

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

T H U R S D A Y, O C T O B E R 10, 1805.

Miscellany.

THE SHRUBBERY.

[CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST.]

THE conversation at breakfast became warm and interesting; literature and music were the principal topics. Julia was not silent on either; she discovered a delicacy and correctness of taste which astonished Melmoth.

'The study of music,' said he, 'while it sweetly soothes the sense of hearing, touches the soul, and elevates and refines its nature. I am persuaded there never was a poet who had not a taste for it; though I cannot go so far as a French writer, who affirmed, that he who is insensible to its effects has but half a soul.'

'Shakespeare's celebrated assertion is not bolder,' said Mr. Hartop, 'but I think I can confute you by a single instance: Garrick had no ear for music!'

'The Italians,' said Julia, 'are enthusiasts in the art; and the French seem to have imbibed their spirit. The fine nerves of Rousseau were tremblingly alive to its powers; and his extreme fondness for it, I have heard, appears in almost every page of his works. Indeed those who have touched the strings of pity with the finest hand, have generally presented the idea of music to the mind, in their most affecting scenes. Marmontelle has given to Frouse his hautboy; Julia de Roubigne has her harpsichord, and Maria de Moulines has her lute.'

'I do not know a sweeter poem in the language,' returned Melmoth, 'than the Minstrel. It breathes a spirit of melancholy enthusiasm, which captivates the mind irresistibly. The character of Edwin is drawn with exquisite taste, and exhibits some of the most romantic scenes in nature. The idea of reclining at a distance from the village dance, 'soothed with the soft notes warbling in the wind,' is inexpressibly beautiful. No less so is the reflection it suggests.

'Is there a heart that music cannot melt?
'Alas, how is that rugged heart forlorn!
Is there who ne'er thole mystic transports felt,
Of solitude and melancholy born?

His petition in favour of the singing bird is sweetly sympathetic:

'O let them ne'er, with artificial note,
To please a tyrant, strain their little bill;
But sing what Heaven inspires, and wander where
they will.'

Julia's eye brightened, as he repeated these lines; but the unhappy end of her black-birds had thrown an air of sadness over her features which all her efforts could not dissipate. It had stamped upon her countenance

..... That expression sweet, of melancholy,
Which captivates the soul,

and, as Melmoth was acquainted with its amiable cause, it operated on his feelings with peculiar energy.

The heart of Julia was attuned to gentle emotions, and whenever the faded form of sorrow met her eye, the tear of sympathy trembled in it. I have seen her set out in a morning on her little errands of charity to the poor of the village. She entered every cottage with such a smile of sweetness, and listened to every tale of family distress with such a look of tender concern, that my heart dilated at the sight. I would not have exchanged my feelings on that occasion for those of any one under Heaven, but herself. Though united to her by no closer bond than that of humanity, I felt a pride, an honest pride in the connexion; I felt a dignity in my nature which I had never known before.

In the evening they sailed upon the lake, the surface of which was just ruffled enough to shew it was alive. A cormorant was flying over it and fishing; and upon the banks, which are steep and flagged with wild shrubs, hung a few goats. Here and there a grotesque mass of rock projects boldly over the water, with a little shining torrent falling from its brow, and then through the precipices appears a smooth green wu, embosomed in old woods, which climb half way up the mountain's side, and discover above them a broken line of craggs that crown the scene. All these objects were inverted on the blue surface of the lake; and no sooner had the boat pushed off from the shore than they started into motion. The rocks, and woods, and mountains, passed by in silent succession on each side, and changed their figure at every yard. The rays of the setting sun gave a glow to the landscape, and Melmoth threw an air of enchantment over it with the soft notes of his flute. Our voyagers were delighted with their expedition. They coasted every island, and looked into every bay. Every stroke of the oar pointed out new beauties, and inspired new ideas. The spirit of pleasure left not a single second vacancy, and evening had overshadowed them with her last and deepest shade, before they landed.

