

BEST ENGLISH AUTHORS AND THEIR SELECTED WORKS

VOL. I

EDITED BY

CHARLES KNIGHT.



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

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1990

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Selected and arranged with short biographical and critical notices, supplies this want. The selection, whether in POETRY OR PROSE—whether ESSAYS—CHARACTERS—STORIES—DESCRIPTIVE, NARRATIVE, OR DRAMATIC VERSE—REMARKABLE ADVENTURES—MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EXHORTATIONS—is confined to pieces of sufficient length to occupy half an hour's ordinary reading—or to pieces which can be so connected as to supply the same amount of instruction and amusement. Every seventh day being selected from some theological writer of universal acceptance and authority. The larger extracts, forming distinct "Half-Hours," are selected from different writers. In the smaller pieces, which are grouped under some general head, will be found selections from about forty writers, who have not contributed to the larger extracts. The volume, therefore, contains

SPECIMENS OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY WRITERS.

CHARLES KNIGHT.

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THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENCE ON THE WELL-BEING AND PROGRESS
OF SOCIETY.

HERSCHEL.

[SIR JOHN HERSCHEL, the author of a 'Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy' (forming a volume of Lardner's Cyclopædia), from which the following 'Half-hour' is extracted, stood at the head of the men of science of our own times. This is not the place to enlarge upon his eminent merits as a philosopher; but he claims especial regard from us, and from our readers, as being amongst the ablest and most generous of advocates for the Diffusion of Knowledge. We cannot forbear the pleasure of quoting a beautiful passage from an 'Address to the Subscribers to the Windsor and Eton Public Library,' delivered by him in 1833—a period when many eminent men believed, or affected to believe, that the people might be over-instructed. We give this as a fit introduction to a course of general reading, not selected for a class—not diluted or mangled in the belief that the great body of readers have depraved intellectual appetites and weak digestions—but taken from the best and the highest works in all literature—gems from the rich treasury of instruction and amusement which the master minds of the world, and especially of our own nation, have heaped up for an exhaustless and imperishable store:—

"If I were to pray for a taste which should stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss, and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading. I speak of it of course only as a worldly advantage, and not in the slightest degree as superseding or derogating from the higher office and surer and stronger panoply of religious principles—but as a taste, an instrument, and a mode of pleasurable gratification. Give a man this taste, and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making a happy man, unless, indeed, you put into his hands a most perverse selection of books. You place him in contact with the best society in every period of history—with the wisest, the wittiest—with the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters that have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations—a contemporary of all ages. The world has been created for him. It is hardly possible but the character should take a higher and better tone from the constant habit of associating in thought with a class of thinkers, to say the least of it, above the average of humanity. It is morally impossible but that the manners should take a tinge of good breeding and civilisation from having constantly before one's eyes the way in which the best bred and the best informed men have talked and conducted themselves in their intercourse with each other. There is a gentle but perfectly irresistible coercion in a habit of reading, well directed, over the whole tenor of a man's character and conduct, which is not the less effectual because it works insensibly, and because it is really the last thing he dreams of. It cannot, in short, be better summed up than in the words of the Latin poet—

'Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.'

It civilises the conduct of men—and *suffers* them not to remain barbarous." Died in 1871.]

The difference of the degrees in which the individuals of a great community enjoy the good things of life has been a theme of declamation and discontent in all ages; and it is doubtless our paramount duty, in every state of society, to alleviate the pressure of the purely evil part of this distribution as much as possible, and, by all

the means we can devise, secure the lower links in the chain of society from dragging in dishonour and wretchedness: but there is a point of view in which the picture is at least materially altered in its expression. In comparing society on its present immense scale, with its infant or less developed state, we must at least take care to enlarge every feature in the same proportion. If, on comparing the *very* lowest states in civilised and savage life, we admit a difficulty in deciding to which the preference is due, at least in every superior grade we cannot hesitate a moment; and if we institute a similar comparison in every different stage of its progress, we cannot fail to be struck with the rapid *rate of dilatation* which every degree upward of the scale, so to speak, exhibits, and which, in an estimate of averages, gives an immense preponderance to the present over every former condition of mankind, and, for aught we can see to the contrary, will place succeeding generations in the same degree of superior relation to the present that this holds to those passed away. Or we may put the same proposition in other words, and, admitting the existence of every inferior grade of advantage in a higher state of civilisation which subsisted in the preceding, we shall find, first, that, taking state for state, the proportional numbers of those who enjoy the higher degrees of advantage increases with a constantly accelerated rapidity as society advances; and, secondly, that the superior extremity of the scale is constantly enlarging by the addition of new degrees. The condition of a European prince is now as far superior, in the command of real comforts and conveniences, to that of one in the middle ages, as that to the condition of one of his own dependants.

