

## LITERATURE, &amp;c.

## LAY SERMON TO YOUNG WOMEN.

THE means of improvement in regard to your sex are chiefly reading and conversation. The first gives you knowledge, and the latter teaches you how to use it; and much circumspection is requisite in both cases. Now, I must confess that I am seldom pleased with the books which I see in the hands of young ladies whom I esteem, and for whose well-being I am anxious. These circulating libraries are ruin for you, as from them you get so much that is nothing but froth and fume. I can never help being pleased when I see one of my own volumes in a young lady's hand whom I like, and yet I cannot say very much for them either; only thus much I can say, that these dreamy stories about ghosts and apparitions and persecutions are not half so apt to poison the mind as those of another class which I shall describe. Ladies' novels, for instance, with the exception only of those of two at present living, are all composed in a false taste, and at the same time convey so little instruction that it would be better for you never to open them. What benefit can a young mind receive from contemplating scenes which, though interesting, have neither nature nor probability to recommend them? You may see, perhaps, virtue rewarded and vice punished; but while these necessary acts of justice are painted, you see nothing of the reality of life, none of the characters with which you are acquainted; and it is far from being a safe amusement for young ladies to have their feelings and imaginations wrought upon the fictions of romance, even though the book should hold up nothing but the fairest sides of fair characters. The mind by these is apt to become too highly toned for the common incidents of life; and the readers of such works are apt to be wound up to such a pitch as to be precisely like those who never enjoy themselves save when they are under the influence of intoxication. Another bad thing in these books is, that they always bring virtue into trying and critical situations, so that you must have the delineation of the other,—all its modes of attack, and the most insinuating infusion of its poison. Vice cannot be exhibited in too detestable colours when the intention of the author is to make resistance meritorious. Where there is no allurements there is no temptation; and it too frequently happens that the worse character in the piece is the most engaging. It is even uniformly so with the greatest and most accomplished novelist that ever was born; and hence, in the mind of a young reader especially, all the distinctions between virtue and vice are broken down. Think, then, what mischief may be wrought in a youthful female mind by such pernicious representations of character. If the agreeable but wicked hero of the piece be reformed, there is a dangerous desire excited to make pro-selelytes; and if he be published, the tears which should have been shed for his guilt fall for the misfortunes of the guilty. I recommend therefore, to your attention those works which give a real picture of such characters as have existed in the world, and do exist, both for your profit and amusement; for whenever your author loses sight of nature and probability, you lose all hold of him and interest in his work. It is good to indulge in reading history; for though the incidents are often surprising, and such as one durst not exhibit in a novel, and likewise many of the characters above the capacity of ordinary readers to comprehend, it nevertheless has this to recommend it, that it gives a faithful and true picture of the passions which have agitated mankind, and the events which have resulted therefrom in real life, especially from the ambition of princes and the selfish intrigues of courtiers and flatterers. But in history, though we often see vice successful, it is as near amiable; and, from the nature of its composition, and the greatness of its objects, the series of events, the dignity of the actors, and the issue of all worldly events, which he does and must exhibit, you will receive lessons on human affairs well calculated to promote your knowledge and humility. There you see the rapid decay of all worldly grandeur, beauty, and ambition; so that the whole of history to a contemplative mind, is one huge *memento mori*—a good lesson still keep before your eyes. Romances, on the other hand, give a transient and false view of human life; the figures are overcharged with coloring, the whole is intended to please, and there is nothing in the back-ground to teach us that all is vanity. The personages of romance are indeed conducted through most difficult and distressing scenes; their virtue is exposed to the greatest risks, while the art of the author must, at all events, preserve it from contamination. Many delicate sentiments may be introduced, and much heroic love displayed, and, when you least expect it, the seas, and interventions of all sorts, which a little while before seemed altogether insurmountable, disappear at once; the stratagems of rivals, and the opposition of parents, are all exhausted; and the marriage of the hero and heroine closes the grand outrage-

ous fiction. Some of these works may be exceedingly amusing to you, though I confess they were never so to me; but I maintain that if you read such books, you will never be instructed. What are regarded as fine sentiments are of no use if arising out of unnatural and improbable adventure; and I farther assure you, on the credit of a poet, that I never knew a young lady the better of her reading when she read for excitement alone.—*The Eltrick Shepherd's Lay Sermons.*

## CUVIER'S NOTIONS OF EDUCATION.

GIVE schools before political rights; make citizens comprehend the duties that the state of society imposes on them; teach them what are political rights before you offer them for their enjoyment. Then all ameliorations will be made without causing a shock; then each new idea thrown upon good ground, will have time to germinate, to grow and to ripen, without convulsing the social body. Imitate nature, who, in the development of beings, acts by gradation, and gives time to every member of her most powerful elements. The infant remains nine months in the body of its mother; man's physical perfection only takes place at twenty or thirty, and his moral completion from thirty to forty. Institutions must have ages to produce their fruits—witness Christianity; the effects of which are not yet accomplished, notwithstanding a thousand years of existence.

## FROM MRS. HEMAN'S NATIONAL LYRICS.

## THE THEMES OF SONG.

WHERE shall the minstrel find a theme?  
Where'er for freedom shed,  
Brave blood hath dyed some ancient stream,  
Amidst the mountains red:

Where'er a rock, a fount, a grove,  
Bears record to the faith  
Of love, deep, holy, fervent love,  
Victor o'er fear and death:

Where'er a chieftain's crested brow  
Too soon hath been struck down,  
Or a bright virgin head laid low,  
Wearing its youth's first crown:

Where'er a spire points up to heaven,  
Through storm and summer air,  
Telling, that all around have striven  
Man's heart, and hope, and prayer:

Where'er a blessed home hath been,  
That now is home no more—  
A place of ivy, darkly green,  
Where laughter's light is o'er:

Where'er, by some forsaken grave,  
Some nameless greensward heap,  
A bird may sing, a wild flower wave,  
A star its vigil keep:

Or where a yearning heart of old,  
A dream of shepherd men,  
With forms of more than earthly mould  
Hath peopled grot or glen.

