

**BEST ENGLISH AUTHORS
AND
THEIR SELECTED WORKS**

VOL. II

EDITED BY

CHARLES KNIGHT.



Deep & Deep Publications
D1/24, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi

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SPECIMENS OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY WRITERS.

CHARLES KNIGHT.

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[EDWARD GIBBON has written his autobiography. He says, "I was born at Putney, in the county of Surrey, the 27th of April, O. S., in the year 1737; the first child of the marriage of Edward Gibbon, Esq., and of Judith Porten. My lot might have been that of a slave, a savage, or a peasant; nor can I reflect without pleasure on the bounty of nature, which cast my birth in a free and civilised country, in an age of science and philosophy, in a family of honourable rank, and decently endowed with the gifts of fortune." How much of character there is in this brief notice! Half a century elapses, and we find in the same autobiography this most interesting record of the completion of the great labour of Gibbon's life—the 'History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire:—"It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake [Lausanne], and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious." Gibbon's early education was defective, although his amount of general reading before he went to Oxford was very great. He remained at the University only fourteen months, having become a convert to Romanism. His father sent him to reside with a Calvinist minister in Switzerland, and he was reconverted to Protestantism. All this ended in religious indifference, which is too visible in his great work. The occupations of his life were chiefly literary; although at one period he was a captain of militia, and at another a member of parliament. He died in London in 1794.]

In a quarter of the city which was inhabited only by mechanics and Jews, the marriage of an innkeeper and a washerwoman produced the future deliverer of Rome. From such parents Nicholas Rienzi Gabrini could inherit neither dignity nor fortune; and the gift of a liberal education, which they painfully bestowed, was the cause of his glory and untimely end. The study of history and eloquence, the writings of Cicero, Seneca, Livy, Cæsar, and Valerius Maximus, elevated above his equals and contemporaries the genius of the young plebeian; he perused with indefatigable diligence the manuscripts and marbles of antiquity; loved to dispense his knowledge in familiar language; and was often provoked to exclaim, "Where are now these Romans? their virtue, their justice, their power? why was I not born in those happy times!" When the republic addressed to the throne of Avignon an embassy of the three orders, the spirit and eloquence of Rienzi recommended him to a place among the thirteen deputies of the commons. The orator had the honour of haranguing Pope Clement the Sixth, and the satisfaction of conversing with Petrarch, a congenial mind; but his aspiring hopes were chilled by disgrace and poverty; and the patriot was reduced to a single garment and the charity of the hospital. From this misery he was relieved by the sense of merit and the smile of favour; and the employment of apostolic notary afforded him a daily stipend of five gold

florins, a more honourable and extensive connection, and the right of contrasting both in words and actions his own integrity with the vices of the state.

* * * * *

A prophecy, or rather a summons, affixed on the church door of St. George, was the first public evidence of his designs; a nocturnal assembly of an hundred citizens on Mount Aventine, the first step to their execution. After an oath of secrecy and aid, he represented to the conspirators the importance and facility of their enterprise; that the nobles, without union or resources, were strong only in the fear of their imaginary strength; that all power, as well as right, was in the hands of the people; that the revenues of the apostolic chamber might relieve the public distress; and that the pope himself would approve their victory over the common enemies of government and freedom. After securing a faithful band to protect his first declaration, he proclaimed through the city, by sound of trumpet, that on the evening of the following day all persons should assemble without arms before the church of St. Angelo, to provide for the re-establishment of the good estate. The whole night was employed in the celebration of thirty masses of the Holy Ghost; and in the morning, Rienzi, bareheaded, but in complete armour, issued from the church, encompassed by the hundred conspirators. The pope's vicar, the simple bishop of Orvieto, who had been persuaded to sustain a part in this singular ceremony, marched on his right hand; and three great standards were borne aloft as the emblems of their design. In the first, the banner of *liberty*, Rome was seated on two lions, with a palm in one hand and a globe in the other; St. Paul, with a drawn sword, was delineated in the banner of *justice*; and in the third, St. Peter held the keys of *concord* and *peace*. Rienzi was encouraged by the presence and applause of an innumerable crowd, who understood little and hoped much; and the procession slowly rolled forward from the Castle of St. Angelo to the Capitol. His triumph was disturbed by some secret emotion which he laboured to suppress; he ascended without opposition, and with seeming confidence, the citadel of the republic; harangued the people from the balcony; and received the most flattering confirmation of his acts and laws. The nobles, as if destitute of arms and counsels, beheld in silent consternation this strange revolution; and the moment had been prudently chosen, when the most formidable, Stephen Colonna, was absent from the city. On the first rumour he returned to his palace, affected to despise this plebeian tumult, and declared to the messenger of Rienzi, that at his leisure he would cast the madman from the windows of the Capitol. The great bell instantly rung an alarm, and so rapid was the tide, so urgent was the danger, that Colonna escaped with precipitation to the suburb of St. Lawrence; from thence, after a moment's refreshment, he continued the same speedy career till he reached in safety his castle of Palestrina; lamenting his own imprudence, which had not trampled the spark of this mighty conflagration. A general and peremptory order was issued from the Capitol to all the nobles, that they should peaceably retire to their estates; they obeyed; and their departure secured the tranquillity of the free and obedient citizens of Rome.

