On Churchyards. Chap. II.

April, 1804.

Pompeii.

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between the mother’s hands, and the sweet serious eyes were raised and fix-
ed upon the mother’s eyes, (there beamed, as yet, the infant’s heaven,) and one saw, that it was lapping it unconscious prayer—unconscious, not surely unaccepted. A kiss from the maternal lips was the token, of God’s approval; and then she rose, and gathering up the scattered garments in the same clasp with the half-naked babe, she held it smiling to its father, and one saw in the expression of his face, as he embraced it after having incontinent a kiss on that of his child—one saw in all the holy fur-

vour of a father’s blessing.

Then the mother withdrew with her little one—and then the curtain fell, and, still I lingered—for after the interval of a few minutes, sweet sounds arrested my departing footsteps—a few notes of the harp, a low subdued sweetly out—a voice still sweeter, mingling its tones with a simple quiet accompaniment, swelled out gradually into a strain of sacred harmony, and the words of the evening hymn came wafted towards the house of prayer.

Then all was still in the cottage, and around it, and the perfect silence, and the deepening shadows, brought to my mind more forcibly the lateness of the hour, and warned me to turn my face homewards. So I moved a few steps, and yet again I lingered, lingering still; for the moon was rising, and the city, was transported to us on the wings of the wind. And their location here is curious. We have seen Vesuvius in a valley, and a torrent, with bushes and yards of a haystack-couch stand, with all its cattle, human and bestial, un-moved by the phenomena. Constantinople, with its bearded and turbaned multitudes, quietly pitched beside a Christian thoroughfare, and offering neither persecution nor proselytism, Switzerland, with its lakes covered with sunset, and mountains capped and robed in storms; the adored of sentimentalists, and the refuge of mighty men— Typhoön; the Demodde of all nations, and German geology—stuck in a corner of a corner of London, and forgotten in the tempting vicissitude of a cook-shop—and now Pompeii, reposing in its slumber of two thousand years, in the very buzz of the Strand. There is no exaggeration in talking of those things as really existing. Berkeley was a metaphysician; and therefore his word goes for nothing but waste of brains, time, and printing-ink; but if we have not the waters of the Lake of Geneva, and the bricks and mortar of the little Greek town,angible by our hands, we have then the mind by the eye—the fullest impression that can be transmitted, by our being perched, passported, pampered, plundered, starved, and stencilled, for 1000 miles east and by south, could not be fuller than the work of Memnon Parker’s and Burbford’s brushes. The scene is ab-

solutely alive, vivid, and true; we feel all but the breeze, and hear all but the dashing of the wave. Travellers recognize the spot where they plucked grapes, picked up fragments of tiles, and full sickle of the magnasala; the draughtsmen would assure us to the very stone on which he stretched himself into an aqua; the man of half-pay, the identical case in which he was fleeced into a perfect knowledge that rogosity abroad was as expensive as taxation at home.

All the world knows the story of Pompeii; that it was a little Greek town of tolerable commerce in its early day; that the sea, which once washed its walls, subsequently left it in the midst of one of these delicious plains made by nature for the dissolution of all in the Italian dairy, and for the commonplaces of poetry in all the northern abodes of the pen; that it was ravaged by every barbarian, who in turn was called a conqueror on the Italian soil, and was successively the palace of Carthaginian and of Roman; until at last the Augustan age saw its little circuit quieted into the centre of a colony, and man, finding nothing more to rob, attempted to rob no more. When man had ceased his molesta-
tion, nature commenced here; and this unfortunate little city was, by a curious fate, to be at once extinguished and preserved, to perish from the face of the Roman empire, and to live when Rome was a nest of monks and ascem-

mists, and her empire torn into frag-
ments for Turk, Russian, Austrian, Prussian, and the whole host of bar-
barian names that were once as the dust under feet. In the year 62 of the Christian era 63, an earthquake showed the city on what tenure her lease was held. Whole streets were thrown down, and the evidences of hasty re-

pair are still to be detected.

