

THE

RURAL REPOSITORY

DEVOTED TO

POLITE LITERATURE,

SUCH AS MORAL AND SENTIMENTAL TALES, BIOGRAPHY, TRAVELING SKETCHES, NOTICES OF NEW PUBLICATIONS, POETRY, AMUSING MISCELLANY, HUMOROUS AND HISTORICAL ANECDOTES, &c. &c.

ENLARGED AND IMPROVED.

VOLUME XIII.—IV. NEW SERIES.

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DEVOTED TO POLITE LITERATURE, SUCH AS MORAL AND SENTIMENTAL TALES, ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS, BIOGRAPHY, TRAVELING SKETCHES, AMUSING MISCELLANY, HUMOROUS AND HISTORICAL ANECDOTES, SUMMARY, POETRY, &c.

VOL. XIII.—[IV. NEW SERIES.]

HUDSON, N. Y. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1836.

NO. 11.

SUBJECT TALES.

From the Saturday Evening Post.

The Spirit of the Potomac.

—Methinks I see them yet,
In their frolic mirth, their young delights,
Their cheerful age.—How sweet to hear
Their tale of sorrows past! and with
Their hope of years to come.—*Aæn.*

THE Warbridge farm and Stanwood house are two places amongst the many I have visited in my younger days, to which I still delight to carry my grey head. Forty years have imprinted their furrows on my brow, and changed men and nations, since Warbridge superseded the primeval woods of the Potomac, Ellis and Eliza Stanwood, with their only child Juliana, fixed themselves on this spot, since endeared by so many recollections. Cultivation, directed by some share of taste and aided by some wealth, soon gave Stanwood farm, or as its owners choose to name it, Warbridge, the aspect of a flourishing settlement.

Those poets, philosophers, or politicians, who speak so confidently of the moderation of our rural patriarchs, show in that, as in many other cases, how very little they understand of human nature. Let any of those inspired poets or sages perambulate our country with their eyes and ears open, and he will find that Napoleon, in the day of his power, never more earnestly longed for a slice of territory from each of his neighbors, than do our plain-going husbandmen for every parcel of soil, good or bad, which touches their limits.

Ellis Stanwood put theories to shame, and acted as all men act, when enabled so to act, by appropriating to himself every spot of earth he could obtain. In executing his ambitious projects, Ellis, however, imitated Penn and Calvert, rather than Napoléon. This shrewd farmer fitted the means to the end, and all his days insisted that debt was any thing else than a blessing.

As far as Stanwood farm extended along the Potomac, the face of nature was reformed. A fine bold mountainous stream crossed the fields, and was lost in the Potomac on the

meadow margin. A grist and saw mill had formed the nucleus of a cotton factory, and at the epoch of our eventful drama, Warbridge was a scene active, busy and noisy. Something like a village rose as the cottages of the work people increased; but it was the more picturesque from all disregard of plan. Stanwood house occupied a globular swell, which afforded from the balcony a sweep of vision over the whole farm, much of the vicinity, and had for back ground the Cococtin mountain.

Debt and slavery were two things equally eschewed by Ellis Stanwood. His maxim was, that the employer and the employed ought to have an equal right of dismissal.

The houses of his tenantry of laborers, dotted the flats and banks: and neat, clean, and nice, amid their garden grounds, very pleasantly decorated the picture. Amongst these adjuncts to the great canvass, the old mill was the most interesting to those who took delight rather in the ancient and plain, than in the modern and gaudy. It rose black, rough, and solid from the creek, and reposing on a bank of rocks, seemed to frown upon the painted cottages around.

'Here stands the nursing mother of my estate,' often said Ellis Stanwood, as he pointed to the old mill; 'and above her head, on that bank, stands the palace of my prime minister.'

That prime minister was Ambrose Burleigh, the miller. Ambrose was a little, round made, very strong, active, merry, reflecting, and truly honest man. The monarch of Warbridge and his minister had now held their respective stations nearly twenty years—a phenomenon not often found in large monarchies; and what added to the wonder, Ellis and Ambrose had never in one instance differed in opinion respecting any proposed measure of policy, and of course their affairs prospered.

Ellis, in the language of the world, had a very commanding person adorned by an excellent education; but in the language of good sense, Ambrose had received a still better education. When the master was reading

Tacitus, the man was directing their grist affairs with unerring aim. These well suited friends, for such they were in reality, were alike in another circumstance—they were both fathers of only children.

