

THE FRIEND:

A Series of Essays,

TO AID IN THE FORMATION OF FIXED PRINCIPLES IN POLITICS, MORALS,
AND RELIGION.

WITH LITERARY AMUSEMENTS INTERSPERSED.

BY

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

*Accipe principium rursus, formamque coactam
Desere: mutatâ melior procede figurâ.*

CLAUDIAN.

LONDON:
BELL & DALDY, 6, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN,
1867.

THE
LANDING-PLACE;

OR,

*ESSAYS INTERPOSED FOR AMUSEMENT, RETROSPECT,
AND PREPARATION.*

MISCELLANY THE FIRST.

Etiani a Musis si quando animum paulisper abducamus, apud Musas nihilominus feriamur:
at reclines quidem, at otiosas, at de his et illis inter se liberè colloquentes.

all their knowledge of Luther from the meagre biography met with in "The Lives of eminent Reformers," or even from the ecclesiastical histories of Mosheim or Milner: for a life of Luther, in extent and style of execution proportioned to the grandeur and interest of the subject, a life of the man Luther, as well as of Luther the theologian, is still a desideratum in English literature, though perhaps there is no subject for which so many unused materials are extant, both printed and in manuscript.*



ESSAY II.

Is it, I ask, most important to the best interests of mankind, temporal as well as spiritual, that certain works, the names and number of which are fixed and unalterable, should be distinguished from all other works, not in degree only but even in kind? And that these, collectively should form THE BOOK, to which, in all the concerns of faith and morality the last recourse is to be had, and from the decisions of which no man dare appeal? If the mere existence of a book so called and characterized be, as the Koran itself suffices to evince, a mighty bond of union, among nations whom all other causes tend to separate; if moreover the book revered by us and our forefathers has been the foster-nurse of learning in the darkest, and of civilization in the rudest, times; and lastly, if this so vast and wide a blessing is not to be founded in a delusion, and doomed therefore to the impermanence and scorn in which sooner or later all delusions must end, how, I pray you, is it conceivable that this should be brought about and secured, otherwise than by a special vouchsafement to this one Book, exclusively, of that divine mean, that uniform and perfect middle way, which in all points is at safe and equal distance from all errors whether of excess or defect? But again if this be true, (and what Protestant Christian worthy of his baptismal dedication will deny its truth?) surely we ought not to be hard and over-stern in our censures of the mistakes and infirmities of those, who pretending to no warrant of extraordinary inspiration have yet been raised up by God's providence to be of highest power and eminence in the reformation of His Church. Far rather does it behove us to consider, in how many instances the peccant humour native to the man had been wrought upon by the faithful study of that only faultless model, and corrected into an unsinning, or at least a venial, predominance in the writer or preacher. Yea, that not seldom the infirmity of a zealous soldier in the warfare of Christ has been made the very mould and ground-work of that man's peculiar gifts and virtues. Grateful too we should be, that the very faults of famous men have been fitted to the age on which they were to act; and that thus the folly of man has proved the wisdom of God, and been made the instrument of His mercy to mankind. ANON.

WHOEVER has sojourned in Eisenach,† will assuredly have visited the Warteburg, interesting by so many historical associations, which stands on a high rock, about two miles to the south from the city gate. To this castle Luther was taken on his return from the imperial Diet, where Charles V., had pronounced the ban upon him, and limited his safe convoy to one and twenty days. On the last but one of these

* The affectionate respect in which I hold the name of Dr. Jortin (one of the many illustrious nurselings of the College to which I deem it no small honour to have belonged — Jesus, Cambridge) renders it painful to me to assert, that the above remark holds almost equally true of a Life of Erasmus. But every scholar well read in the writings of Erasmus and his illustrious contemporaries,

must have discovered, that Jortin had neither collected sufficient, nor the best, materials for his work; and (perhaps from that very cause) he grew weary of his task, before he had made a full use of the scanty materials which he had collected.