When Melmoth retired to his chamber, and reviewed the little incidents of the past day, the exquisite sensibility of Julia thrilled his heart.—He took out his pocket-book and penciled upon a slip of paper the following lines:

THE BLACK-BIRDS—AN ELEGY.

Spring had return'd, and nature smil'd,
Verdure had crown'd each wood and vale,
All was compos'd, serene and mild,
And notes of pleasure swell'd the gale.

'Twas then a black-bird and its mate
In a seringo built their nest,
The patient hen assiduous sat
With trembling wings and heaving breast.

Two chirpers soon reward their care,
The pledges of their mutual love;
The pleasing task the parents share,
And range for food the blossom'd grove.

Returning through a shrubb'ry mead,
The gentle pair, with anguish saw
Their little ones expiring bleed
Beneath a wanton tyrant's paw.

In vain they feebly flutter'd round,
In vain they pour'd a plaintive lay;
Deaf to the sweet pathetic sound,
The plunderer still retain'd her prey.

Whither, ah whither shall we fly?

'Life has no value now—they sung;
'We'll melt the murderer's heart, and die,
'With wings stretch'd fondly o'er our young.'

When he had finished, he thought something was still wanting—he had not paid a compliment to Julia. He cut his pencil again and again, but it would not do; the string was too fine to touch upon. He went to bed in despair.

In the morning, when he took his leave, he presented the paper to Julia. She read the title, and put it into her bosom, with a smile—but that smile betrayed a secret which she wished to have concealed. It forced a tear down her cheek.

Spirits of love and sympathy! inspirers of the soft affections, of all that is beautiful in feeling and elevated in thought! ye alone can tell, ye who can awake such thrilling harmony from that sweet instrument the human soul, ye alone can tell what fine, what exquisitely fine cement unites congenial natures, what magnetic principles operate on them.

It was not till three years after, when Melmoth returned from making the tour of Europe, that he had an opportunity of revisiting his friends. He had written to them several times on his travels, but he had never received any answer, and he concluded that his letters had miscarried. Interesting as were all the various scenes which had passed under his eye during that interval, they had not once diverted his thoughts from the beloved object of their contemplation—Julia mingled in every idea; he had passions, sighs, sentiments and sensations, only for Julia. As soon as he arrived in London, he obtained his father's consent to ask her hand, and immediately set out for Westmoreland. It was towards the close of the third day when he reached the banks of the lake, and he ordered the post-chaise to drive to the by-path, intending to walk up to the house through the shrubbery, that he might surprize them the more agreeably.

When he opened the wicket he was presented with a scene embellished with all the beauties of spring. The lilac was in full blow, and the laburnum dropt its golden clusters in a grand profusion; while the softer blossoms of the apple and almond appeared above the rest, and were finely relieved by the fresh verdure of their foliage. Melmoth recognized every object with the feeling of a friend. Every tree and shrub recalled to his mind the ideas they had inspired, when he had first walked under their shade, and he bade them welcome with as much ardour as if they had been animate. He looked down, as he passed, at the bench upon which he sat when the voice of his Julia first broke upon his ear; and his heart exulted as he looked. But his impatience would not suffer him to indulge the idea. He had a thousand things to say, a thousand little incidents which he had treasured up in his memory to tell of. Every minute seemed an age which did not bring the interview along with it, and he quickened his pace at every step.

When he came to the house, he found a servant sitting in the porch, and he inquired eagerly if Mr. Hartop was within. 'No Sir,' she replied, 'he is just gone to speak over his daughter's grave.' 'Whose grave?' interrupted Melmoth, in a faltering voice, 'Miss Julia's, Sir, she died last week of a consumption.—That gate opens to the church-yard.'

Melmoth felt the intelligence in every nerve. It was as the cold point of a dagger to his heart. He did not utter a word in reply, his feelings would not let him; he stood motionless as a statue, gazing on vacancy, and lost in the sensations which harrowed up

his soul. All the fond hopes which he had cherished so long, were now extinguished, and in the very moment when he expected their completion. He walked up to the gate, but he could not open it; it led to a scene which he knew would unman him—he let the latch fall, and burst into tears.