Juliana Stanwood, now in her thirteenth year, was a beautiful, playful, and joyous child, though perhaps in mind and manners rather too much approaching the masculine. Blithe as a meadow lark, and frank as the air she breathed, little Juliana had already exhibited some of those lights and shades of character which come into such powerful contrast in after life. Affectionate and kind, but if provoked by any wilful injury, the remembrance of the act grew with her years. Already entered on her regular education in the native city of her mother, Philadelphia, it was not always even in vacation that she returned to Warbridge; but when she did return, no squirrel ever skipped more briskly over the cedar-clothed shores of the Potomac.

Amongst the sons of Warbridge, the two most remarkable were Elias Lampert, son of the minister of the gospel whose congregation included the parents of Juliana, and the majority of the other inhabitants of Warbridge; and George Burleigh, only child of Ambrose Burleigh, the miller.

Juliana had already received the title of the Spirit of the Potomac, and of all those of her young acquaintance who hailed the periodical return of the Spirit, none avowed their joy so openly as Elias and George. Nature in all her freaks had perhaps never presented face to face two human beings in temper and principles less alike. Elias was dark, insinuating, deceitful, and naturally cold and cruel. George was open, generous, and kind, and yet headstrong and violent. Elias, in the village school, was steady, studious and prying. George was the reverse. The one avoided blows himself, but secured them to others; the other was punished for every one's faults as well as his own. The one was punctual in attendance, whilst the other, once a week at least, was truant amongst the hills of the Potomac.

On the day of examination the application

heart, as the brother of my murdered Clotilda, and her spirit now hovers to save thee. Where are my papers?"

"On board my vessel," at length breathed Cyril.

"Restore them."

"I am willing," faltered Cyril.

"This very instant, then, restore them—we can go with thee," said Silvano, who, turning to me, observed—"bring us our bosom friends, George."

"The bosom friends I knew to be two brace of excellent pistols, were in as excellent order. I brought them, and we were on the point of sallying forth, when a fiendish grin from Cyril caught the eye of Silvano who once more jerked him into the inner room, exclaiming, not so fast, villain. George, bring pen, ink and paper. Cyril de Toro, write an order on your principal officer to deliver those papers to this young man, or by—don't start, wretch, your brains are safe—but, by heaven and earth, justice shall be done to either you or me, before the sun sets on this day."

"It was evident that, from some cause I could not then penetrate, de Toro was completely in the power of his opponent. The order was given with as much despatch as agitated nerves would admit; and in about an hour I returned with a double though small trunk. Seeing me enter, Silvano smiled—but such a smile. 'George, look to that,' pointing with a nod of his order to Cyril, and at the same time very deliberately opening the trunk.

[Concluded in our next.]

BIOGRAPHY.

From the Literary Enquirer.

George Wythe.

BY J. L. LEWIS, JR.

It is a remark of that elegant writer, Dr. Knox, that the law reminded one of a Gothic edifice, which time has consecrated, and to which, although it was irregular and misshapen, no one would think of giving a modern cast. This remark seems to be true in every particular, and the observer is induced to exclaim with the poet, 'How reverend seems the face of his tall pile.' The solemnity and awe which fill the mind, upon contemplating the structure, is naturally conveyed to its ministers, and the respect and admiration with which we look upon a dignified and upright judge, is a surer protection than all the panoply of his guards and attendant ministers. We hang upon his accents as upon the breathings of an oracle; and we regard his frowns and rebuke as more terrific than the lightnings and thunder of the fabled Jupiter. The guardian of our dearest rights, and the dispenser of equal and exact justice, has a

claim upon our affection, which obloquy cannot shake, nor jarring passions obliterate; and we regard him rather as an indulgent parent, than one elevated above us by official station. Of all the patriots of the revolution, pure and incorruptible as they were, and venerated as they were, and venerated as they may have been, there is no one who has juster or stronger claims upon our esteem, than the upright, impartial and venerable Chancellor Wythe, the Aristides of America, in whose breast there glowed, not only the warmest and most disinterested love for his country, but the purest philanthropy. The father of the orphan, the protector of the widow, and the guardian of the helpless, by virtue of his office, he entered as warmly into their concerns as if there had been a nearer and dearer tie and bond of union between them; and none applied to him for relief whose just claims were denied. The blessings of the people smoothed the decline of the patriarch, and added softness to his nightly pillow.