† Durchflüge durch Deutschland, die Niederlande und Frankreich: zweit. theil. p. 126.

days, as he was on his way to Waltershausen (a town in the duchy of Saxe Gotha, a few leagues to the south-east of Eisenach) he was stopped in a hollow behind the Castle Altenstein, and carried to the Warteburg. The Elector of Saxony, who could not have refused to deliver up Luther, as one put in the ban by the Emperor and the Diet, had ordered John of Berleptsch, the governor of the Warteburg, and Burckhardt von Hundt, the governor of Altenstein, to take Luther to one or the other of these castles, without acquainting him which; in order that he might be able, with safe conscience, to declare, that he did not know where Luther was. Accordingly they took him to the Warteburg, under the name of the Chevalier (Ritter) George.

To this friendly imprisonment the Reformation owes many of Luther's most important labours. In this place he wrote his works against auricular confession, against Jacob Latronum, the tract on the abuse of Masses, that against clerical and monastic vows, composed his Exposition of the 22nd, 27th, and 68th Psalms, finished his Declaration of the Magnificat, began to write his Church Homilies, and translated the New Testament. Here too, and during this time, he is said to have hurled his ink-stand at the Devil, the black spot from which yet remains on the stone wall of the room he studied in; which, surely, no one will have visited the Warteburg without having had pointed out to him by the good Catholic who is, or at least some few years ago was, the Warden of the castle. He must have been either a very supercilious or a very incurious traveller if he did not, for the gratification of his guide at least, inform himself by means of his pen-knife, that the said marvellous blot bids defiance to all the toils of the scrubbing brush, and is to remain a sign for ever; and with this advantage over most of its kindred, that being capable of a double interpretation, it is equally flattering to the Protestant and the Papist, and is regarded by the wonder-loving zealots of both parties, with equal faith.

Whether the great man ever did throw his ink-stand at his Satanic Majesty, whether he ever boasted of the exploit, and himself declared the dark blotch on his study wall in the Warteburg, to be the result and relict of this author-like hand-grenado, (happily for mankind he used his ink-stand at other times to better purpose, and with more effective hostility against the arch-fiend,) I leave to my reader's own judgment; on condition, however, that he has previously perused Luther's Table Talk, and other writings of the same stamp, of some of his most illustrious contemporaries, which contain facts still more strange and whimsical, related by themselves and of themselves, and accompanied with solemn protestations of the truth of their statements. Luther's Table Talk, which to a truly philosophic mind will not be less interesting than Rousseau's Confessions, I have not myself the means of consulting at present, and cannot therefore say, whether this ink-pot adventure is, or

is not, told or referred to in it; but many considerations incline me to give credit to the story.

Luther's unremitting literary labour and his sedentary mode of life, during his confinement in the Warteburg, where he was treated with the greatest kindness, and enjoyed every liberty consistent with his own safety, had begun to undermine his former unusually strong health. He suffered many and most distressing effects of indigestion and a deranged state of the digestive organs. Melancthon, whom he had desired to consult the physicians at Erfurth, sent him some deobstruent medicines, and the advice to take regular and severe exercise. At first he followed the advice, sate and laboured less, and spent whole days in the chase; but like the younger Pliny, he strove in vain to form a taste for this favourite amusement of the "Gods of the earth," as appears from a passage in his letter to George Spalatin, which I translate for an additional reason: to prove to the admirers of Rousseau, (who perhaps will not be less affronted by this biographical parallel, than the zealous Lutherans will be offended,) that if my comparison should turn out groundless on the whole, the failure will not have arisen either from the want of sensibility in our great reformer, or of angry aversion to those in high places, whom he regarded as the oppressors of their rightful equals. "I have been," he writes, "employed for two days in the sports of the field, and was willing myself to taste this bitter-sweet amusement of the great heroes: we have caught two hares, and one brace of poor little partridges. An employment this which does not ill suit quiet leisurely folks: for even in the midst of the ferrets and dogs, I have had theological fancies. But as much pleasure as the general appearance of the scene and the mere looking on occasioned me, even so much it pitied me to think of the mystery and emblem which lies beneath it. For what does this symbol signify, but that the Devil, through his godless huntsmen and dogs, the Bishops and Theologians to wit, doth privily chase and catch the innocent poor little beasts? Ah! the simple and credulous souls came thereby far too plain before my eyes. Thereto comes a yet more frightful mystery: as at my earnest entreaty we had saved alive one poor little hare, and I had concealed it in the sleeve of my great-coat, and had strolled off a short distance from it, the dogs in the meantime found the poor hare. Such, too, is the fury of the Pope with Satan, that he destroys even the souls that had been saved, and troubles himself little about my pains and entreaties. Of such hunting then I have had enough." In another passage he tells his correspondent, "you know it is hard to be a prince, and not in some degree a robber, and the greater a prince the more a robber." Of our Henry VIII. he says, "I must answer the grim lion that passes himself off for King of England. The ignorance in the book is such as one naturally expects from a King; but the bitterness and impudent falsehood is quite leonine." And in his

