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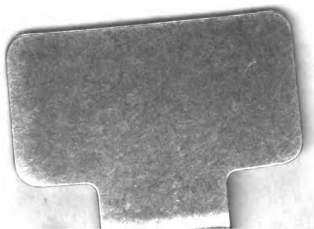
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D U R H A M

IN

T H E Y E A R 1831.

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DURHAM

IN THE YEAR 1831.

IN times like the present, it belongs to every honest pen to give evidence (even though un-called for) in the cause of *truth*. Much has been written and uttered against the prelates and dignified clergy, who surround and administer to the divine service of our national Church in the venerable Cathedral of Durham, by persons ignorant of every thing relating to the interior state of that most christian establishment. A nearer view of the Prebendaries, who compose that learned and beneficent community in their daily proceedings, would, in any candid mind, detect and *disprove* the malicious aspersions,

and at the same time evince that they *are* exemplary in their conduct, pursuits, and amusements.

Nearly three months' residence in Durham, enabled me to observe the domestic and private characters of those prelates, whose cultivation of sound principles and suavity of manners are calculated to support and adorn the dignity of their high order. I became acquainted with the many excellent qualities constantly exercised in the diurnal course of their lives,—those traits of benevolence which never meet the public eye, and are only known by their beneficial effects. Had myself been a person of importance, whose arrival might cause a sensation, the opportunity of observing would have been less favourable; or had my own connexions not entitled me to move in the same sphere, *les égards*, which politeness always accords to a stranger-guest, might have thrown the light of gratified vanity on the prospect, through which it is so difficult to distinguish the real features or characteristics.

The best position possible was that of an individual domesticated in a family *within* the circle of acquaintance, without the precincts of the Cathedral: visited and visiting among the members of the college. Thus qualified by the daily evidence of my senses, I *assert* that the habits of life among these high ecclesiastics, so far from presenting scenes of pomp, ostentation, or *indolence*, are marked by active beneficence, and a dignified gentleness of speech and deportment; whilst every thing appertaining to the service of the Cathedral is performed with assiduous punctuality, and the most decorous attention to the nice keeping and rich adorning of the holy edifice for public worship.

There is no slovenly performance of everyday service, (frequently the case ELSEWHERE;) the prayers are read with the same devotion, the beautiful anthems never omitted.

Discourses from the pulpit are delivered with the eloquence of preachers who are convinced that their doctrine is true; and amongst whom

religion is the bond to unite mankind in peace and good-will towards each other.

The charities of these divines are readily and liberally extended to the sick and needy of all descriptions; (the munificent public endowments to which *all* contribute, are well known and need not here be enumerated;) in several houses it was the usual habit to provide an extra basket of bread, for the purpose of feeding the wives and children of the *pitmen*, while those *ill-guided* men were in a state of uproar and idleness; thus relieving the innocent without encouraging the rebellious.

In addition to the ordinary duties of the Cathedral, a chapel called "the Galilee," (built as a place of worship for females who were not allowed access to the altar,) has been fitted up with benches at the expense, and under the direction, of the *Prebendaries*, in which an extra service is performed on Sunday evenings, with a sermon by one of them; anthems of the most beautiful sacred music are

selected to harmonize the conclusion of the Sabbath; and this, for the especial gratification of the lowest class of the people, is established and maintained by the voluntary *exertions* of men slanderously called indolent and proud, by corruptors of the public mind, who endeavour to subvert religion by attacking the ministers who keep and defend the sanctity of her altar! These evening sermons were always attended by many of the ladies and families both within and without the college; who after participating in the previous worship of the day, had left their fire-side indulgences to unite in the service these benevolent prelates bestowed on the people. Such is not the life of ease and enjoyment falsely imputed to the clergy; on the contrary, a *continuance* of exertion is far more difficult than a greater sacrifice of time and *ease*, made at once, —on impulse, ceasing with the effect it has produced.

The vociferous multitude who reject the use of water, because they can fetch it without cost, and obtain it without clamour, are in the con-

dition of those short-sighted Indians, who assisted the Spaniards to build "La Navidad,"—that Fort, when raised, afforded means for the destruction and subjugation of the natives.

The plebeians of England (*merum pecus*) are instigated by evil spirits, (who, permitted to vex the human race for a season, will ultimately be remanded home to Tartarus,) to use their physical strength in pulling down all the fences framed to protect the humble hearth, the personal property, and even the decent burial-grounds of their industrious countrymen. "Arrose la plebe para defender los primeros delitos, y no faltaron *algunos Nobles* à quien hizo Pleybeyos là *Corta Capacidad*, defecto que suele destrui todos los consejos de la buena sangre." Superior to frivolous diversions, the clerical influence in Durham is never exercised despotically. Races are annually held between the city and Pellow Wood, but not attended by them.