But such voluntary obedience evaporates with the first transports of zeal; and Rienzi felt the importance of justifying his usurpation by a regular form and a legal title. At his own choice the Roman people would have displayed their attachment and authority, by lavishing on his head the names of senator or consul, of king or emperor; he preferred the ancient and modest appellation of tribune; the protection of the commons was the essence of that sacred office; and they were ignorant that it had never been invested with any share in the legislative or executive powers of the republic. In this character, and with the consent of the Romans, the tribune enacted the most salutary laws for the restoration and maintenance of the good estate. By the first he fulfils the wish of honesty and inexperience, that no civil

suit should be protracted beyond the term of fifteen days. The danger of frequent perjury might justify the pronouncing against a false accuser the same penalty which his evidence would have inflicted; the disorder of the times might compel the legislator to punish every homicide with death, and every injury with equal retaliation. But the execution of justice was hopeless till he had previously abolished the tyranny of the nobles. It was formally provided, that none, except the supreme magistrate, should possess or command the gates, bridges, or towers of the state; that no private garrisons should be introduced into the towns or castles of the Roman territory; that none should bear arms, or presume to fortify their houses in the city or country; that the barons should be responsible for the safety of the highways, and the free passage of provisions; and that the protection of malefactors and robbers should be expiated by a fine of a thousand marks of silver. But these regulations would have been impotent and nugatory, had not the licentious nobles been awed by the sword of the civil power. A sudden alarm from the bell of the Capitol could still summon to the standard above twenty thousand volunteers; the support of the tribune and the laws required a more regular and permanent force. In each harbour of the coast, a vessel was stationed for the assurance of commerce; a standing militia of three hundred and sixty horse and thirteen hundred foot was levied, clothed, and paid in the thirteen quarters of the city; and the spirit of a commonwealth may be traced in the grateful allowance of one hundred florins, or pounds, to the heirs of every soldier who lost his life in the service of his country. For the maintenance of the public defence, for the establishment of granaries, for the relief of widows, orphans, and indigent convents, Rienzi applied, without fear of sacrilege, the revenues of the apostolic chamber; the three branches of hearth-money, the salt duty, and the customs, were each of the annual produce of one hundred thousand florins; and scandalous were the abuses if in four or five months the amount of the salt duty could be trebled by his judicious economy. After thus restoring the forces and finances of the republic, the tribune recalled the nobles from their solitary independence; required their personal appearance in the Capitol; and imposed an oath of allegiance to the new government, and of submission to the laws of the good estate. Apprehensive for their safety, but still more apprehensive of the danger of a refusal, the princes and barons returned to their houses at Rome in the garb of simple and peaceful citizens. * * * It was the boast of Rienzi, that he had delivered the throne and patrimony of St. Peter from a rebellious aristocracy; and Clement the Sixth, who rejoiced in its fall, affected to believe the professions, to applaud the merits, and to confirm the title, of his trusty servant. The speech, perhaps the mind, of the tribune, was inspired with a lively regard for the purity of the faith; he insinuated his claim to a supernatural mission from the Holy Ghost; enforced by a heavy forfeiture the annual duty of confession and communion; and strictly guarded the spiritual as well as temporal welfare of his faithful people.