An interval of reason succeeded—it was an interval of patience, humility and hope—but it was short. The frenzy of his soul returned; he instantly burst the gate open, and rushed violently through.

As he hurried along the path that winded among the tomb-stones, his eye looked round involuntarily for the objects it most dreaded to fix on; and it soon found them. A number of mourners had ranged themselves in a little circle round a grave on one side; it was an interesting group, and Melmoth drew near to examine the weeping figures which composed it. They were villagers, whose families Julia had been enabled by her father to keep from want, and who asked leave to pay this last tribute of gratitude to her memory. Mr. Hartop stood advanced a few paces before the rest, with the volume of inspiration in his hand. There was a manly resignation expressed in his countenance, and a firmness in the tone of his voice, which shamed Melmoth for his weakness—except now and then, when a tear stole down his cheek, and melted his accent. He had lost all that was dear to him in this world, and his soul was how ready to

take its flight. A good man, struggling with adversity, and rising amidst all his efforts to depress him, as an object on which angels may look down with delight, and which the Divine Being must contemplate with peculiar complacency.

As soon as the funeral service was over, and the mourners had departed, Melmoth stepped up to the grave, and looked eagerly in. The frantic wildness of his air struck the sexton, who was preparing to throw the earth into it; and he stood fixed in silent astonishment, with his foot lifted up on his spade. Melmoth kept bending over, with his eye chained to the inscription on the lid of the coffin—Within it were the remains of one whom he had chosen from the world—she was indeed his world—he had seen her walk—her eyes, now for ever closed, had once—and who could not have interpreted their language—had once conversed tenderly with his. The thought cut him to the soul—he could not bear it, and he walked hastily away—but he had not gone ten paces before his strength failed him, and he returned back to take another look. He was too late—the sexton had already fallen to work, and the coffin was to be seen no more, for the last spadeful of earth had covered it. A tear started in his eye at the disappointment—he looked wistfully at the man a moment, but had not the heart to reproach him for it—every feeling within him was turned to tenderness; he fetched a deep sigh, and walked slowly away, weeping as he walked.

In his return to the parsonage he met some of the mourners who had been conducting Mr. Hartop home, and he commanded firmness enough to inquire the particulars of an event, the sudden disclosure of which had so unhinged him. Mr. Hartop, they said, had been confined the year preceding, by a long and dangerous illness; and the closeness and anxiety with which his daughter had attended him during that period, had brought on a slow fever that soon threw her into a decline.

When Melmoth came to the gate he felt himself ill qualified to act the part of a comforter, and he took a turn into the garden in order to compose himself. But Julia had not left the shades, which she had rendered so dear to him. They were full of her. He saw her in every object, he felt her at every step; at every instant he heard her well known voice;

Sweet as the shepherd's pipe upon the mountains,

In every wood-scene her gentle figure appeared at a distance among the trees; she sat upon every bench, and stood listening beside every water-fall. He took a path that soon brought him to the edge of a small pool hung round with willows. It was a scene in unison with his feelings, and he threw himself upon a seat to indulge the melancholy which had taken possession of his soul. He looked back on the past, and every sensation within him accused him of folly in his conduct to the Hartops. To have delayed an alliance, even for a moment, with such virtue, would have shewn him unworthy of it; but to go abroad, to linger so long in a foreign country, to seek the society of strangers while Julia was alive, this betrayed such insensibility that he could never forgive himself. He was rising in an agony of vexation and despair, when happening to turn his eye towards the tree round which the seat was fixed, he observed his own name cut on the bark of it. His heart instantly told him who had done it—Julia did not forget him, though he had deserted Julia. The idea of his having wronged her, was more than he could bear—every former feeling revolted at it. He took out his pocket-handkerchief, and, wiping away the tear that dimmed his eye, he