circular letter to the princes, on occasion of the peasants war, he uses a language so inflammatory, and holds forth a doctrine which borders so near on the holy right of insurrection, that it may as well remain untranslated.

Had Luther been himself a prince, he could not have desired better treatment than he received during his eight months' stay in the Warteburg; and in consequence of a more luxurious diet than he had been accustomed to, he was plagued with temptations both from the "flesh and the devil." It is evident from his letters* that he suffered under great irritability of his nervous system, the common effect of deranged digestion in men of sedentary habits, who are at the same time intense thinkers; and this irritability added to, and revivifying, the impressions made upon him in early life, and fostered by the theological systems of his manhood, is abundantly sufficient to explain all his apparitions and all his nightly combats with evil spirits. I see nothing improbable in the supposition, that in one of those unconscious half-sleeps, or rather those rapid alternations of the sleeping with the half-waking state, which is the true witching time,—

the season

Wherein the spirits hold their wont to walk,

the fruitful matrix of ghosts—I see nothing improbable, that in some one of those momentary slumbers, into which the suspension of all thought in the perplexity of intense thinking so often passes, Luther should have had a full view of the room in which he was sitting, of his writing-table and all the implements of study as they really existed, and at the same time a brain-image of the Devil, vivid enough to have acquired apparent *outness*, and a distance regulated by the proportion of its distinctness to that of the objects really impressed on the outward senses.

If this Christian Hercules, this heroic cleanser of the Augean stable of apostacy, had been born and educated in the present or the preceding generation, he would, doubtless, have held himself for a man of genius and original power. But with this faith alone he would scarcely have removed the mountains which he did remove. The darkness and superstition of the age, which required such a reformer, had moulded his mind for the reception of ideas concerning himself, better suited to inspire the strength and enthusiasm necessary for the task of reformation, ideas more in sympathy with the spirits whom he was to influence. He deemed himself gifted with supernatural influxes, an especial servant of Heaven, a chosen warrior, fighting as the general of a small but faithful

* I can scarcely conceive a more delightful volume than might be made from Luther's letters, especially from those that were written from the Warteburg, if they were translated in the simple, sinewy, idiomatic, hearty mother-tongue of the original. A

difficult task I admit—and scarcely possible for any man, however great his talents in other respects, whose favourite reading has not lain among the English writers from Edward VI. to Charles I.