Never perhaps has the energy and effect of a single mind been more remarkably felt than in the sudden, though transient, reformation of Rome by the tribune Rienzi. A den of robbers was converted to the discipline of a camp or convent: patient to hear, swift to redress, inexorable to punish, his tribunal was always accessible to the poor and stranger; nor could birth, or dignity, or the immunities of the church, protect the offender or his accomplices. The privileged houses, the private sanctuaries in Rome, on which no officer of justice would presume to trespass, were abolished; and he applied the timber and iron of their barricades in the fortifications of the Capitol. The venerable father of the Coionna was exposed in his own palace to the double shame of being desirous, and of being unable, to protect a criminal. A mule, with a jar of oil, had been stolen near Capranica; and

the lord of the Ursini family was condemned to restore the damage, and to discharge a fine of four hundred florins for his negligence in guarding the highways. Nor were the persons of the barons more inviolate than their lands or houses; and, either from accident or design, the same impartial rigour was exercised against the heads of the adverse factions. Peter Agapet Colonna, who had himself been senator of Rome, was arrested in the street for injury or debt; and justice was appeased by the tardy execution of Martin Ursini, who, among his various acts of violence and rapine, had pillaged a shipwrecked vessel at the mouth of the Tiber. His name, the purple of two cardinals, his uncles, a recent marriage, and a mortal disease, were disregarded by the inflexible tribune, who had chosen his victim. The public officers dragged him from his palace and nuptial bed: his trial was short and satisfactory: the bell of the Capitol convened the people: stript of his mantle, on his knees, with his hands bound behind his back, he heard the sentence of death; and after a brief confession, Ursini was led away to the gallows. After such an example, none who were conscious of guilt could hope for impunity, and the flight of the wicked, the licentious, and the idle, soon purified the city and territory of Rome. In this time (says the historian) the woods began to rejoice that they were no longer infested with robbers; the oxen began to plough; the pilgrims visited the sanctuaries; the roads and inns were replenished with travellers; trade, plenty, and good faith, were restored in the markets; and a purse of gold might be exposed without danger in the midst of the highway. As soon as the life and property of the subject are secure, the labours and rewards of industry spontaneously revive: Rome was still the metropolis of the Christian world; and the fame and fortunes of the tribune were diffused in every country by the strangers who had enjoyed the blessings of his government.

The deliverance of his country inspired Rienzi with a vast, and perhaps visionary, idea of uniting Italy in a great federative republic, of which Rome should be the ancient and lawful head, and the free cities and princes the members and associates. His pen was not less eloquent than his tongue; and his numerous epistles were delivered to swift and trusty messengers. On foot, with a white wand in their hand, they traversed the forest and mountains; enjoyed, in the most hostile states, the sacred security of ambassadors; and reported, in the style of flattery or truth, that the highways along their passage were lined with kneeling multitudes, who implored heaven for the success of their undertaking. * * *

Beyond the Alps, more especially at Avignon, the revolution was the theme of curiosity, wonder, and applause. Petrarch had been the private friend, perhaps the secret counsellor, of Rienzi: his writings breathe the most ardent spirit of patriotism and joy; and all respect for the pope, all gratitude for the Colonna, was lost in the superior duties of a Roman citizen. The poet laureat of the Capitol maintains the act, applauds the hero, and mingles with some apprehension and advice the most lofty hopes of the permanent and rising greatness of the republic.

While Petrarch indulged these prophetic visions, the Roman hero was fast declining from the meridian of fame and power; and the people, who had gazed with astonishment on the ascending meteor, began to mark the irregularity of its course, and the vicissitudes of light and obscurity. More eloquent than judicious, more enterprising than resolute, the faculties of Rienzi were not balanced by cool and commanding reason: he magnified in a tenfold proportion the objects of hope and fear; and prudence, which could not have erected, did not presume to fortify, his throne. In the blaze of prosperity his virtues were insensibly tintured with the adjacent vices; justice with cruelty, liberality with profusion, and the desire of fame with perile and ostentatious vanity. He might have learned, that the ancient tribunes, so strong and sacred in the public opinion, were not distinguished in style, habit, or appearance,

