicholas Nickleby; when she is tired reads Nicholas Nickleby;

when she is in bed reads Nicholas Nickleby; when she has nothing to do reads Nicholas Nickleby; and when she has finished the book reads Nicholas Nickleby over again. This candid young critic, at ten years of age, said: "I like Mr. Dickens's books much better than your books, papa;"—and frequently expressed her desire that the latter author should write a book like one of Mr. Dickens's books. Who can! Every man must say his own thoughts in his own voice, in his own way; lucky is he who has such a charming gift of nature as this, which brings all the children in the world trooping to him, and being fond of him.

I remember when that famous Nicholas Nickleby came out, seeing a letter from a pedagogue in the north of England, which dismal as it was, was immensely comical. "Mr. Dickens's ill-advised publication," wrote the poor school-master, "has passed like a whirlwind over the schools of the north." He was a proprietor of a cheap school; Dotheboys-Hall was a cheap school. There were many such establishments in the northern counties. Parents were ashamed, that never were ashamed before, until the kind satirist laughed at them; relatives were frightened; scores of little scholars were taken away; poor school-masters had to shut their shops up; every pedagogue was voted a Squeers, and many suffered, no doubt unjustly; but afterward school-boys' backs were not so much caned; school-boys' meat was less tough and more plentiful; and school-boys' milk was not so sky-blue. What a kind light of benevolence it is that plays round Crumles and the Phenomenon, and all those poor theatre people in that charming book! What a humor! and what a good-humor! I coincide with the youthful critic, whose opinion has just been mentioned, and own to a family admiration for Nicholas Nickleby.

One might go on, though the task would be endless and needless, chronicling the names of kind folks with whom this kind genius has made us familiar. Who does not love the Marchioness, and Mr. Richard Swiveller! Who does not sympathize, not only with Oliver Twist, but his admirable young friend the Artful Dodger! Who has not the inestimable advantage of possessing a Mrs. Nickleby in his own family! Who does not bless Sairey Gamp and wonder at Mrs. Harris. Who does not venerate the chief of that illustrious family who, being stricken by misfortune, wisely and greatly turned his attention to "coals," the accomplished, the Epicurean, the dirty, the delightful Micawber!

I may quarrel with Mr. Dickens's art a thousand and a thousand times, I delight and wonder at his genius; I recognize in it—I speak with awe and reverence—a commission from that Divine Beneficence, whose blessed task we know it will one day be to wipe every tear from every eye. Thankfully I take my share of the feast of love and kindness, which this gentle, and generous, and charitable soul has contributed to the happiness of the world. I take and enjoy my share and say a Benediction for the meal.

THE LOST FLOWERS.

A SCOTTISH STORY.

IT was a beautiful morning in May, when Jeanie Gray, with a small bundle in her hand, took her leave of the farm-house of Drylaw, on the expiration of her half-year's term of service. She had but a short distance to walk, the village of Elsington, about three miles off, being her destination. As she passed down the little lane leading from the farm to the main road, two or three fair-haired children came bounding over a stile to her side, and clung affectionately around their late attendant.

"Oh, Jeanie, what for maun ye gang away? Mamma wadna let us see you out on the road a bit, but we wan away to you by rinnin' round the stack-yard."

Jeanie stood still as the eldest of her late charges spoke thus, and said: "Marian, you should have had mair sense than to come when your mother forbad you. Rin away back, like guid bairns," continued she, caressing them kindly; "rin away hame. I'll maybe come and see you again."

"Oh, be sure and do that, then, Jeanie," said the eldest.

"Come back again, Jeanie," cried the younger ones, as they turned sorrowfully away.

From such marks of affection, displayed by those who had been under her care, our readers may conceive that Jeanie Gray was possessed of engaging and amiable qualities. This was indeed the case; a more modest and kind-hearted creature perhaps never drew the breath of life. Separated at an early age from her parents, like so many of her class—that class so perfectly represented in the character of Jenny, in the "Cottar's Saturday Night"—she had conducted herself, in the several families which she had entered, in such a way as to acquire uniformly their love and esteem. Some mistresses, it is true, are scarcely able to appreciate a good and dutiful servant; and of this class was Mrs. Smith of Drylaw, a cold, haughty, mistrustful woman, who, having suffered by bad servants, had come to look upon the best of them as but sordid workers for the penny-fee. To such a person, the timidity and reserve which distinguished Jeanie Gray's character to a fault, seemed only a screen, cunningly and deliberately assumed; and the proud distance which Mrs. Smith preserved, prevented her from ever discovering her error. Excepting for the sake of the children, therefore, it is not to be wondered at that Jeanie felt no regret at leaving Drylaw.

Her destination on departing from her late abode was, as we have already mentioned, the village of Elsington; and it is now necessary that we should divulge a more important matter—she was going there to be married. Jeanie Gray could not be called a beautiful girl, yet her cheerful though pale countenance, her soft dark eye and glossy hair, and her somewhat handsome form, had attracted not a few admirers. Her matrimonial fate, however, had been early