The advantages conferred by the augmentation of our physical resources through the medium of increased knowledge and improved art, have this peculiar and remarkable property—that they are in their nature diffusive, and cannot be enjoyed in any exclusive manner by a few. An eastern despot may extort the riches and monopolise the art of his subjects for his own personal use; he may spread around him an unnatural splendour and luxury, and stand in strange and preposterous contrast with the general penury and discomfort of his people; he may glitter in jewels of gold and raiment of needle-work; but the wonders of well contrived and executed manufacture which we use daily, and the comforts which have been invented, tried, and improved upon by thousands, in every form of domestic convenience, and for every ordinary purpose of life, can never be enjoyed by him. To produce a state of things in which the physical advantages of civilised life can exist in a high degree, the stimulus of increasing comforts and constantly elevated desires must have been felt by millions; since it is not in the power of a few individuals to create that wide demand for useful and ingenious applications, which alone can lead to great and rapid improvements, unless backed by that arising from the speedy diffusion of the same advantages among the mass of mankind.

If this be true of physical advantages, it applies with still greater force to intellectual. Knowledge can neither be adequately cultivated nor adequately enjoyed by a few; and although the conditions of our existence on earth may be such as to preclude an abundant supply of the physical necessities of all who may be born, there is no such law of nature in force against that of our intellectual and moral wants. Knowledge is not, like food, destroyed by use, but rather augmented and perfected. It requires not, perhaps, a greater certainty, but at least a confirmed authority and a probable duration, by universal assent; and there is no body of knowledge so complete, but that it may acquire accession, or so free from error but that it may receive correction in passing through the minds of millions. Those who admire and love knowledge for its own sake ought to wish to see its elements made accessible to all, were it only that they may be the more thoroughly examined into, and more effectually developed in their consequences, and receive that ductility and plastic

quality which the pressure of minds of all descriptions, constantly moulding them to their purposes, can alone bestow. But to this end it is necessary that it should be divested, as far as possible, of artificial difficulties, and stripped of all such technicalities as tend to place it in the light of a craft and a mystery, inaccessible without a kind of apprenticeship. Science, of course, like every thing else, has its own peculiar terms, and, so to speak, its idioms of language; and these it would be unwise, were it even possible, to relinquish: but every thing that tends to clothe it in a strange and repulsive garb, and especially every thing that, to keep up an appearance of superiority in its professors over the rest of mankind, assumes an unnecessary guise of profundity and obscurity, should be sacrificed without mercy. Not to do this is to deliberately reject the light which the natural unencumbered good sense of mankind is capable of throwing on every subject, even in the elucidation of principles: but where principles are to be applied to practical uses it becomes absolutely necessary; as all mankind have then an interest in their being so familiarly understood, that no mistakes shall arise in their application.

The same remark applies to arts. They cannot be perfected till their whole processes are laid open, and their language simplified and rendered universally intelligible. Art is the application of knowledge to a practical end. If the knowledge be merely accumulated experience, the art is *empirical*; but if it be experience reasoned upon and brought under general principles, it assumes a higher character and becomes a *scientific art*. In the progress of mankind from barbarism to civilised life, the arts necessarily precede science. The wants and cravings of our animal constitution must be satisfied; the comforts and some of the luxuries of life must exist. Something must be given to the vanity of show, and more to the pride of power: the round of baser pleasures must have been tried and found insufficient before intellectual ones can gain a footing; and when they have obtained it, the delights of poetry and its sister arts still take precedence of contemplative enjoyments, and the severer pursuits of thought; and when these in time begin to charm from their novelty, and sciences begin to arise, they will at first be those of pure speculation. The mind delights to escape from the trammels which had bound it to earth, and luxuriates in its newly found powers. Hence, the abstractions of geometry—the properties of numbers—the movements of the celestial spheres—whatever is abstruse, remote, and extramundane—become the first objects of infant science. Applications come late: the arts continue slowly progressive, but their realm remains separated from that of science by a wide gulf which can only be passed by a powerful spring. They form their own language and their own conventions, which none but artists can understand. The whole tendency of empirical art is to bury itself in technicalities, and to place its pride in particular short cuts and mysteries known only to adepts; to surprise and astonish by results, but conceal processes. The character of science is the direct contrary. It delights to lay itself open to inquiry; and is not satisfied with its conclusions, till it can make the road to them broad and beaten: and in its applications it preserves the same character; its whole aim being to strip away all technical mystery, to illuminate every dark recess, with a view to improve them on rational principles. It would seem that a union of two qualities almost opposite to each other—a going forth of the thoughts in two directions, and a sudden transfer of ideas from a remote station in one to an equally distant one in the other—is required to start the first idea of *applying science*. Among the Greeks, this point was attained by Archimedes, but attained too late, on the eve of that great eclipse of science which was destined to continue for nearly eighteen centuries, till Galileo in Italy, and Bacon in England, at once dispelled the darkness: the one by his inventions and discoveries; the other, by the irresistible force of his arguments and eloquence.