from an ordinary plebeian; and that, as often as they visited the city on foot, a single *viator*, or beadle, attended the exercise of their office. The Gracchi would have frowned or smiled, could they have read the sonorous titles and epithets of their successor, "*Nicholas, severe and merciful; deliverer of Rome; defender of Italy; friend of mankind, and of liberty, peace, and justice; tribune august:*" his theatrical pageants had prepared the revolution; but Rienzi abused, in luxury and pride, the political maxim of speaking to the eyes, as well as the understanding, of the multitude. From nature he had received the gift of an handsome person, till it was swelled and disfigured by intemperance; and his propensity to laughter was corrected in the magistrature by the affectation of gravity and sternness. He was clothed, at least on public occasions, in a party-coloured robe of velvet or satin, lined with fur, and embroidered with gold: the rod of justice, which he carried in his hand, was a sceptre of polished steel, crowned with a globe and cross of gold, and inclosing a small fragment of the true and holy wood. In his civil and religious processions through the city, he rode on a white steed, the symbol of royalty: the great banner of the republic, a sun with a circle of stars, a dove with an olive branch, was displayed over his head; a shower of gold and silver was scattered among the populace; fifty guards with halberds encompassed his person; a troop of horse preceded his march; and their cymbals and trumpets were of massy silver.

The ambition of the honours of chivalry betrayed the meanness of his birth, and degraded the importance of his office; and the equestrian tribune was not less odious to the nobles, whom he adopted, than to the plebeians, whom he deserted. All that yet remained of treasure, or luxury, or art, was exhausted on that solemn day. Rienzi led the procession from the Capitol to the Lateran; the tediousness of the way was relieved with decorations and games; the ecclesiastical, civil, and military orders marched under their various banners; the Roman ladies attended his wife; and the ambassadors of Italy might loudly applaud, or secretly deride, the novelty of the pomp. In the evening, when they had reached the church and palace of Constantine, he thanked and dismissed the numerous assembly, with an invitation to the festival of the ensuing day. From the hands of a venerable knight he received the order of the Holy Ghost; the purification of the bath was a previous ceremony; but in no step of his life did Rienzi excite such scandal and censure as by the profane use of the porphyry vase, in which Constantine (a foolish legend) had been healed of his leprosy by Pope Sylvester. With equal presumption the tribune watched or reposed within the consecrated precincts of the baptistery; and the failure of his state bed was interpreted as an omen of his approaching downfall. At the hour of worship he showed himself to the returning crowds in a majestic attitude, with a robe of purple, his sword, and gilt spurs; but the holy rites were soon interrupted by his levity and insolence. Rising from his throne, and advancing towards the congregation, he proclaimed in a loud voice: "We summon to our tribunal Pope Clement; and command him to reside in his diocese of Rome: we also summon the sacred college of cardinals. We again summon the two pretenders, Charles of Bohemia, and Lewis of Bavaria, who style themselves emperors: we likewise summon all the electors of Germany, to inform us on what pretence they have usurped the unalienable right of the Roman people, the ancient and lawful sovereigns of the empire." Unsheathing his maiden sword, he thrice brandished it to the three parts of the world, and thrice repeated the extravagant declaration, "And this too is mine!" The pope's vicar, the Bishop of Orvieto, attempted to check this career of folly; but his feeble protest was silenced by martial music; and instead of withdrawing from the assembly, he consented to dine with his brother tribune, at a table which had hitherto been reserved for the supreme pontiff. A banquet, such as the Cæsars had given, was prepared for the Romans. The apartments, porticoes,

and courts of the Lateran were spread with innumerable tables for either sex, and every condition ; a stream of wine flowed from the nostrils of Constantine's brazen horse ; no complaint, except of the scarcity of water, could be heard ; and the licentiousness of the multitude was curbed by discipline and fear. A subsequent day was appointed for the coronation of Rienzi ; seven crowns of different leaves or metals were successively placed on his head by the most eminent of the Roman clergy ; they represented the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost ; and he still professed to imitate the example of the ancient tribunes. These extraordinary spectacles might deceive or flatter the people ; and their own vanity was gratified in the vanity of their leader. But in his private life he soon deviated from the strict rule of frugality and abstinence ; and the plebeians, who were awed by the splendour of the nobles, were provoked by the luxury of their equal. His wife, his son, his uncle (a barber in name and profession), exposed the contrast of vulgar manners and princely expense : and without acquiring the majesty, Rienzi degenerated into the vices, of a king.

