handsome offer of the same remuneration for 'Sir Eldred of the Bower' and the 'Bleeding Well' as Goldsmith had received for the 'Deserted Village' —"be it what it might." This now "unconsidered trifle" was then much praised—and, what is still more remarkable, and certainly not in the very least a matter of sequence, it was also much read.

Hannah More among the prophets and Hannah More as a humorist are, possibly, characterisations under which she has not appeared upon any stage within the last fifty years. But this is a generation that knows not Hannah! and certainly, whoever else knows anything about her, Mr Augustine Birrell does *not.* He may have read her Life and Works from cover to cover, but a man only gets out of a book that which he himself is capable of assimilating, and Mr Birrell is evidently not *en rapport* with his subject, and had better have left his unworthy Essay[1] unwritten.

It has a spurious smartness about it which makes its misstatements all the more distasteful to an earnest student of her time, especially when coupled with a condescending air of patronage and superiority which sits ill upon a man who has not done, and could not do, one tithe of the work that was done by this delicate woman.

As Charles Lamb whimsically said, "She is not Hany More," and Mr Birrell can therefore criticise

[1] Collected Essays.

as harshly as he thinks fit; but with men like Johnson, Garrick, Pitt, Wesley, and Macaulay as counsel for the defence, even her greatest admirers of to-day can afford to smile. In his self-evident desire to be smart, he has forgotten alike the "scrupulous justice which belongs to critics and the delicacy towards the sex which belongs to gentlemen," with which the 'British Review' wrote of her in 1811. To speak of an old woman and a dead woman as a "huge conger-eel floundering in a sea of dingy morality" *may* be smart writing, but its taste is questionable, to say the least. The careless condescension with which, in later years, he acknowledges her lineaments to be "very pleasant" is almost comical, when one looks at the strong sweet old face with its halo of silver curls, to which Time has but added the beautiful serenity of a well-spent life

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like—*hers!*

The Bristol election of 1774 was very hotly contested, and the intelligent and tactful sisters did their utmost to secure the return of the Whig candidates, Cruger and Burke, who were triumphantly declared successful by a large majority. This election, " he most interesting that ever took place in Bristol," must have been a time of unwonted excitement for the quiet sisterhood. Burke's own personality was singularly prepossessing, and his

marvellous oratory was of a power and beauty which has passed almost into a proverb. The key-note of his electioneering addresses on this occasion is contained in the well-known words now inscribed upon the bronze statue erected to his memory in the town of Bristol, "I wish to be a member of Parliament to have my share in doing good and resisting evil." Goldsmith's 'Retaliation' gives a fair idea of his reputation, but the present generation can realise but little the witchery of his style. He was a frequent visitor at the Park Street house, and during the progress of the election, a party of Whigs assembled outside and gave "Three cheers for Sappho," whom some of the crowd imagined to be a new candidate, and the cheers for the lady alternated with the chews for Burke and Cruger.

The tea-services produced by Richard Champion, the head of the Bristol China Works, for presentation to Burke's hostess, Mrs Joseph Smith, and for Mrs Burke respectively, are triumphs of art, and have never been surpassed in beauty. In 1876 one cup and saucer sold for £91, which was more than three times the value of their weight in gold. One wonders whether Hannah More ever drank her tea out of one of these wonderful cups,-- if so, it must have been a dubious joy, for the thought of a possible accident would embitter the most fragrant Bohea that was ever brewed.

From 1775 her time was largely spent in the very heart of London life, and amid all the social and intellectual gaieties which the best society afforded. Her account of the trial of Elizabeth, Countess of Bristol, is full of humour, and her letters are brimming with vivacity and observant shrewdness, verifying her own declaration in her seventy-first year, "My temper is naturally gay. This gayety even time and sickness have not much impaired. I have carried too much sail. Nothing but the grace of God and frequent attacks of very severe sickness could have kept me in tolerable order. If I am no better with all these visitations, what should I have been without them?"

As the trial of Elizabeth Chudleigh is historically and legally noteworthy, it may not be without interest to give her description of the High Court as it appeared to an intelligent outsider:—

"Garrick would make me take his ticket to go to the trial of the Duchess of Kingston, a sight which, for beauty and magnificence, exceeded anything which those who were never present at a coronation or a trial by peers can have the least notion of. Mrs Garrick and I were in full dress by seven. At eight we went to the Duke of Newcastle's, whose house adjoins Westminster Hall, in which he has a large gallery communicating with the apartments in his house. You will imagine the bustle of 5000 people getting into one hall! When they were all

seated and the King-at-Arms had commanded silence on pain of imprisonment (which, however, was very ill observed), the gentleman of the Black Rod was commanded to bring in his prisoner. Elizabeth, calling herself Duchess Dowager of Kingston, walked in, led by Black Rod and Mr La Roche, curtseying profoundly to her judges. When she bent, the Lord Steward called out, 'Madam, you may rise,' which I think was literally taking her up before she was down. The prisoner was dressed in deep mourning, a black hood on her head, her hair modestly dressed and powdered, a black silk sacque with crape trimmings, black gauze, deep ruffles, and black gloves. The counsel spoke about an hour and a quarter each. Dunning's manner is insufferably bad, coughing and spitting at every three words, but his sense and his expression pointed to the last degree; he made her Grace shed bitter tears. She imitated her great predecessor, Mrs Rudd,[1] and affected to write very often, though I plainly perceived she only wrote as they do their love-epistles on the stage—without forming a letter. The Duchess has but small remains of that beauty of which kings and princes were once so enamoured: she is large and ill-shaped; there

