

THE AMARANTH.

CONDUCTED BY ROBERT SHIVES.

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{ No. 2.

LAST DAYS OF PRINCES.

the true but forcible apothegm is Philosophy teaching by example. It will perhaps be found that the last days of princes afford more ample scope for reflection, and yield more useful instruction in every department of philosophy, than are to be derived from all the preceding events of their reigns as they are successively called up to memory, and in a language that could be derived from the lives of any other class of mankind. It is at such a juncture that the monarch is induced to take a review of the life and career of the departing great one of the earth; and we feel impelled to calculate the amount of the good or evil, which has been the effect of his promptings or the result of his actions. We are irresistibly moved, at such a time, to investigate *motives* as well as consequences, and, while we attempt to trace the progress of events, we endeavour to ascertain whether they have terminated according to the true intent of the mover, or whether they have brought about a state of things which he neither expected nor desired.

In such examinations like these, we may not unexpectedly discover, on the one hand, that benevolence of motive and wisdom of design, through an adverse concurrence of circumstances, not only turned to misfortune in result, but have fixed an undeserved and glaring stigma on the character of their possessor; and that they have frequently embittered the latter days of those whose evening ought, in worldly justice, to have been peaceful and tranquility. On the other hand, it is an unusual thing to find that projects, which had their origin in no nobler source than pride or ambition, or which may even have been still more sordid motives, have nevertheless terminated in glory, have set a halo round their heads where real desert was wanting, and induced, even in the individual himself, a

false estimate of his own qualifications, intentions, and actions.

But the death-bed, with the consciousness that in all human probability it is such, is a wonderful illuminator of the soul. However mankind may deceive others, however they may deceive themselves, while in the glow of health, and in the vigor of action, *here* are the hour and the scene that will compel the presence of truth, and cause us to know ourselves as we really are. Not that to those around, even at such moments, is the true state of the heart always displayed, for the hardest mortal task, to the vain and obstinate heart of man, is the confession of error and the acknowledgment of wrong. We may, like the cardinal, "Die and make no sign;" but, if the reflective and reasoning faculties have not forsaken their seats, the tide of retrospection will force its flood upon us, and well is it if it do not sweep away our hopes and our strongest dependencies.

Without violating the truth of history, then, we may place before us, as in a moving picture, any prince who has swayed the sceptre of power on earth; and, in moments such as we have here assumed, we may call up the principal events in his career, arraign his life, actions, and disposition, try him by the evidence of fact, enter into his secret soul, and pluck from thence such lessons of wisdom, humility, and varieties of conscious feeling, as may be salutary to any condition of human existence;—remembering always, that human nature is the same in all conditions, and that the virtues and the vices of the great differ not from those of the humbler classes of society, save only as they may be modified from the effect of mental and moral education, or the power of volition, and of action.

NO. 1. — WILLIAM, THE CONQUEROR.

— "Within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king,