Finally, the improvement effected in the condition of mankind by advances in physical science as applied to the useful purposes of life, is very far from being limited to their direct consequences in the more abundant supply of their physical wants, and the increase of our comforts. Great as these benefits are, they are yet but steps to others of a still higher kind. The successful results of our experiments and reasonings in natural philosophy, and the incalculable advantages which experience, systematically consulted and dispassionately reasoned on, has conferred in matters purely physical, tend of necessity to impress something of the well-weighed and progressive character of science on the more complicated conduct of our social and moral relations. It is thus that legislation and politics become gradually regarded as experimental sciences, and history, not, as formerly, the mere record of tyrannies and slaughters, which, by immortalising the execrable actions of one age, perpetuates the ambition of committing them in every succeeding one, but as the archive of experiments, successful and unsuccessful, gradually accumulating towards the solution of the grand problem—how the advantages of government are to be secured with the least possible inconvenience to the governed. The celebrated apophthegm, that nations never profit by experience, becomes yearly more and more untrue. Political economy, at least, is found to have sound principles, founded in the moral and physical nature of man, which, however lost sight of in particular measures—how-ever even temporarily controverted and borne down by clamour—have yet a stronger and stronger testimony borne to them in each succeeding generation, by which they must, sooner or later, prevail. The idea once conceived and verified, that great and noble ends are to be achieved, by which the condition of the whole human species shall be permanently bettered, by bringing into exercise a sufficient quantity of sober thoughts, and by a proper adaptation of means, is of itself sufficient to set us earnestly on reflecting what ends are truly great and noble, either in themselves, or as conducive to others of a still loftier character; because we are not now, as heretofore, hopeless of attaining them. It is not now equally harmless and insignificant, whether we are right or wrong; since we are no longer supinely and helplessly carried down the stream of events, but feel ourselves capable of buffeting at least with its waves, and perhaps of riding triumphantly over them: for why should we despair that the reason which has enabled us to subdue all nature to our purposes, should (if permitted and assisted by the providence of God) achieve a far more difficult conquest; and ultimately find some means of enabling the collective wisdom of mankind to bear down those obstacles which individual short-sightedness, selfishness, and passion, oppose to all improvements, and by which the highest hopes are continually blighted, and the fairest prospects marred.

THE PITEOUS DEATH OF THE SON OF GASTON DE FOIX.

FROISSART.

[THERE are few who have not heard of JOHN FROISSART, the most graphic of the old chroniclers. He was born at Valenciennes, about 1337, and early in life was dedicated to the church. He was scarcely twenty years old when he began to write a history of the English wars in France, chiefly compiled from another chronicler. This history he brings down to the battle of Poitiers in 1356; after which period his Chronicle has all the value of contemporary observation. His opportunities as an observer were very great; he was in the confidence of many of the sovereigns and nobles of his time, and was especially attached to the court of Edward III., being secretary to Queen Philippa. He closed a life, compounded of travel and ease, of labour and luxury, of native honesty and courtly arts, about the beginning of the fifteenth century. His description of the manner of life at the Count of Foix's house at Orthes