[1] A remarkably beautiful woman who, in 1775, was associated with the twin brothers Robert and Daniel Perreau in the forgery of bonds to the extent of £70,000. The brothers were hanged, but Mrs Rudd got off, by reason of her good looks, though all were believed to be equally guilty.

was nothing white but her face, and, had it not been for that, she would have looked like a bale of bombazine. There was a great deal of ceremony, a great deal of splendour, and a great deal of nonsense—they adjourned upon the most foolish pretences imaginable and did NOTHING, with such an air of business as was truly ridiculous. I forgot to tell you that the Duchess was taken ill, but performed it badly. . . . Elizabeth was undignified and unduchessed, and very narrowly escaped burning in the hand. All the peers but two or three (who chose to withdraw) exclaimed with great emphasis, 'Guilty, upon my honour!' except the Duke of Newcastle, who said 'Guilty erroneously, but not intentionally.' Great nonsense, by the bye—but peers are privileged!'"

This "notorious evil-liver," Elizabeth, Countess of Bristol—self-styled Duchess of Kingston—shared with the American War the attention of England in 1776. Her secret marriage with John Hervey, grandson of the first Earl of Bristol, is a long story, alternately romantic and sordid; but her subsequent marriage with the Duke of Kingston was absolutely invalid, her first husband being still alive, and no divorce proceedings having been instituted. Her fascinations seem to have been irresistible; and even when, by incontrovertible evidence, she was proved "guilty," her judges allowed to her the privilege of exemption from corporal punishment—i.e., of burn-

ing in the hand, which was the old punishment for bigamy—by straining a point and allowing her to claim her right still to be classed as a member of the peerage.

Hannah More's account also of Burke's impeachment of Warren Hastings is worthy of record, if only for the interest attaching to the orator and his victim. So vividly was the guilt of Hastings portrayed in the burning eloquence of his accuser, that for awhile he believed himself as guilty as Burke had painted him, and only when the spell of that marvellous oratory had passed away did he again believe in his own integrity. Surely no higher tribute was ever paid to the magic of the "silver-tongue." The trial continued from 1788 to 1795, and for four days at the beginning and for nine days at the close that scathing arraignment went on. Of one speech in 1788 she says, "Such a splendid and powerful oration I never heard. Poor Hastings sitting by and looking so meek, to hear himself called 'villain' and 'cut-throat,' &c.! The recapitulation of the dreadful cruelties in India was worked up to the highest pitch of eloquence and passion, so that the orator was seized with a spasm which made him incapable of speaking another word, and I did not know whether he might not have died in the exercise of his powers, like Chatham. I think I never felt such indignation as when Burke, *with Sheridan standing on one side and Fox on the*

other, said, 'Vice incapacitates a man from all public duty,—it withers the power of his understanding and makes his mind paralytic.' I looked at his neighbours, and saw that they were quite free from any symptoms of palsy!"

Of this world-famous trial Macaulay writes, "The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The judges in their vestments of state attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The grey old wails were hung with scarlet. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art."

The Queen and the Princesses, the Prince of Wales, and ambassadors of great kings and Commonwealths, the stern and hostile Chancellor and the high-souled Wyndham, Sarah Siddons in her majestic beauty, side by side with the dainty grace of the Duchess of Devonshire, Reynolds the greatest painter and Parr the greatest scholar of the age, were some of those who listened enraptured to the "sublime and beautiful" Burke; and among the noblest in the land sat the daughter of the Stapleton schoolmaster, and watched with breathless in-

terest a display of colour, intellect, beauty, and rank which has perhaps been rarely, if ever, equalled.

Her tragedy of "Percy" was produced at Covent Garden Theatre in 1777. Four thousand copies of the "book o' the words" were sold in a fortnight, and the play itself had an unusually long run, Garrick taking the principal character, and enriching the performance by a prologue and epilogue of his own.

This tragedy seems to have made the greatest success of any of her plays, and excited the emotions alike of rich and poor. Johnson, Garrick, and Pitt united in praising it, and the author's place in the literary world was definitely secured. For several years she lived a life of adulation, but throughout it all she held tight on to her Sundays, and maintained a degree of real simpleness which could only be regarded as remarkable, were not her early influences taken into account. The Jesuits have a saying, "Give us a child to train until he be nine years old, and you may do what you like with him afterwards," and of the truth of this Hannah More is an example. The purity of her life remained untouched, and if to our modern notions she sometimes appears almost "priggish," it must be remembered that the line between faith and unfaith was more sharply defined in her day than it is now, and she was bold to avow that "Propriety is to a woman what the great Roman

critic said that action is to an orator, — it is the first, the second, and the third requisite."

The strange millinery of the upper classes did not escape her observant eye, and both she and Garrick succeeded, by ridiculing the prevailing fashion, in putting a stop to the kitchen-gardens and flower-plots which ladies then wore upon their heads. "The old order changeth, yielding place to new," but there are cycles in head-gear, as in other less mundane matters, and we are again threatened with abnormal-sized currants, grapes, and cherries, &c., as well as every sort of possible and impossible insect and shrub, as parts of our toilet decoration. The appearance of Garrick with his head disfigured by bunches of carrots and turnips was enough to startle into common-sense all but the most thick-skinned of his audience, but, alas! in these days we have no Garrick, and the stage, in spite of all that culture can do, becomes less and less of an object-lesson in decency and propriety. Her Utopian schemes of reforming the character of theatrical representations seems to have died with Garrick, and the sight of his coffin in the same room where she had but lately witnessed him performing as Macbeth, made her resolve definitely to devote her talents to higher uses. David Garrick was buried in 1779, amid great mourning and splendid pomp, in the great Abbey of Westminster, but on the very night of his funeral the play-houses were as