troop, against an army of evil beings headed by the prince of the air. These were no metaphorical beings in his apprehension. He was a poet indeed, as great a poet as ever lived in any age or country; but his poetic images were so vivid, that they mastered the poet's own mind! He was possessed with them, as with substances distinct from himself: Luther did not write, he acted poems. The Bible was a spiritual indeed but not a figurative armoury in his belief: it was the magazine of his warlike stores, and from thence he was to arm himself, and supply both shield and sword, and javelin, to the elect. Methinks I see him sitting, the heroic student, in his chamber in the Warteburg, with his midnight lamp before him, seen by the late traveller in the distant plain of Bischofsroda, as a star on the mountain! Below it lies the Hebrew Bible open, on which he gazes, his brow pressing on his palm, brooding over some obscure text, which he desires to make plain to the simple boor and to the humble artizan, and to transfer its whole force into their own natural and living tongue. And he himself does not understand it! Thick darkness lies on the original text: he counts the letters, he calls up the roots of each separate word, and questions them as the familiar spirits of an oracle. In vain! thick darkness continues to cover it! not a ray of meaning dawns through it. With sullen and angry hope he reaches for the Vulgate, his old and sworn enemy, the treacherous confederate of the Roman anti-Christ, which he so gladly, when he can, rebukes for idolatrous falsehoods, that had dared place

Within the sanctuary itself their shrines.
Abominations!

Now—O thought of humiliation!—he must entreat its aid. See! there has the sly spirit of apostacy worked in a phrase, which favours the doctrine of purgatory, the intercession of saints, or the efficacy of prayers for the dead. And what is worst of all, the interpretation is plausible. The original Hebrew might be forced into this meaning: and no other meaning seems to lie in it, none to hover above it in the heights of allegory, none to lurk beneath it even in the depths of Cabala! This is the work of the tempter! it is a cloud of darkness conjured up between the truth of the sacred letters and the eyes of his understanding, by the malice of the evil one, and for a trial of his faith! Must he then at length confess, must he subscribe the name of Luther to an exposition which consecrates a weapon for the hand of the idolatrous hierarchy? Never! never!

There still remains one auxiliary in reserve, the translation of the seventy. The Alexandrine Greeks, anterior to the Church itself, could intend no support to its corruptions—the Septuagint will have profaned the altar of truth with no incense for the nostrils of the universal bishop to snuff up. And here again his hopes are baffled! Exactly at this perplexed passage had the Greek translator given his understanding a

holiday, and made his pen supply its place. O honoured Luther! as easily mightest thou convert the whole city of Rome, with the Pope and the conclave of Cardinals inclusive, as strike a spark of light from the words, and nothing but words, of the Alexandrine Version. Disappointed, despondent, enraged, ceasing to think, yet continuing his brain on the stretch in solicitation of a thought; and gradually giving himself up to angry fancies, to recollections of past persecutions, to uneasy fears and inward defiances and floating images of the evil being, their supposed personal author; he sinks, without perceiving it, into a trance of slumber: during which his brain retains its waking energies, excepting that what would have been mere thoughts before, now (the action and counterweight of his senses and of their impressions being withdrawn,) shape and condense themselves into things, into realities! Repeatedly half-wakening, and his eye-lids as often re-closing, the objects which really surround him form the placid scenery of his dream. All at once he sees the arch-fiend coming forth on the wall of the room, from the very spot perhaps on which his eyes had been fixed vacantly during the perplexed moments of his former meditation; the ink-stand, which he had at the same time been using, becomes associated with it; and in that struggle of rage, which in these distempered dreams almost constantly precedes the helpless terror by the pain of which we are finally awakened, he imagines that he hurls it at the intruder, or not improbably in the first instant of awakening, while yet both his imagination and his eyes are possessed by the dream, he actually hurls it. Some weeks after, perhaps, during which interval he had often mused on the incident, undetermined whether to deem it a visitation of Satan to him in the body or out of the body, he discovers for the first time the dark spot on his wall, and receives it as a sign and pledge vouchsafed to him of the event having actually taken place.