is one of the most picturesque of his passages; and a short extract may fitly introduce the quaint and touching story of the death of his son, which we give in Lord Berners' old translation: "At midnight, when he came out of his chamber into the hall to supper, he had ever before him twelve torches burning, borne by twelve varlets, standing before his table all supper. They gave a great light, and the hall was ever full of knights and squires, and many other tables were dressed to sup who would. There was none should speak to him at his table but if he were called. His meat was lightly, wild fowl, the legs and wings only, and in the day he did eat and drink but little. He had great pleasure in harmony of instruments; he could do it right well himself: he would have songs sung before him. He would gladly see conceits and fantasies at his table, and when he had seen it, then he would send it to the other tables bravely; all this I considered and advised. And ere I came to his court I had been in many courts of kings, dukes, princes, counts, and great ladies; but I was never in none that so well liked me. Nor there was none more rejoiced in deeds of arms than the count did; there was seen in his hall, chamber, and court, knights and squires of honour going up and down, and talking of arms and of amours: all honour there was found, all manner of tidings of every realm and country there might be heard, for out of every country there was resort, for the valiantness of this count."

Froissart describes his own intense curiosity to know "how Gaston, the count's son, died;" but no one would satisfy him. At last "so much I enquired, that an ancient squire, and a notable man, shewed the matter to me," and began thus—]

"True it is," quoth he, "that the Count of Foix and my Lady of Foix, his wife, agreeth not well together, nor have not done of a long season, and the discord between them was first moved by the King of Navarre, who was brother to the lady: for the King of Navarre pledged himself for the Duke Dalbret, whom the Count of Foix had in prison, for the sum of fifty thousand francs; and the Count of Foix, who knew that the King of Navarre was crafty and malicious, in the beginning would not trust him, wherewith the Countess of Foix had great displeasure and indignation against the count her husband, and said to him:—

"Sir, ye repute but small honour in the King of Navarre, my brother, when ye will not trust him for fifty thousand francs: though ye have no more of the Armagnacs, nor of the house of Dalbret, than ye have, it ought to suffice. And also, sir, ye know well ye should assign out my dower, which amounteth to fifty thousand francs, which ye should put into the hands of my brother, the King of Navarre; wherefore, sir, ye cannot be evil paid."

"Dame," quoth he, "ye say truth; but if I thought that the King of Navarre would stop the payment for that cause, the Lord Dalbret should never have gone out of Orthes, and so I should have been paid to the last penny; and since ye desire it, I will do it; not for the love of you, but for the love of my son."

"So by these words, and by the King of Navarre's obligation, who became debtor to the Count of Foix, the Lord Dalbret was delivered quit, and became French, and was married in France to the sister of the Duke of Bourbon, and paid at his ease to the King of Navarre the sum of fifty thousand francs for his ransom, for the which sum the king was bound to the Count of Foix; but he would not send it to the count.

"Then the Count of Foix said to his wife—'Dame, ye must go into Navarre to che king your brother, and shew him how I am not well content with him, that he will not send me that he hath received of mine.'

"The lady answered, how that she was ready to go at his commandment. And so she departed, and rode to Pampeluna to the king her brother, who received her with much joy. The lady did her message from point to point.

"Then the king answered—'Fair lady, the sum of money is yours. The count should give it for your dower; it shall never go out of the realm of Navarre since I have it in possession.'

"Ah, Sir," quoth the lady, "by this ye shall set great hate between the count,

my husband, and you ; and if ye hold your purpose, I dare not return again into the county of Foix, for my husband will slay me. He will say I have deceived him.'

"I cannot tell,' quoth the king, 'what ye will do ; either tarry or depart ; but as for the money I will not depart from it ; it pertaineth to me to keep it for you, but it shall never go out of Navarre.'

"The countess could have none other answer of the king her brother, and so she tarried still in Navarre, and dust not return again. The Count of Foix, when he saw the dealing of the King of Navarre, he began to hate his wife, and was evil content with her ; howbeit she was in no fault, but that she had not returned again when she had done her message. But she durst not, for she knew well the count, her husband, was cruel where he took displeasure. Thus the matter standeth.

"The count's son, called Gaston, grew and waxed goodly, and was married to the daughter of the Count of Armagnac, a fair lady, sister to the count that now is, the Lord Bertrand of Armagnac ; and, by the conjunction of that marriage, there should have been peace between Foix and Armagnac. The child was a fifteen or sixteen years of age, and resembled right well to his father. On a time he desired to go into Navarre to see his mother, and his uncle the King of Navarre ; which was in an evil hour for him and for all this country. When he was come into Navarre he had there good cheer, and tarried with his mother a certain space, and then took his leave ; but for all that he could do, he could not get his mother out of Navarre, to have gone with him into Foix. For she demanded if the count had commanded him so to do, or no ; and he answered, that when he departed the count spake nothing thereof. Therefore the lady durst not go thither, but so tarried still.