A simple citizen describes with pity, or perhaps with pleasure, the humiliation of the barons of Rome. "Bareheaded, their hands crossed on their breast, they stood with downcast looks in the presence of the tribune ; and they trembled, good God, how they trembled !" As long as the yoke of Rienzi was that of justice and their country, their conscience forced them to esteem the man, whom pride and interest provoked them to hate : his extravagant conduct soon fortified their hatred by contempt ; and they conceived the hope of subverting a power which was no longer so deeply rooted in the public confidence. The old animosity of the Colonna and Ursini was suspended for a moment by their common disgrace : they associated their wishes, and perhaps their designs ; an assassin was seized and tortured ; he accused the nobles ; and as soon as Rienzi deserved the fate, he adopted the suspicions and maxims of a tyrant. On the same day, under various pretences, he invited to the Capitol his principal enemies, among whom were five members of the Ursini and three of the Colonna name. But instead of a council or a banquet, they found themselves prisoners under the sword of despotism or justice ; and the consciousness of innocence or guilt might inspire them with equal apprehensions of danger. At the sound of the great bell the people assembled ; they were arraigned for a conspiracy against the tribune's life ; and though some might sympathise in their distress, not a hand, nor a voice, was raised to rescue the first of the nobility from their impending doom. Their apparent boldness was prompted by despair ; they passed in separate chambers a sleepless and painful night ; and the venerable hero, Stephen Colonna, striking against the door of his prison, repeatedly urged his guards to deliver him by a speedy death from such ignominious servitude. In the morning they understood their sentence from the visit of a confessor and the tolling of the bell. The great hall of the Capitol had been decorated for the bloody scene with red and white hangings. the countenance of the tribune was dark and severe ; the swords of the executioners were unsheathed ; and the barons were interrupted in their dying speeches by the sound of trumpets. But in this decisive moment, Rienzi was not less anxious or apprehensive than his captives : he dreaded the splendour of their names, their surviving kinsmen, the inconstancy of the people, the reproaches of the world, and, after rashly offering a mortal injury, he vainly presumed that, if he could forgive, he might himself be forgiven. His elaborate oration was that of a Christian and a suppliant ; and, as the humble minister of the commons, he entreated his masters to pardon these noble criminals, for whose repentance and future service he pledged his faith and authority. "If you are spared," said the tribune, "by the mercy of the Romans, will you not promise to support the good estate with your lives and fortunes ?" Astonished by this mar-

vellous clemency, the barons bowed their heads ; and, while they devoutly repeated the oath of allegiance, might whisper secret, and more sincere, assurance of revenge. A priest, in the name of the people, pronounced their absolution : they received the communion with the tribune, assisted at the banquet, followed the procession ; and, after every spiritual and temporal sign of reconciliation, were dismissed in safety to their respective homes, with the new honours and titles of generals, consuls, and patricians.

During some weeks they were checked by the memory of their danger, rather than of their deliverance, till the most powerful of the Ursini, escaping with the Colonna from the city, erected at Marino the standard of rebellion. The fortifications of the castle were instantly restored ; the vassals attended their lord ; the outlaws armed against the magistrate ; the flocks and herds, the harvests and vineyards from Marino to the gates of Rome, were swept away or destroyed ; and the people arraigned Rienzi as the author of the calamities which his government had taught them to forget. In the camp, Rienzi appeared to less advantage than in the rostrum ; and he neglected the progress of the rebel barons till their numbers were strong, and their castles impregnable. From the pages of Livy he had not imbibed the art, or even the courage, of a general : an army of twenty thousand Romans returned without honour or effect from the attack of Marino ; and his vengeance was amused by painting his enemies, their heads downwards, and drowning two dogs (at least they should have been bears) as the representatives of the Ursini. The belief of his incapacity encouraged their operations : they were invited by their secret adherents ; and the barons attempted, with four thousand foot and sixteen hundred horse, to enter Rome by force or surprise. The city was prepared for their reception : the alarm-bell rung all night : the gates were strictly guarded, or insolently open ; and after some hesitation they sounded a retreat. The two first divisions had passed along the walls, but the prospect of a free entrance tempted the headstrong valour of the nobles in the rear ; and after a successful skirmish, they were overthrown and massacred without quarter by the crowds of the Roman people. Stephen Colonna the younger, the noble spirit to whom Petrarch ascribed the restoration of Italy, was preceded or accompanied in death by his son John, a gallant youth, by his brother Peter, who might regret the ease and honours of the church, by a nephew of legitimate birth, and by two bastards of the Colonna race ; and the number of seven, the seven crowns, as Rienzi styled them, of the Holy Ghost, was completed by the agony of the deplorable parent, of the veteran chief, who had survived the hope and fortune of his house. The vision and prophecies of St. Martin and Pope Boniface had been used by the tribune to animate his troops : he displayed, at least in the pursuit, the spirit of an hero ; but he forgot the maxims of the ancient Romans, who abhorred the triumphs of civil war. The conqueror ascended the Capitol ; deposited his crown and sceptre on the altar ; and boasted, with some truth, that he had cut off an ear which neither pope nor emperor had been able to amputate. His base and implacable revenge denied the honours of burial ; and the bodies of the Colonna, which he threatened to expose with those of the vilest malefactors, were secretly interred by the holy virgins of their name and family. The people sympathised in their grief, repented of their own fury, and detested the indecent joy of Rienzi, who visited the spot where these illustrious victims had fallen. It was on that fatal spot that he conferred on his son the honour of knighthood ; and the ceremony was accomplished by a slight blow from each of the horsemen of the guard, and by a ridiculous and inhuman ablution from a pool of water, which was yet polluted with patrician blood.