George Wythe, the Chancellor of Virginia, was born in the state, in the year 1726 of a respectable but not affluent family, and was nurtured in the very lap of science; for his mother has been represented to be a lady possessed of uncommon endowments and strength of mind—one who watched, not only over the physical but moral improvement of her child, and who regarded his advancement in knowledge, with all the tender solicitude of a mother. Her mind was one of no common order; she infused its strength and vigor into his, and gave a practical commentary on the advantages of female education more striking than the precepts of a volume. She habituated herself to converse fluently with him in the Latin language, and he might be said to be a classical scholar from his very cradle. Beyond this however he had few of those advantages which the students and illustrious men of the old world have possessed, and which our thousand literary institutions now present;—his education was limited to reading, writing, and a knowledge of arithmetic. His earliest friend, and guide and instructor, his mother, died in his boyhood, and George Wythe, before he had attained his majority, was destitute and an orphan. Without a friend to direct his steps or to counsel him as to the course he should pursue, it is not surprising that he should have plunged into all the vices and dissipation of youth. But a mind like his could not always be obscured by this moral darkness; and the sparkling of the diamond could still be perceived despite the surrounding rubbish. At the age of thirty the chains which had bound him were broken, the sleeper was awakened from his slumbers, and he was a regenerated and disenthralled man. By intense and close application to study he redeemed the time he

had wasted, but he never ceased lamenting the loss of the most valuable and useful part of his life. He mastered the Greek and Latin languages without an instructor, and applied himself to the study of the law, in the office of a Mr. Lewis, whose daughter he subsequently married. His professional career was marked by all of those ennobling traits which distinguish the man of judgment, talents and integrity, and his rise at the bar was steady and sure. He never could admire that feeling which prompted the skillful advocate to defend an unjust cause, and he was never enlisted on the side of dishonesty or baseness. So punctually scrupulous was he on this point, that he would choose to either hear the testimony of witnesses himself, or to take the affidavit of his client to the truth of his story. Those were days of Arcadian simplicity and innocence, when might could not prevail over justice, nor the strong arm of the oppressor, nor the wily cunning of the knave, defeat its ends. Without wishing to cast an imputation on a profession which is loaded with much undeserved reproach and stale slander, it is to be wished that such was now the prevailing state of things, and that lawyers should be a little scrupulous in espousing the cause of their clients, without being satisfied that their claims were just or their pleas meritorious. They would render themselves the guardians of the spirit of the laws which they profess to expound; the conservators of the public tranquillity, and the promoters of human happiness. Mr. Wythe took an early, and an active stand in the difficulties with the mother country, and though he swayed not the thunderbolt, nor wielded the shafts of vengeance, yet the cool, calm steadiness and firmness of Wythe achieved, what the impetuosity of Henry could never accomplish. Yet his whole soul was with the cause in which he was enlisted, and though emphatically a 'man of peace,' yet he was active in raising a company of volunteers to assist in asserting his country's rights, and associated with the illustrious friend and pupil Jefferson, in boldly going forth the advocate of liberty and freedom. But it was not the destiny of Wythe to fight his country's battles. Previous to the war he was chosen where his services were most needed, and the weight of his influence was most deeply felt, in the legislature of his native state, of which dignified and illustrious body he was the most efficient member, and was chosen speaker of the house of Burgesses, the duties of which station were discharged, as might be expected, from a man of his excellent character. The day of trial at length arrived and Mr. Wythe was deputed to Congress, and was of that immortal body who declared themselves 'free and independent,' and one who sanctioned the highminded pledge which they gave to the world with his

name. In November, on that memorable year, he was appointed to the task as one of the committee of revising the laws of Virginia. The manner in which that committee discharged the trust is emblazoned on the pages of our nation's history, as it struck a deep blow at the root of those aristocratical institutions which were then our inheritance, and promoted essentially the cause of liberty and equal rights throughout the world; and it is engraven on the tomb-stone of one of that committee, as the highest tribute which can be paid to his memory, that he was 'author of the statutes for religious freedom in Virginia.' They abolished the right of primogeniture, converted estates tail into fee simple, and gave the first impetus to those changes which destroy the dominions of the monarchs of the old world in America forever. In June, 1779, they completed their labors, and although they failed in their proposed system of education and melioration of the code of punishment, yet their services will ever be felt and gratefully remembered. Under the new system, Mr. Wythe was appointed a Judge of equity, and subsequently Chancellor, which he filled till his death, in June, 1816. So limited was his salary during the greater period of that time, that he was forced to accept of the law professorship in Williams and Mary college, to increase the means of livelihood; for it could not be supposed that he who had never fattened on the spoils of iniquity, nor shared the plunder of the unwary and unsuspecting, should be rich. He was a member of the Virginia convention, which adopted the federal constitution, and to which he gave his warm support, and he twice presided over the college of electors and gave a republican vote, it being once his fortune to vote for his former pupil and steady friend, Thomas Jefferson.