"Then the child went to Pampeluna to take his leave of the king, his uncle. The king made him great cheer, and tarried him there a ten days, and gave to him great gifts, and to his men. Also the last gift that the king gave him was his death. I shall show you how.

"When this gentleman should depart, the king drew him apart into his chamber, and gave him a little purse full of powder, which powder was such, that if any creature living did eat thereof, he should incontinent die without remedy. Then the king said, 'Gaston, fair nephew, ye shall do as I shall shew to you. Ye see how the Count of Foix, your father, wrongfully hath your mother, my sister, in great hate ; whereof I am sore displeased, and so ought ye to be ; howbeit, to perform all the matter, and that your father should love again your mother, to that intent ye shall take a little of this powder and put it on some meat that your father may eat it ; but beware that no man see you. And as soon as he hath eaten it, he shall intend to nothing but to have again his wife, and so to love her ever after, which ye ought greatly to desire ; and of this that I shew you let no man know, but keep it secret, or else ye lose all the deed.' The child, who thought all that the king said to him had been true, said, 'Sir, it shall be done as ye have devised ;' and so he departed from Pampeluna, and returned to Orthes. The count, his father, made him good cheer, and demanded tidings of the king of Navarre, and what gifts he had given him ; and the child showed him how he had given him divers, and shewed him all except the purse with the powder.

"Oftimes this young Gaston and Juan, his bastard brother, lay together, for they loved each other like brethren, and were like arrayed and apparelled, for they were near of a greatness and of one age ; and it happened on a time as their clothes lay together on their bed, Juan saw a purse at Gaston's coat, and said, 'What thing is this that ye bear ever about you ?' Whereof Gaston had no joy, and said, 'Juan, give me my coat, ye have nothing to do therewith :' and all that day after Gaston was pensive.

"And it fortun'd a three days after, as God would that the count should be

saved, Gaston and his brother Juan fell out together, playing at tennis, and Gaston gave him a blow, and the child went into his father's chamber and wept. And the count as then had heard mass, and when the count saw him weep, he said, 'Son Juan, what ailest thou?' 'Sir,' quoth he, 'Gaston hath beaten me, but he were more worthy to be beaten than me.' 'Why so?' quoth the count, and incontinent suspected nothing. 'By my faith, sir,' said he, 'since he returned out of Navarre, he beareth privily at his breast a purse full of powder; I wot not what it is, nor what he will do therewith, but he hath said to me once or twice, that my lady, his mother should shortly be again in your grace, and better beloved than ever she was.' 'Peace!' quoth the count, 'and speak no more, and show this to no man living.' 'Sir,' said he, 'no more I shall.' Then the count entered into imagination, and so came to the hour of his dinner; and he washed, and sat down at his table in the hall. Gaston, his son, was used to set down all his service, and to make the essays.* And when he had set down the first course, the count cast his eyes on him, and saw the strings of the purse hanging at his bosom. Then his blood changed, and he said, 'Gaston, come hither, I would speak with thee, in thine ear.' And the child came to him, and the count took him by the bosom, and found out the purse, and with his knife cut it from his bosom. The child was gashed, and stood still, and spake no word, and looked as pale as ashes for fear, and began to tremble. The Count of Foix opened the purse, and took of the powder, and laid it on a trencher of bread, and called to him a dog, and gave it him to eat; and as soon as the dog had eaten the first morsel, he turned his eyes in his head, and died incontinent. And when the count saw that, he was sore displeased, and also he had good cause, and so rose from the table, and took his knife, and would have stricken his son. Then the knights and squires ran between them, and said, 'Sir, for God's sake have mercy, and be not so hasty; be well informed first of the matter, ere you do any evil to your child.' And the first word that the count said, was, 'Ah; Gaston! traitor! for to increase thine heritage that should come to thee, I have had war and hatred of the French King, of the King of England, of the King of Spain, of the King of Navarre, and of the King of Arragon, and as yet I have borne all their malice, and now thou wouldest murder me; it moveth of an evil nature; but first thou shalt die with this stroke.' And so he stepped forth with his knife, and would have slain him; but then all the knights and squires kneeled down before him weeping, and said, 'Ah, Sir, have mercy for God's sake—slay not Gaston, your son. Remember ye have no more children; Sir, cause him to be kept, and take good information of the matter; peradventure he knew not what he bare, and peradventure is nothing guilty of the deed.' 'Well,' quoth the count, 'incontinent put him in prison, and let him be so kept that I may have a reckoning of him.' Then the child was put into the tower.