Such was Luther under the influences of the age and country in and for which he was born. Conceive him a citizen of Geneva, and a contemporary of Voltaire: suppose the French language his mother-tongue, and the political and moral philosophy of English free-thinkers remodelled by Parisian fort esprits, to have been the objects of his study;—conceive this change of circumstances, and Luther will no longer dream of fiends or of anti-Christ—but will he have no dreams in their place? His melancholy will have changed its drapery; but will it find no new costume wherewith to clothe itself? His impetuous temperament, his deep-working mind, his busy and vivid imaginations—would they not have been a trouble to him in a world, where nothing was to be altered, where nothing was to obey his power, to cease to be that which it had been, in order to realize his preconceptions of what it ought to be? His sensibility, which found objects for itself, and shadows of human suffering in the harmless brute, and even in the flowers which he trod upon—might

it not naturally, in an unspiritualized age, have wept, and trembled, and dissolved, over scenes of earthly passion, and the struggles of love with duty? His pity, that so easily passed into rage, would it not have found in the inequalities of mankind, in the oppressions of governments and the miseries of the governed, an entire instead of a divided object? And might not a perfect constitution, a government of pure reason, a renovation of the social contract, have easily supplied the place of the reign of Christ in the new Jerusalem, of the restoration of the visible Church, and the union of all men by one faith in one charity? Henceforward then, we will conceive his reason employed in building up anew the edifice of earthly society, and his imagination as pledging itself for the possible realization of the structure. We will lose the great reformer, who was born in an age which needed him, in the philosopher of Geneva, who was doomed to misapply his energies to materials the properties of which he misunderstood, and happy only that he did not live to witness the direful effects of his system.

ESSAY III.

Pectora cui credam? quis me lenire docebit
 Mordaces curas, quis longas fallere noctes
 Ex quo summa dies tulerit Damona sub umbras?
 Omnia paulatim consumit longior ætas,
 Vivendoque simul morimur, rapimurque manendo.
 Ite tamen, lacrymæ! purum colis æthera, Damon!
 Nec mihi conveniunt lacrymæ. Non omnia terræ
 Obruta! vivit amor, vivit dolor! ora negatur
 Dulcia conspicere: flere et meminisse relictum est.

THE two following essays I devote to elucidation, the first of the theory of Luther's apparitions stated perhaps too briefly in the preceding number: the second for the purpose of removing the only difficulty, which I can discover in the next section of *The Friend*, to the reader's ready comprehension of the principles, on which the arguments are grounded. First, I will endeavour to make my ghost-theory more clear to those of my readers, who are fortunate enough to find it obscure in consequence of their own good health and unshattered nerves. The window of my library at Keswick is opposite to the fire-place, and looks out on the very large garden that occupies the whole slope of the hill on which the house stands. Consequently, the rays of light transmitted through the glass (*i.e.* the rays from the garden, the opposite mountains, and the bridge, river, lake, and vale interjacent) and the rays reflected from it (of the fire-place, &c.) enter the eye at the same moment. At the coming on of evening, it was my frequent amusement to watch the image or reflection of the fire, that seemed burning in the bushes or between the trees in different parts of the garden or the fields beyond it, according