Such is a succinct and brief account of the life and services of George Wythe. But let not the biographer here drop his pen. It is the province of the biographer, not merely to detail the facts of a life, but to furnish examples worthy of imitation, and the example of Wythe is rich in instruction. We mark his promising boyhood and rejoice in the brilliancy of the prospect. Sterner manhood arrives, the aspect is dreary, and the brow is clouded with sorrow. The rising sun of genius, which gave promise to a glorious day, is enshrouded in gloom. But the soul cannot rest in this torpor; it aspires to a higher and better state of existence. He burst the bonds which confined him, and achieved a more triumphant victory than that of any conqueror: it was a victory over himself—It was the triumph of the intellect over the passions—a triumph which elevated him at once from the depths of sorrow and degradation, to the station which he so proudly and ably filled.

It is such victories which raise the standard of human character and exalts one above the common herd. An Alexander may prevail by means of mere physical superiority; but the self conquerer deserves a like crown of laurels, and a yet higher meed of praise, for his are more fierce, persevering and relentless enemies—his own vices and faults. Bitterly as he lamented the loss and misapplication of his earlier years, yet his close and persevering attention to the business of his profession, and his exemplary and useful life, redeemed his earliest faults and follies. To the young man, who too eager in the pursuit of pleasure, has contracted dissipated habits, the story of Wythe is all worthy of imitation. He may, by one vigorous effort—one exertion of his will, become an ornament to society. No one enjoyed a more unblemished reputation, and to his plain abstemious manners and inward peace of mind, may be attributed his green old age and his long continued usefulness. As a man of benevolent and philanthropic feelings, Howard himself scarcely surpassed our distinguished American—and it was his constant endeavor to alleviate human sufferings, and promote human happiness. But it is on the discharge of his duties as a judge and chancellor that the solid basis of his reputation is founded, and he stands in that respect upon an eminence to which we look up with feelings of admiration and veneration. Elevated above the storms and tempests to which the lives of great men are too often subject, he stood like the snow capped peak of some lofty mountain, an object of profound respect and attention, superior to earth and emulous of its native Heaven.—He sought not the praise of men, nor the empty applause of the crowd, but seemed only intent upon rendering to every man that which was due. The guilty trembled at the bar of his judgment seat, and the innocent rejoiced in a protector powerful, more by the weight of an unimpeachable character, than by the law's array with which he was surrounded. When he pronounced judgment, none murmured at his decisions, for their judge was inflexibly just. Although surpassed by many other legal worthies in facility and despatch of business, yet he heard patiently, and decided promptly and correctly, and seemed anxious to have nothing unheard that would elicit truth. He was no friend to the ingenuity which would 'make the worse appear the better cause,' nor to genius which would sell itself for base purposes. In his charges and fees he was more moderate than a due attention to his own interests required, and he was never known to accept a solitary cent while at the bar for any service beyond the ordinary and legal cost. He was, indeed, the model of a just judge—one, to use the language of an impassioned orator 'before the

splendor of whose genius and virtues men bow with respectful deference.' The annals of the old world may produce judges of equal sanctity of character, but none so happy in his life and death. His memory is dear indeed to the profession, and it is firm as the adamantine rocks which surround our country.

MISCELLANY.

The Consumptive.

BY E. L. BULWER.

ONE bright day in June as I was sitting alone in my room, I was suddenly roused from my reverie by a sharp sudden pain that shot through my breast, and when it left me I fainted away. I was a little alarmed by this circumstance, but thought the air might relieve me. I walked out and ascended a hill at the back of the house. My attention being now aroused and directed toward myself, I was startled to find my breath so short that I was forced several times to stop in the ascent. A low short cough, that I had not heeded before, now struck me as a warning which I ought to prepare myself to obey, I looked in the glass for the first time for several weeks with any care in the survey, I perceived that my apprehensions were corroborated by the change in my appearance. My cheeks were fallen and I detected in their natural paleness, that hectic which never betrays its augury. I saw that my days were numbered: and lay down upon the pillow that night resolved to prepare for death.

The next day when I looked over my scattered papers—when I saw the mighty schemes I had commenced, and recalled the long and earnest absorption of all my faculties which even that commencement had required. I was seized with a sort of despair. It was evident that I could now perform nothing great, and as for trifles, ought they to occupy the mind of one whose eye was on the grave? There was, but one answer to this question. I committed my fragments to the flames; and now there came indeed upon me, a despondency which I had not felt before. I saw myself in the condition of one, who after much travel in the world has found a retreat, and built himself a home, and who in the moment he says to his heart 'now shalt thou have rest' beholds himself summoned away. I had found an object—it was torn from me—my staff was broken, and it was only left for me to creep to the tomb without easing by any support the labor of the way.

I had coveted no petty aim; I had not bowed my desires to the dust and mire of men's common wishes; I had bade my ambitions single out a lofty end, and pursue it by generous means. In the dreams of my spirit I had bound the joys of my existence to this one aspiring hope—nor had I built that hope