"And the count took a great many of them that served his son, and some of them departed; and as yet the Bishop of Lescar is out of the country, for he was had in suspect, and so were divers others. The count caused to be put to death a fifteen right horribly; and the cause that the count laid to them was, he said, it could be none otherwise but that they knew of the child's secrets, wherefore they ought to have showed it to him, and to have said, 'Sir, Gaston, your son, beareth a purse at his bosom.' Because they did not thus, they died horribly; whereof it was great pity, for some of them were as fresh and jolly squires as were any in all the country. For ever the count was served with good men.

"This thing touched the count near to the heart, and that he well shewed: for, on a day, he assembled at Orthes all the nobles and prelates of Foix and of Bierne, and all the notable persons of his country; and when they were all assembled, he

* Tasted the dishes, to prevent the poisoning of the prince.

shewed them wherefore he sent for them, as how he had found his son in this default, for the which he said his intent was to put him to death, as he had well deserved. Then all the people answered to that case with one voice, and said, 'Sir saving your grace, we will not that Gaston should die; he is your heir, and ye have no more.' And when the count heard the people, how they desired for his son, he somewhat refrained his ire. Then he thought to chastise him in prison a month or two, and then to send him on some voyage for two or three years, till he might somewhat forget his evil will, and that the child might be of greater age and of more knowledge.

"Then he gave leave to all the people to depart; but they of Foix would not depart from Orthes till the count should assure them that Gaston should not die; they loved the child so well. Then the count promised them, but he said he would keep him in prison a certain time to chastise him; and so upon this promise every man departed, and Gaston abode still in prison.

"These tidings spread abroad into divers places, and at that time Pope Gregory the Eleventh was at Avignon. Then he sent the Cardinal of Amiens in legation into Bierne, to have come to the Count of Foix for that business. And by that time he came to Beziers, he heard such tidings that he needed not to go any further for that matter; for there he heard how Gaston, son of the Count of Foix, was dead. Since I have showed you so much, now I shall show you how he died.

"The Count of Foix caused his son to be kept in a dark chamber, in the town of Orthes, a ten days; little did he eat or drink, yet he had enough brought him every day, but when he saw it he would go therefrom, and set little thereby. And some said that all the meat that had been brought him stood whole and entire the day of his death, wherefore it was great marvel that he lived so long, for divers reasons. The count caused him to be kept in the chamber alone, without any company, either to counsel or comfort him; and all that season the child lay in his clothes as he came in, and he argued in himself, and was full of melancholy, and cursed the time that ever he was born and engendered, to come to such an end.

"The same day that he died, they that served him of meat and drink, when they came to him, they said, 'Gaston, here is meat for you;' he made no care thereof and said, 'Set it down there.' He that served him regarded and saw in the prison all the meat stand whole as it had been brought him before, and so departed and closed the chamber-door, and went to the count and said, 'Sir, for God's sake have mercy on your son, Gaston, for he is near famished in prison; there he lieth. I think he never did eat any thing since he came into prison, for I have seen there this day all that ever I brought him before, lying together in a corner.' Of these words the count was sore displeased; and without any word speaking, went out of his chamber, and came to the prison where his son was, and in an evil hour. He had the same time a little knife in his hand to pare withal his nails. He opened the prison door and came to his son, and had the little knife in his hand, and in great displeasure he thrust his hand to his son's throat, and the point of the knife a little entered into his throat, into a certain vein, and said, 'Ah, traitor! why dost not thou eat thy meat?' And therewith the count departed without any more doing or saying, and went into his own chamber. The child was abashed, and afraid of the coming of his father, and also was feeble of fasting, and the point of the knife a little entered into a vein of his throat, and so he fell down suddenly and died. The count was scarcely in his chamber, but the keeper of the child came to him, and said.

'Sir, Gaston, your son, is dead!' 'Dead?' quoth the count. 'Yea, truly, Sir,' answered he. The count would not believe it, but sent thither a squire that was by him, and he went, and came again, and said, 'Sir, surely he is dead.' Then the count was sore displeased and made great complaint for his son, and said, 'Ah.