There may the bard's high themes be found.  
We die, we pass away;  
But faith, love, pity—these are bound  
To earth without decay.

The heart that burns, the cheek that glows,  
The tear from hidden springs,  
The thorn and glory of the rose—  
These are undying things.

Wave after wave of mighty stream  
To the deep sea hath gone;  
Yet not the less, like youth's bright dream,  
The exhaustless flood rolls on.

## STATE OF SPAIN.

CAPTAIN Cook states, in his Sketches, that Spain is at this moment precisely in those circumstances in which England was placed at the beginning of the reign of the Tudors; when vast territorial possessions were in the hands of a very few individuals, "of illustrious names but in a state of beggary and unable to divide their estates burdened to ruin by taxes and other charges, rather tied to their properties than deriving any benefit from them, the roads hardly passable, no canals or scarcely internal or external navigation or commerce, an enormous and unfathomable debt (unknown in these times) whilst all the rest of Europe was in the same situation as at present. We should have little idea of the judgment of ministers who should propose to raise their country to a par with others by the establishment of a few manufactures at Glasgow, if that portion of the kingdom belonging to them, whilst they left the whole of England, where the consumers of these manufactures were to be sought, in the same state of depression as before, and so far from relieving the proprietors of lands, were daily subjecting them to additional, unjust and illegal exactions.

## INFLUENCE OF WOMEN.

NATURE has given woman an influence over man more powerful, more perpetual, than his over her; from birth to death, he takes help and healing from her hand, under all the most touching circumstances of life; her bosom succours him in infancy, soothes him in manhood, supports him in sickness and in age. Such influence as this—beginning at the spring of life, and acting in all its most trying moments—must deteriorate or improve man's character—must diminish or increase his happiness—according to the moral and intellectual elevation or degradation of woman. Thus, upon her improvement in particular depends human improvement in general. Call, Rosina, upon all women to rise to a work that will bring such exceeding great reward. Tell them to think more of their sex, and less of their sex, and less of themselves—and more of universal humanity than of either. The rivalry of pretty faces and French fashions, the cruelties of coquetry, and the follies of flirtation, are all *blasphemies* against their own power, their own privilege—that of perfecting the moral happiness and intellectual character of human nature.—*Mr Leman Grimstone's Cleone.*

## CHRISTIANITY AND UTILITARIANISM.

CHRISTIANITY considers every act grounded on mere worldly consequences as built on a false foundation. The mainspring of every virtue is placed by it in the affections, called into renewed strength by a feeling of self abasement—by gratitude for an immortal benefit—by communion with God—and by the hopes of everlasting life. Humility in the foundation of the Christian's honour, distrust of self is the ground of his strength, and his religion tells him that every work of man is counted worthless in the sight of Heaven, as the means of his pardon or the price of his redemption. Yet it gives him a pure and perfect rule to life; and does not, for an instant, exempt him from the duty of obedience to this rule: for it ever aims at a purgation of the moral faculties, and a renewal of the defaced image of God; and its moral precepts have an everlasting sanction. And thus does Christian love become an efficient and abiding principle, not tested by the world but above the world; yet reaching the life-spring of every virtuous deed, and producing in its season a harvest of good and noble works incomparably more abundant than ever rose from any other soil. The utilitarian scheme starts, on the contrary, with an abrogation of the authority of conscience—a rejection of the moral feelings as the test of right and wrong. From first to last, it is in bondage to the world, measuring every act by a worldly standard, and estimating its value by worldly consequences. Virtue becomes a question of calculation—a matter of profit or loss; and if man gain heaven at all on such a system, it must be by arithmetical details—the computation of his daily work—the balance of his moral ledger. A conclusion such as this offends against the spirit breathing in every page of the book of life; yet it is fairly drawn from the principles of utility. It appears, indeed, not only to have been foreseen by Paley, but to have been accepted by him—a striking instance of the tenacity with which man ever clings to system, and is ready to embrace even its monstrous consequences rather than believe that he has himself been building on a wrong foundation. Utilitarian philosophy and Christian ethics have in their principle and motives no common bond of union, and ought never to have been linked together in one system: for, palliate and disguise the differences as we may, we shall find at last that they rest on separate foundations; one deriving all its strength from the moral feelings, and the other from the selfish passions of our nature. Religion renounces this unholy union; and the system of utility standing by itself, and without the shelter of a heavenly garment not its own, is seen in its true colours, and in all the nakedness of its deformity.—*Sedgwick on the Studies of Cambridge.*

## CHARACTER OF THE RUSSIAN POPULATION.

IN point of quickness and intelligence, the Russian yields none. I believe there is no people on earth who are such adepts at acquiring foreign languages. The lower orders, which constitute the great mass of the community, may be considered as a mild patient, inoffensive, and enduring people, extremely good humoured and cheerful, always contented and always ready to oblige, respectful in their superiors, and obedient to command; and even those who are in a state of slavery—often nominal, it is true—are well treated by their masters, well fed, according to their tastes, with a due proportion of black bread, garlic, and quass, well clothed, and are, in fact, among the happiest people on earth. It is true they are disgustingly filthy; but it is almost unavoidable in Northern Russia, where sheep skin clothing, airless stoves, and close hovels produce vermin of various kinds, from which their superiors, clad in furs are not always exempt.—*Barrow's Excursion to the North of Europe.*