The amusements of the College Circle (as it

is called) are at all times more refined than exciting; consisting chiefly of handsome and hospitable social parties of about twenty persons at table, where conversation is rational, and of that superior cast that requires not to derive animation from satire on the follies or foibles of others: indeed, *the Circle*, as a corps, is so lenient in its judgments, and a tone of such suavity prevails there, that "*Umile in tanta gloria*" is applicable to express the lives and customs of the Twelve, who are ranged like Corinthian pillars round the Cathedral of Durham. Music of the best kind, both vocal and instrumental, is always introduced into the college assemblies; where, without affectation or display, ladies contribute to the harmony of social intercourse. I never saw cards resorted to as a pastime in any house either within or without the consecrated precincts; good taste and cultivated intellect have banished so dull and senseless a diversion. The *soirees* generally concluded with excellent melody, and that so temperately enjoyed as seldom to rob the coming day of its first hour.

Those base and envious feelings, *which were formerly concealed*, or when betrayed by circumstances treated with contempt as proofs of moral depravity, are *now* risen from the dregs to the surface of human association, and rear their hardened fronts, ill-disguised under the mask of *distorted patriotism*, to disturb and extinguish all intellectual pursuits—*all the charities of life*—whatever embellishes the dwellings of persons whose affluence enables them to indulge a cultivated taste for the fine arts, or to collect around them the elegances which belong to polished habits. If, then, “the basest now go foremost,” is public opinion to be led *unresistingly* by these *Calibans*? (like a victim, hurried on by rude boys, to be sacrificed on some Pagan altar.) Are there none calm or rational enough to discern and detect, that the seeming “*vox populi*” is the sharp and hoarse cry of *Diavoli*: eager as wolves to tear the *people*, like sheep when lured from the protecting fold, or rendered indocile to the call of the shepherd. * * *

That it is conformable to human nature, may

be demonstrated from the practice of all countries, to invest the highest offices in Church and State with the ensigns and ornaments which have by universal custom become the symbols of dominion and dignity. A great national establishment must command the means of maintaining the splendour of exalted station, and of practising the *liberality expected* from the Order, even by those who would *rob* them of the power of bestowing.

Deprive a body of animation, (of sustenance,) “*et facilis jactura sepulchri.*” Shall none but those consecrated to the service of religion defend her altars?—when every Christian, at his baptism, is bound to become a faithful combatant against the wiles of the devil, in the service of the Saviour of mankind.

It should be a source of exultation and pleasure to every well-educated person, to witness the combination of talent, and the various beauties of language, exemplified in the discourses delivered from the pulpit of Durham Cathedral.

Ecclesiastics who collectively stand higher for learning and eloquence than the present members of that sacred college, can nowhere be found; or any association of men, who wear the robes of dignity with more gentle consideration towards the undistinguished, of every class and degree.

The erudition and integrity of the venerable Bishop are undisputed and evident.

“ Who knows not this, argues *himself unknown*.”

The Basilica of that fair city derives lustre from the attainments of her sons, each in his peculiar style contributing to the diffusion and advancement of christian knowledge.

St. David's:—silent in company, learned and intelligible in the pulpit; addressing the understanding in sound and classical language; informing the ignorant: as the sun dispels the darkness of night.

Gilly, the gentle and persuasive; to whom the afflicted listen and are soothed; round whom

the children of poverty congregate and are cheered, as they hear a voice of sympathy, teaching them how in their lowly station each has duties to fulfil, each has blessings to enjoy in this world; and pointing out the path to happiness in the next. Like the dew of summer, refreshing the soil on which it descends.

Townsend;—whose zeal and energy, like the spear of Ithuriel, has power to detect hypocrisy, and appal the guilty conscience; driving forth the startled fiends from their inmost recesses into the clear light of day. As the element of fire disperses contagion from the dwellings of men.

Darnell;—who so pleasingly inculcates the truths of religion, and so convincingly explains its principles, that the young, who are entering on the study of theology, seek his instruction, and are encouraged to more ardent application by his indulgence. As the salutary manna became nourishment to those who sought it early.

Ogle;—with the deportment of a Northumbrian

prince, bending a buoyant spirit to the regular fulfilment of his clerical functions; hospitable, charitable, and humane. As a noble forest oak protects the flock assembled under its shade.

Thorpe;—whose eloquence springs from the firmest principles; who could stand *alone*, like Abdiel, before the altar of his faith; who convinces, instructs, invites to the practice of all the christian virtues, in terms of benevolent interest; who revives the desponding, and combines the endowments of nature with the acquirments of education, in his forcible and fluent discourses. Like the Nile, overflowing in its course, and fertilizing the whole land in its abundance.

One benevolent Prelate, in the grey and feeble winter of life, was every where greeted with the most affectionate tokens of respect: all were ready to assist him in his portion of service; each was willing to lighten the burden of his duties.

Such were the Prebendaries of Durham in

1831 ; such, doubtless, they continue. Their actions harmonize with the precepts they inculcate : both are honourable to themselves, and to the Church in whose service their lives are consecrated. The most positive evidence of whatever has been here advanced may be obtained. The nearest view will elicit more instances of moderation, and diligence in well doing. Fools, if they go to scoff, will remain to pray : and fiends, if any dare to enter “ those hallowed walls,” will feel that there is yet a barrier between their malice and the human race. The candid and sensible will allow that honour is due to those who conscientiously fulfil the duties of an exalted station.

The power of truth will be felt with more effect from those profound theologians, than from the pen of an unknown scribe ; a patrician commoner of Great Britain.

LUCHNOS.

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