From this period, occasional warn-

ings were given in slight shocks; un-
til, in the year 79, Vesuvius poured out all his old accumulation of terror at once, and on the clearing away of the cloud of fire and smoke which covered Campania for four days, Pom-
peii, with all its multitude, was gone. From its ruins, now a fond of villas as if every soul of them had made fortunes in Cesaipide, and the whole southern coast was covered with the summer palaces of those lords of the world. Vesuvius is now a formidable foundation for a house whose inhabitants may not wish to be sucked into a furnace ten thousand fathoms deep; or roasted ab wo apertos; but it was then asleep, and had never hung up spark or stone from time immemorial. To those who

look upon it now in its terrors, grim, blasted, and lifting up its sooty fore-

head among the piles of perpetual smoke that are to be enlightened only by its bursts of fire, the very throne of Pluto and Vulcan together, no force of fancy may picture what it was when the Roman built his palaces and pa-
vilions on its side. A pyramid of three thousand feet high, painted over with gardens, forest, vineyard, and orchard, ripening under the southern sun, zoned with colonnades, and tur-

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little temple. Again, the cities slumbered, till, in 79 A.D., a King of Naples, the Forum, the narrow streets, the little Greek houses, with their remnants of ornamental painting, their columns and their tessellated floors, are seen, as they might have been seen the day before the eruption. The surrounding lands

scapes has the grandeur that the eye looks for in a volcanic country, Wild hills, fragments of old lava, richly broken shores, and in the centre the most picturesque and sublime of all volcanoes, Vesuvius, throwing up its eternal volumes of smoke to the heavens.

1894.

Pompeii.

Pompeii.

Oh thou! who in my happier days
Wert all to me that earth could hold,
And deserter to my youthful gate
Than tongue can tell, or words have told.

Now, far from me, unmark'd and cold,
This ashes rest—thine reliks lie
d And mourning in earth's common mound
The frame that seem'd too fair to die!

The stranger tends my lanassa at morn
And stings in vain upon the tree
Letters by Time's rude finger worn
That bore the earthly name of thee.
To him 'tis all unknown; and he
Strays on amid the woodland scene;
And thou, to all alive but me,
Art now as thou hast never been.

Ah! little didst thou think, when I
With thee have roam'd at eventide,
Mark'd setting sun, and purple sky,
And saunter'd by the river's side,
And gazed on thee—my destined bride
How soon thou should'st from hence depart,
And leave me here without a guide—
With ruin'd hopes, and broken heart.

Oh, Inez! Inez! I have seen,
Above this spot where thou art hail
Wilt flowers and weeds almsky green,
As if in mockery wild display'd!
In sombre twilight's purple shade,
My steps have to thy grave sojourn'd;
And as I mused o'er hopes decay'd,
Mine eyes have stream'd, my heart hath burn'd.

I thought of days for ever past—
When thou wert being—Morning—Sun
I thought of feelings nourished
In secret, mid the world's loud jar!
I thought, how, from the crowd afar,
I loved to stay, and for thee sigh;
Nor deem'd, when winds and waves a bar
Between us placed, that thou shouldst die.

I saw thee not in thy distress,
Nor ever knew that pale disease
Was preying on that loveliness,
Whose smiles all earthly life could eases;

But, when she passed, I call'd thy magic form to mind,
I little dreamt that charms like these
Were to Death's icy arms resign'd.

Now years have pass'd, and years may pass
Earth not a fear nor charm can have,
Ah! no—I could not view the grass
That revels rustling o'er thy grave!
My day is one long ruffled wave;
The night is not a lake of rest;
I dream, and night is with me, save
A troubled scene—Despair my guest;

Or if, mayhap, my slumbering hour
Should paint thee to mine arms restored?
Then, then, the blissful dream has power
A moment's rapture to afford;
Mirth cheers the heart, and crowns the board;
My bosom's burden finds relief;
I breathe thy name—but at that word
I wake to darkness, and to grief!