

the cares, duties, and enjoyments of his simple neighbours, and the workings of his own observant and catholic mind have been made to echo in grace and beauty and the "power of gentleness" over the length and breadth of the land, until they exercise an influence over our literature which is as great as it is unsuspected.

But we wander from our immediate object—Mr. BUCHANAN'S Poem—itsself a powerful proof that the principles and plans of the Social system are not irreconcilable with the possession of a keen relish for natural and philosophical beauty, and the power of expressing strong emotions poetically and vividly.

The dedication is striking :—

*To Ye! the Social Missionaries! Apostles of Free Thought! Bold
Pioneers of Truth and Happiness! to Ye! the Benevolent and
Good—Lovers of Human Kind—Friends of True Liberty! to
all the Beautiful and Chaste!—"This Lowly Lay of Mine" I
Humbly Dedicate.*

"The lowly lay" of our brother may be welcomed with all joy by those to whom it is dedicated; for although in his brief but nervous preface he asks "allowance for any faults of style and composition, as the author's time, from youth to maturity, has been too fully occupied in procuring by daily labour his daily bread, to afford him the opportunity of cultivating largely the literary graces necessary to poetic embellishment," we are persuaded that few will lay down this delightful volume of impassioned poetry without feeling such deprecation of the critic's wrath as unnecessary.

Listen to the notes wherewith the poet ushers in his song; a fitting prelude to a noble strain :—

"Tis sweet to trace Life's progress, from a noon
Of cares and fears, of anxious thoughts and hopes,
To the calm quiet of a sober eve,—
When the dark clouds that hover'd in the sky,
Threat'ning with low'ring aspect, by the breeze
Of peace are swept away, leaving the pure
Empyrean blue, lit up with smiles serene,
All mildly radiant from the placid brows
Of Day's retiring God. 'Tis sweet
To mark the march of happiness—to see
The cup of joy replace the cup of woe,
And smiling Love extend her generous arms,—
Embruing them with fond regard, who erst,
Torn by the demon Hate, in fiercest rage,
Look'd on each other, as the fiends would do,
With dark malignant scowl. 'Tis pleasant to behold
The hills and valleys of a fertile land,
Bathed in the glories of the orb of day :
But nobler far, to witness, spread around,
Homes of the free and virtuous, where Plenty,
With never-failing hand, bestows on all
The choicest gifts of earth; whilst fond-eyed Love
With Peace and Wisdom, hand in hand, attend
To tune all hearts to sympathy and joy :—
Or yet, to sketch on fancy's chart, the past,
In contrast with what is, and yet shall be.

"Be mine the task, to trace th' advance of truth,
Onward, triumphant o'er her numerous foes ;
Of human progress, from a world of wrong,
(Where Misery, like the dread Sirocco's blast,
With pestilential breath, prostrates and kills,)
To that fond state of Peace and Happiness,
Sung by the Bards, those prophets of the past,
Who, aspiring to the beautiful and true,
Would measure human right and destiny,
By the deep wishes of their earnest hearts ;
But, seeing in the world's gross selfish shapes
No fair embodiment of those bright thoughts
Their fancies form'd and cherish'd ; to the future
Their bright eyes turn'd, and, with prophetic fire,
Proclaim'd the coming day, when the IDEAL,
Their spirits worshipp'd, o'er the world's extent
Should be woven with all forms and powers,
That move and guide the actions of mankind."

Hath our bard no sympathy, think you, with these "aspirings to the beautiful and true," [a line by the way faulty in its measure,]

those "fair embodiments of bright thoughts" which the wisest and best have ever cherished in all ages; and which have given birth alike to the glowing descriptions of the ante-dated golden age, and the prospective millenium? We think you will be inclined to say that even the overture evinces some longings after these bright visions, not altogether in unison with the predictions of the fanciful critics already alluded to.

The author proceeds to take a rapid survey of the various schools of philosophy, which shed a light upon Greece amid an almost universal night of intellect. Egypt, Syria, Rome, the dark ages, their termination, the introduction of the press, and the galaxy of bright names of which it was the herald, all claim his attention, and are discussed with pregnant brevity, felicity of language, and sound observation.

To this and the succeeding canto valuable notes are appended, containing much interesting information and explanation of the matters alluded to in the text.

In the second canto the poet draws a vivid picture of "the present." The whole canto sparkles with beauties, and it is difficult to select where so much is so good; we venture, however, on two extracts which we group upon the painter's principle of contrast. After shewing the immense productive powers at our command, and briefly alluding to the condition of our ancestors without these gigantic appliances, he asks :—

"Yet whither shall we turn our eyes to find
The proofs that tell of Thought's triumphant march,
Spreading to all of human kind, a share
Of that surpassing wealth created by
Those wondrous powers call'd to the aid of man?
Has knowledge pierced its silver beams of light
Through the dark cottage of the artisan,
Wak'ning to intellectual day each mind
Within, now free from that excessive load
Which pressed their Fathers' energies to earth,—
Struggling no more beneath an iron doom?
Can man, no more a heartless drudge, decreed
To toil a slave from earliest morn to night,
Go forth in pride to view the varied works
Of Nature, scattered far o'er hill and dale?
Can he behold the flowers and budding trees;
The fruits and grain in plenty spread around;
The mountains rising in majestic pride,
On whose sharp peaks white clouds and vapours rest,
Like ermined crown upon a Monarch's brow;
While from their sides the torrents wild burst forth,
Dashing in fury down each rugged steep,
Meeting together in a noble stream
To beautify and water distant vales?
Can he, with keenest pleasure feast his eyes
As the rich carpet on the breast of earth,
Dyed deep in emerald hue, is tinged with gold,
While Sol, descending in the Western sky,
Sheds out his beams on valley, hill, and plain?
Can he, as viewing all the choicest gifts
Scatter'd profusely o'er a teeming land;
While listening to the music of the trees,
And of the earth and air, full of rich sounds,
From whence the choral hymn of numerous tribes
Of feathery minstrels rise so sweet to heaven,—
Exclaim, I am a partner here! I too
Exist in harmony with all around!
A shareholder in the great feast of love,
With time for knowledge, pleasure, as for toil?
Does health beam from the ruddy countenance
Of renovated man? Do truth and love
Reign in his breast, to guide each thought and act,
In the smooth paths of peace and sympathy?
Hath Wisdom with persuasive voice appeal'd
To the kind feelings of the human heart,
For Charity, with bland and holy sway,
To rule the empire of the world below;
Or keen eyed Science with his vigorous arm,
Struck off the chain of slavery from the limbs
Of human kind, and plenty given to all?"