A short delay would have saved the Colonna, the delay of a single month, which elapsed between the triumph and exile of Rienzi. In the pride of victory, he for-

feited what yet remained of his civil virtues, without acquiring the fame of military prowess. A free and vigorous opposition was formed in the city; and when the tribune proposed in the public council to impose a new tax, and to regulate the government of Perugia, thirty-nine members voted against his measures; repelled the injurious charge of treachery and corruption; and urged him to prove, by their forcible exclusion, that, if the populace adhered to his cause, it was already disclaimed by the most respectable citizens. The pope and the sacred college had never been dazzled by his specious professions; they were justly offended by the inscience of his conduct; a cardinal legate was sent to Italy, and after some fruitless treaty, and two personal interviews, he fulminated a bull of excommunication, in which the tribune is degraded from his office, and branded with the guilt of rebellion, sacrilege, and heresy. The surviving barons of Rome were now humbled to a sense of allegiance; their interest and revenge engaged them in the service of the church; but as the fate of the Colonna was before their eyes, they abandoned to a private adventurer the peril and glory of the revolution. John Pepin, Count of Minorbino in the kingdom of Naples, had been condemned for his crimes, or his riches, to perpetual imprisonment; and Petrarch, by soliciting his release, indirectly contributed to the ruin of his friend. At the head of one hundred and fifty soldiers, the Count of Minorbino introduced himself into Rome; barricaded the quarter of the Colonna; and found the enterprise as easy as it had seemed impossible. From the first alarm, the bell of the Capitol incessantly tolled;—but, instead of repairing to the well-known sound, the people was silent and inactive; and the pusillanimous Rienzi, deploring their ingratitude with sighs and tears, abdicated the government and palace of the republic.

184.—ON THE RECEIPT OF HIS MOTHER'S PICTURE.

COWPER.

[SOUTHEY has emphatically described Cowper as "the most popular poet of his generation, and the best of English letter-writers." When we are familiar with the strong sense, the earnest piety, the ardent love of nature, the home affections, and the playful humour which characterise both his poetry and his prose, it is painful to know that such a mind was habitually clouded with the deepest gloom, and that occasional insanity was the fearful lot of this gifted being. The events of Cowper's life cannot be understood without much explanatory narrative. We may therefore content ourselves with saying that he was born in 1731, his father being the rector of Great Berkhamstead, that he was educated at Westminster, and that he died in 1800.]

O that those lips had language! Life has pass'd
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
 "Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
 (Blest be the art that can immortalise,
 The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
 To quench it!) here shines on me still the same.
 Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
 O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
 Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
 I will obey, not willingly alone,
 But gladly, as the precept were her own:

And, while that face renews my filial grief,
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
 Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
 A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
 Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
 Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
 Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
 Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss;
 Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
 Ah, that maternal smile!—it answers—Yes.
 I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
 I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
 And, turning from my nursery window, drew
 A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
 But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
 Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
 May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
 The parting word shall pass my lips no more!
 Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
 Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
 What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
 And disappointed still, was still deceived;
 By expectation every day beguiled,
 Dupe of to-morrow even from a child,
 Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
 Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,
 I learn'd at last submission to my lot,
 But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
 Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
 And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
 Drew me to school along the public way,
 Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt
 In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet-capt,
 'Tis now become a history little known,
 That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.
 Short-lived possession! But the record fair,
 That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
 Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
 That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
 Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum;
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd;
 All this, and more endearing still than all,
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
 Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,
 That humour interposed too often makes;
 All this still legible in memory's page,

