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From the Christian Spectator.

ON THE GENIUS OF COWPER.

To discuss the merits of Cowper is like analyzing the qualities of an intimate friend: the emotions of our hearts towards him are not so much admiration as tenderness; not so much a reverence for illustrious genius, as affection for the loveliness of personal character. The accounts of his life, as portrayed by the hand of friendship, and exhibited in his private correspondence, and wrought into the descriptions of his poetry, are made up of those lesser incidents and hourly displays of feeling which constitute the material friendship. We feel ourselves linked to him by the ties of sympathy and intimacy; we are let into the secrecy and confidence of his bosom; and our souls mingle with his, and flow to gather with it in its current of thoughts and joys and sadness. Other poets are borne above us, and break away from the sympathies of the soul, and are wafted in vast elevation on the breath of general fame; we gaze on them with feelings of awe and tumultuous wonder, and every personal trait, and favourite virtue, and weakness, are swallowed up in the full blaze of intellectual glory. But Cowper has descended from the dazzling height and glorious company of his fellow-luminares, hovering over the dwelling of peaceful life, and shedding down upon them a soft radiance as if imploring the love and fellowship of mortality. His image is mingled with our visions of domestic bliss; it dwells among the remembered pleasures of childhood and home. The spirit of his soft and lovely character steals through the relations of private intercourse and social affluence. We throw open to him the inmost sanctuaries of our bosoms, and he enters a dear and welcome visitor. His very name kindles up within us a glow of human sensibility and celestial purity. The thought of him is like a whispering vision of paradise. How softly do our contemplations repose on this dearest and most sacred image of genius! how quietly he steals away one and another of sympathies, till the enchanted heart surrenders in sweet captivity, and rejoices in his power!

There was in the constitution of Cowper a deep and strong morality, a quiet but inextinguishable warmth of temperament, in which every pure and amiable feeling sprung up in ever-blooming freshness and verdure. It was in his age and before, that the hollow-hearted poetry of France had spread its elegant and frosty incrustations over the fountains of the British Helicon; but the streams still flowed beneath and collected in secret their force, till they gushed forth warm and sparkling in the genius of Cowper.

The original temperament of Cow-

per fitted him for a secluded retreat and select friendship. His situation might seem to deprive him of much of that literary stimulus and that wide fellowship with the play of human passions, which is so generally necessary to sustain the heart in healthful and vigorous exercise; suited to the general structure of our moral nature, was just adapted to give his the vigorous expansion. His acute sensibilities shrunk from the public gaze, and he sought a sympathizing word; he sighed for the protection and nourishment of tender childhood; he wanted to repose on the bosom that loved him with maternal fondness. His gentle and innocent affections expanded themselves to sweet smiles, and soothing voices, and delicate assiduous, and as the tender vegetable drinks in its life from the dews of the evening, so the heart of Cowper haqueted on the soft elegance of female courtesies. He could not tolerate distant and civil friendship; if he loved, it was with the ardour of young and untaught enthusiasm. With the boundless confidence of inexperience, he clasped his friend to his inmost self, and bathed and blessed him in the outpourings of his purest affections.

Domestic seclusion was the element in which he lived and breathed. He delighted in the contemplation of human character and manners, as they displayed their countless hues to objects of pleasure and ambition; but they must be chastened and melted by distance; the toil, and clamour, and confusion, and heart-breaking of this restless and turbid life—he loved to feel and pity them all; but it was in the musing quiet of contemplation; it was as one who at a distance from the haunts of men, and his feelings soothed to the mildness of an evening sky, listens to the mingled murmurs of a busy and expiring day. The heartlessness of an unfeeling world, the weary and exceeding months of agony which rolled over him, must have given double attractions to a scene of calm and hallowed repose; here he found rest and healing to his wounded spirit; here it flowed even and tranquil like the gentle ripples of an ocean after a night of shipwreck and storm; and the scenery of life comes reflected from his mind in all its original beauty and in crystalline purity.

There is an indefinable charm pervading the writings of Cowper which the heart only can understand. He has no loftiness of diction, or surprising novelties of imagery to lead captive the fancy. His style is that of an even and unambitious phraseology. You see no labour of thought, nor sudden impulses of inspiration. When he rises, it is in gentle undulation. There is sometimes such a want of vigour that he almost borders on the very verge of tameness, when some happy thought will awaken a new gleam of poetic fervour and every reader will forgive him his error. The tone of feeling that pervades his composition is perfectly inimitable, it is so entirely the effusion of his native and spontaneous temperament. The directness and simplicity of his expression, too, no art can equal, because art did not produce it; it is limpid as water, and the sentiment is seen through it as a medium of perfect transparency. It is so original and peculiar so shaped to the thought to which it gives utterance, so impregnated with the warm and living spirit that glowed within him, that it seems not collected from the common vocabulary of the language, but the birth of occasion, and to be thrown out as a new creation from the omnipotence of his fancy.