Gaston! what a poor adventure is this for thee, and for me! In an evil hour thou wentest to Navarre to see thy mother; I shall never have the joy that I had before! Then the count caused his barber to shave him, and clothed himself in black, and all his house, and with much sore weeping the child was borne to the Friars in Orthes, and there buried.

"Thus, as I have showed you, the Count of Foix slew Gaston, his son; but the King of Navarre gave the occasion of his death."

OLD DRAMATIC POETS.

SCENES FROM THE CITY MADAM.

MASSINGER.

[PHILIP MASSINGER, one of the most illustrious of the successors of Shakspeare, was born at Salisbury, in 1584. His father was in the household of the Earl of Pembroke. He was probably sent to college by the earl: but the favour of the great man appears to have been withdrawn from him in his mature years. He became a writer for the stage, and there is distinct evidence that his genius scarcely gave him bread. His dramas, which have been collected by Gifford, in four volumes, are of unequal merit; but of some the dramatic power, the characterization, the poetry, and the exhibition of manners, are of the very highest order. Massinger died in 1640.

In selecting a few scenes from 'The City Madam,' we endeavour to connect them with the plot, and with each other, by very slight links.]

SCENE I.

Sir John Frugal is a city merchant; his wife and two daughters of extravagant habits and boundless pride. Luke is brother to Sir John Frugal—a dependant on his bounty, having spent all his own substance. Lady Frugal and her daughters are first shown as treating Luke with unmitigated scorn and tyranny:—

Lady Frugal. Very good, Sir,
Were you drunk last night, that you could rise no sooner
With humble diligence, to do what my daughters
And women did command you?

Luke. Drunk, an't please you!

L. Frugal. Drunk, I said, sirrah! dar'st thou, in a look,
Repine, or grumble? Thou unthankful wretch,
Did our charity redeem thee out of prison,
(Thy patrimony spent,) ragged, and lousy,
When the sheriff's basket, and his broken meat
Were your festival-exceedings! and is this
So soon forgotten?

Luke. I confess I am
Your creature, madam.

L. Frugal. And good reason why
You should continue so.

Anne. Who did new clothe you?

Mary. Admitted you to the dining-room?

Millicent (Lady Frugal's maid). Allow'd you
A fresh-bed in the garret?

L. Frugal. Or from whom
Received you spending money?

Luke. I owe all this
 To your goodness, madam; for it you have my prayers.
 The beggar's satisfaction: all my studies—
 (Forgetting what I was, but with all duty
 Remembering what I am) are now to please you.
 And if in my long stay I have offended,
 I ask your pardon; though you may consider,
 Being forced to fetch these from the Old Exchange,
 These from the Tower, and these from Westminster,
 I could not come much sooner.

SCENE II.

Lord Lacy is a nobleman who is desirous that his son should marry one of the rich merchant's daughters. His deportment to Luke is a contrast to the vulgar insolence of Lady Frugal and her daughters:—

Lord Lacy. Your hand, Master Luke, the world's much changed
 with you
 Within these few months; then you were the gallant:
 No meeting at the horse-race, cocking, hunting,
 Shooting, or bowling, at which Master Luke
 Was not a principal gamester, and companion
 For the nobility.

Luke. I have paid dear
 For those follies, my good lord; and 'tis but justice
 That such as soar above their pitch and will not
 Be warn'd by my example, should, like me,
 Share in the miseries that wait upon it.
 Your honour, in your charity, may do well
 Not to upbraid me with those weaknesses,
 Too late repented.

L. Lacy. I nor do, nor will;
 And you shall find I'll lend a helping hand
 To raise your fortunes: how deals your brother with you?

Luke. Beyond my merit, I thank his goodness for 't.
 I am a free man; all my debts discharged;
 Nor does one creditor, undone by me,
 Curse my loose riots. I have meat and clothes,
 Time to ask Heaven remission for what's past;
 Cares of the world by me are laid aside,
 My present poverty's a blessing to me;
 And though I have been long, I dare not say
 I ever lived till now.

SCENE III.

The extravagance and pride of 'The City Madam' and her daughters, who have rejected the suit of two honourable men in the wantonness of their ambition, determine Sir John Frugal, in concert with Lord Lacy, to give out that he has retired into a monastery, and has left all his riches to his brother. Luke soliloquises upon his greatness:—

Luke. 'Twas no fantastic object, but a truth,
 A real truth; nor dream: I did not slumber,