as there was more or less light ; and which still arranged itself among the real objects of vision, with a distance and magnitude proportioned to its greater or lesser faintness. For still as the darkness increased, the image of the fire lessened and grew nearer and more distinct ; till the twilight had deepened into perfect night, when all outward objects being excluded, the window became a perfect looking-glass : save only that my books on the side shelves of the room were lettered, as it were, on their backs with stars, more or fewer as the sky was more or less clouded, (the rays of the stars being at that time the only ones transmitted). Now substitute the phantom from Luther's brain for the images of reflected light (the fire for instance), and the forms of his room and its furniture for the transmitted rays, and you have a fair resemblance of an apparition, and a just conception of the manner in which it is seen together with real objects. I have long wished to devote an entire work to the subject of dreams, visions, ghosts, witchcraft, &c. in which I might first give, and then endeavour to explain the most interesting and best attested fact of each, which has come within my knowledge, either from books or from personal testimony. I might then explain in a more satisfactory way the mode in which our thoughts, in states of morbid-slumber, become at times perfectly dramatic (for in certain sorts of dreams the dullest wight becomes a Shakespeare), and by what law the form of the vision appears to talk to us its own thoughts in a voice as audible as the shape is visible ; and this too oftentimes in connected trains, and not seldom even with a concentration of power which may easily impose on the soundest judgements, uninstructed in the optics and acoustics of the inner sense, for revelations and gifts of prescience. In aid of the present case, I will only remark, that it would appear incredible to persons not accustomed to these subtle notices of self-observation, what small and remote resemblances, what mere *hints* of likeness from some real external object, especially if the shape be aided by colour, will suffice to make a vivid thought consubstantiate with the real object, and derive from it an outward perceptibility. Even when we are broad awake, if we are in anxious expectation, how often will not the most confused sounds of nature be heard by us as articulate sounds ? For instance, the babbling of a brook will appear for a moment the voice of a friend, for whom we are waiting, calling out our own names, &c. A short meditation, therefore, on the great law of the imagination, that a likeness in part tends to become a likeness of the whole, will make it not only conceivable but probable, that the inkstand itself, and the dark-coloured stone on the wall, which Luther perhaps had never till then noticed, might have a considerable influence in the production of the fiend, and of the hostile act by which his obtrusive visit was repelled.

A lady once asked me if I believed in ghosts and apparitions. I answered with truth and simplicity : " No, madam ! I have seen far too

many myself." I have indeed a whole memorandum-book filled with records of these phenomena, many of them interesting as facts and data for psychology, and affording some valuable materials for a theory of perception and its dependence on the memory and imagination. "*In omnem actum perceptionis imaginatio influit efficienter.*"—Wolfe. But he is no more who would have realized this idea, who had already established the foundations and the law of the theory; and for whom I had so often found a pleasure and a comfort, even during the wretched and restless nights of sickness, in watching and instantly recording these experiences of the world within us, of the "*gemina natura, quæ fit et facit, et creat et creatur!*" He is gone, my friend! my munificent co-patron, and not less the benefactor of my intellect!—He who, beyond all other men known to me, added a fine and ever-wakeful sense of beauty to the most patient accuracy in experimental philosophy and the profounder researches of metaphysical science; he who united all the play and spring of fancy with the subtlest discrimination and an inexorable judgment; and who controlled an almost painful exquisiteness of taste by a warmth of heart, which in the practical relations of life made allowances for faults as quick as the moral taste detected them; a warmth of heart, which was indeed noble and pre-eminent, for alas! the genial feelings of health contributed no spark towards it! Of these qualities I may speak, for they belonged to all mankind.—The higher virtues, that were blessings to his friends, and the still higher that resided in and for his own soul, are themes for the energies of solitude, for the awfulness of prayer!—virtues exercised in the barrenness and desolation of his animal being; while he thirsted with the full stream at his lips, and yet with unwearied goodness poured out to all around him, like the master of a feast among his kindred in the day of his own gladness! Were it but for the remembrance of him alone and of his lot here below, the disbelief of a future state would sadden the earth around me, and blight the very grass in the field.



ESSAY IV.

Καλεπὸν, ὦ δαιμόνιε, μὴ παραδείγμασι χρώμενον ἰκανῶς ἐνδείκνυσθαί τι τῶν μειζόνων. κινδυνέει γὰρ ἡμῶν ἕκαστος ὄλον ὄναρ, εἰδῶς ἅπαντα, παντ' αὐ πάλιν ὥσπερ ὑπάρ ἀγγεῖν.

PLATO, Polit. p. 47, Ed. Bip.

(Translation.)—It is difficult, excellent friend! to make any comprehensive truth completely intelligible, unless we avail ourselves of an example. Otherwise we may as in a dream, seem to know all, and then as it were, awaking find that we know nothing.—PLATO.

AMONG my earliest impressions I still distinctly remember that of my first entrance into the mansion of a neighbouring baronet, awfully known to me by the name of the Great House, its exterior having been long connected in my childish imagination with the feelings and fancies