In many respects Cowper was a contrast to Thomson, whose genius

was certainly inclined to the French models. Thomson had more splendour, but less of that earnest sincerity that flows into the heart like a stream of liquid pathos. He has a more ambitious fancy and while in Cowper you are absorbed by the beauty of the scenery, in him you think of the superlative elegance of the description. The one thrives the rich and the other leans forth and pours with his passion the scene which his pencil is to draw; while in the descriptions of Cowper you have a naked and exact impress of the living beauty which caught his delicate and sensitive eye. There is more invention in Thomson, and more reality in Cowper. In Thomson you see the outbursts of riotous and intoxicated power, the wide diffusion of a spirit so plastic and penetrating, that it moulds and fires every subject of the hardest and roughest materials. Cowper transfuses a sufficiency of fervour into every subject, and while there is no forced animation, there is no overflowing fulness; nothing wanting and nothing to spare.

Cowper was a Christian, and I doubt not, that often has the devout spirit risen from the persual of his strains, and rapt in the holy elevation caught from this mingled flame of genius and piety, poured out the vestiges of his soul for such a gift to religion. It has been the reproach or misfortune of its friends that they have cramped its energies by scholastic definitions; that instead of letting its native attractions shine through the medium of a rich and elevated diction, they have both from the pulpit and the press, disguised it by a quaint and pedantic paradoxology; they have sullied its lustre by numerous and gross perversities of taste; they have chilled its generous and lofty spirit by narrow and spiritless and common place sentiment. This reproach can be separated from the true genius; the separation between taste and devotion, is a most unnatural divorce. Cowper had a soul keenly alive to every beauty of nature and art; and religion, as invested with the charms of his poetry, never wore an earthly robe that shone so like its hue of original and celestial loveliness. Never dwelt there in a human being a temper that mingled so kindly with the bland spirit of Christianity. It touched with its hallowed fire all the springs of his elegant taste; it breathed its inspiring vigour into all his innocent loves, till every element of his beautiful genius, like the scenes it described, wafted nothing but in cease to heaven. What! shall man be attracted to every other of his interests by the forms of a seductive rhetoric, and the power of a brilliant and fascinating imagery! Shall genius pour forth its praises of nature, till the stars above us twinkle down with new lustre, and the whole earth wake to new beauty, as when it bursts fresh from the bosom of almighty love? Shall vice itself glitter in the magic of unwanted melody, and the heart be drunken with its sorceries? Shall the God of heaven be blasphemed in colours dipped in his own glory; and shall religion, the joy of angels, the dearest friend of humanity, the bright hope and vision of immortality, meet the naked selfishness of the heart without a grace to soften and conciliate? Must it contend not only with the polished shaft of wit, the subtleties of depraved reason, and the heat of mighty passions—but must it also wage a natural war with those very refinements and sensibilities of our nature, which owe to it their purest nourishment and noblest elevation? It has by done that for man, which ought to fill every heart with enthusiasm.

The prospects of its achievements are enough to open all the fountains of the soul; to make it break from its tame and proscribed impurity of diction; to pour around Christianity the light of every taste, and the charm of irresistible persuasion. Then melting down every obstacle it shall go forth conquering and to conquer till every eye is ravished with its beauty, and every heart yields it the homage of veneration!

REVIEW.

Of the Memoirs of Richard Henry Lee

Such a subject, as the history of the United States, is no where else in the range of ages to be appointed out. Beginning with the first steps of the colonial policy of Britain towards America, in 1764, and brought down to the adoption of the Constitution and organization of the government in 1790, it is a theme of epic unity and grandeur. It comprehends every kind of interest; politics alternately of the subtilist and of the most expansive school; the action and reaction upon each other of the mature political strength of the English Cabinet, and the adolescent energy of America. It is filled with characters, with an eloquence, like that which was wont to be heard in the storms of the old commonwealths; strains of exhortation and resolute responses echo to each other across the Atlantic; in the shifting scenes of the war, all the races of man and the stages of civilization are mingled, the gallant Chevaliers of Poland and France, the hardy American yeoman, the mountain-warrior, the painted savage. At one moment the mighty fleets of Europe are thundering in the Antilles; at the next, the blue eye Brunswicker, the veterans of the Seven Years' War, are seen winding down from the Canadian frontier, under the command of an English Gentleman, to capitulate to the American militia; peace is made; thirteen republics stand side by side on the continent, bleeding from the wounds of war, tremblingly alive for the independence, which their labors and agonies had gained them; the trial of war had been borne, that of peace succeeds; a Constitution is proposed, is discussed, is adopted; a new life is breathed by it into the exhausted channels of the nation, which starts from that moment in a career of prosperity so rapid, so resistless, so adventurous, that the reality every day puts our brightest visions to shame. And this astonishing drama of events was the work of our days; its theatre was our beloved country; its immortal actors were our fathers.

OFFICE SEEKING.

The Georgetown Metropolitan, informs us that a resignation of one of the Clerks in the Treasury Office at Washington City took place recently, and adds, that as soon as the resignation was known, then came the tug of precedence in the ante-chamber. Members of Congress who had friends to serve, broken merchants, discharged clerks, ruined spendthrifts and idle boys, rushed in one promiscuous mass, until the Secretary found it necessary, to preserve his person from being taken by storm, to have a label pasted up in the ante-chamber announcing that the appointment had been made. We understand that the plan was highly approved of, and that several Secretaries have ordered a sign to be hung up, subscribed on one side, "No vacancies in this Office," and on the other, "Vacancies filled."