And still to be so to my latest age,
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
 Not scorn'd in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight revers'd, restore the hours,
 When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
 I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile,
 Could those few pleasant days again appear,
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?
 I would not trust my heart ;—the dear delight
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—
 But no—what here we call our life is such,
 So little to be loved, and thou so much,
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
 (The storms all weather'd, and the ocean cross'd)
 Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle,
 Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
 There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
 While airs impregnated with incense play
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;
 So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reach'd the shore,
 " Where tempests never beat nor billows roar ;"
 And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
 Of life, long since has anchor'd by thy side.
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
 Always from port withheld, always distress'd,—
 Me, howling blasts drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
 Sails ripp'd, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
 And day by day some current's thwarting force
 Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
 Yet O the thought, that thou art safe, and he !
 That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
 My boast is not that I deduce my birth
 From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise,—
 The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
 And now, farewell !—Time unrevoked has run
 His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
 I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again ;
 To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
 Without the sin of violating thine ;
 And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft,—
 'Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

185.—THE LAW OF PRICES.

CHALMERS.

[THE Reverend Thomas Chalmers, D.D., was one of the most eloquent, pious, and philosophical divines of the Scottish Church. He was born about 1780, and received his education at the University of Saint Andrews. As a preacher, few men ever attained such unbounded popularity. He visited London in 1817, and the effect he produced is thus recorded by Mr. Wilberforce in his Diary: "Off early with Canning, Huskisson, and Lord Binning, to the Scotch Church, London Wall, to hear Dr. Chalmers. Vast crowds. So pleased with him that I went again, getting in at a window with Lady D., over iron palisades, on a bench. Chalmers most awful on carnal and spiritual man. . . . I was surprised to see how greatly Canning was affected; at times he quite melted into tears. I should have thought he had been too much hardened in debate to show such signs of feeling." This eminent man died at Edinburgh, on May 30, 1847. The range of Dr. Chalmers' knowledge was very various; but perhaps the most original of his views are those connected with what may be termed the morals of political economy.]

THE first thing to be attended to is the way in which the price of any article brought to market is affected by the variations of its supply on the one hand, and of the demand for it on the other. The holders of sugar, for example, after having reserved what they need for their own use, bring the whole surplus to market, where they dispose of it in return for those other things which they do need. It must be quite obvious, that if there be more of this sugar exposed than there is a demand for, the great force of the competition will be among the sellers, to get it off their hands. Each will try to outstrip the others, by holding out a greater inducement for purchasers to buy from him—and this he can only do by holding it out to them on cheaper terms. It is thus that each tries to undersell the rest—or, in other words, the great supply of any article of exchange is always sure to bring down the price of it.

On the other hand, let the same article have been sparingly brought into the market, insomuch that, among the buyers, there is a demand for it to a greater extent than it is to be had. The force of the competition now changes place. It is among the purchasers, instead of the sellers. Each will try to outstrip his neighbours, by holding out a larger inducement to the holders of a commodity now rare, and, therefore, in more urgent request than usual. This he can only do by offering a greater price for it. It is thus that each tries to overbid the other—or, in other words, the small supply of any article of exchange is always sure to bring up the price of it.

The price, then, of a commodity falls with the increase of the supply, and rises with the diminution of it; a law of political economy, which is expressed still more shortly thus—that the price of every article of commerce is inversely in proportion to its supply.

But it is conceivable, that there might be no variation whatever in the supply—that, from one week to another, the same quantity of sugar, or corn, or any other commodity, may be brought to market, and yet, for all this, may there be a great weekly variation in the price of them. The truth is, that not only may the holders of an article have not always the same quantity on hand for sale, but the buyers may not always have the same need of it. There may be a fluctuation in the demand for an article, as well as in the supply of it; and it is quite evident that the price just rises and falls with the demand, instead of rising and falling inversely to it. Hence the more extended aphorism in political economy, that the price of any commodity is directly in proportion to the demand, and inversely in proportion to the supply—a doctrine that is somewhat more loosely and generally expressed, by saying that the price of an article depends upon the proportion which the demand and the supply bear to each other