

and luxurious habits; and *by its character*, to her tender, sensitive and fanciful disposition!" iv. p. 286.

Such is the story; which may be dismissed as merely foolish; but the sentiments and language must not escape quite so easily. The latter is an inflated jargon, composed of terms picked up in all countries, and wholly irreducible to any ordinary rules of grammar or sense. The former are mischievous in tendency, and profligate in principle; licentious and irreverent in the highest degree. To revelation, Miss Owenson manifests a singular antipathy. It is the subject of many profound diatribes, which want nothing but meaning to be decisive. Yet Miss Owenson is not without an object of worship. She makes no account indeed of the Creator of the universe, unless to swear by his name; but, in return, she manifests a prodigious respect for something that she dignifies with the name of Nature, which, it seems, governs the world, and, as we gather from her creed, is to be honoured by libertinism in the women, disloyalty in the men, and atheism in both.

This young lady, as we conclude from her Introduction, is the *enfant gaté* of a particular circle, who see, in her constitutional sprightliness, marks of genius, and encourage her dangerous propensity to publication. She has evidently written more than she has read, and read more than she has thought. But this is beginning at the wrong end. If we were happy enough to be in her confidence, we should advise the immediate purchase of a spelling book, of which she **stands** in great need; to this, in due process of time, might be **added** a pocket dictionary; she might then take a few easy lessons in 'joined-hand,' in order to become *legible*: if, after **this**, she could be persuaded to exchange her idle raptures for common sense, practise a little self denial, and gather a few precepts of humility, from an old-fashioned book, which, although it does not seem to have lately fallen in her way, may yet, we think, be found in some corner of her study; she might then hope to prove, not indeed a good writer of novels, but a useful friend, a faithful wife, a tender mother, and a respectable and happy mistress of a family.

ART. IV. *Woman: or, Ida of Athens.* By Miss Owenson, author of the "*Wild Irish Girl*," "*The Novice of St. Dominick*," &c. 4 vols. 12mo. London. Longman. 1809.

'BACCHANTES, animated with Orphean fury, slinging their serpents in the air, striking their cymbals, and utering dithyrambics, appeared to surround him on every side.' p. 5.

'That modesty which is of soul, seemed to diffuse itself over a form, whose exquisite symmetry was at once betrayed and concealed by the apparent tissue of woven air, which fell like a vapour round her.' p. 23.

'Like Aurora, the extremities of her delicate limbs were rosed with flowing hues, and her little foot, as it pressed its naked beauty on a scarlet cushion, resembled that of a youthful Thetis from its blushing tints, or that of a fugitive Atalanta from its height,' &c. &c. p. 53.

After repeated attempts to comprehend the meaning of these, and a hundred similar conundrums, in the compass of half as many pages, we gave them up in despair; and were carelessly turning the leaves of the volume backward and forward, when the following passage, in a short note 'to the Reader,' caught our eye. 'My little works have been always printed from *illegible* manuscripts in one country, while their author was resident in another,' p. vi. We have been accustomed to overlook these introductory gossipings: in future, however, we shall be more circumspect; since it is evident that if we had read straight forward from the title page, we should have escaped a very severe head-ach.

The matter seems now sufficiently clear. The printer having to produce four volumes from a manuscript, of which he could not read a word, performed his task to the best of his power; and fabricated the requisite number of lines, by shaking the types out of the boxes at a venture. The work must, therefore, be considered as a kind of overgrown *amphigouri*, a heterogeneous combination of events, which, pretending to no meaning, may be innocently permitted to surprize for a moment, and then dropt for ever.

If, however, which is possible, the author like Caliban (we beg Miss Owenson's pardon) 'cannot endue her purpose with words that make it known;' but by *illegible* means *what may be read*, and is, consequently, in earnest; the case is somewhat altered, and we must endeavour to make out the story.

Ida of Athens, a Greek girl, half antient and half modern, falls

falls desperately in love with a young slave; and, when he is defeated and taken prisoner, in a fray more ridiculously begun and ended, than the wars of Tom Thumb the Great, marries a 'Disdar-aga,' to save his life. This simple personage, instead of taking possession of his bride, whom he has 'placed on an ottoman of down,' *couleur de rose*, rushes from the apartment 'to see a noise which he heard:' and has scarcely thrust his head out of the street door, when, to his inexpressible amazement, it is dexterously sliced off by 'an agent of the Porte;*' and Ida, without waiting for her thirds, runs joyfully home to her father. Meanwhile the Greek slave, who had, somewhat unpolitely, looked through the Disdar-aga's 'casement,' and seen Ida in his arms, very naturally takes it in dudgeon, and enrols himself among the Janissaries. Ida, on her side, having no engagement on her hands, falls in love with an English traveller, who offers her a settlement, which she very modestly rejects. A long train of woe succeeds. Her father is stripped of his property, and thrown into a dungeon; from which he is delivered by the Janissary on duty, (the prying lover of Ida) who, without making himself known, assists them to quit the country, and embark for England. 'They launch into the Archipelago, that interesting sea, so precious to the soul of genius;' iv. p. 45, and after many hair-breadth scapes, arrive in London. Here they are cheated, robbed, and insulted by every body; and the father, after being several days without food, is dragged to a spunging house, where he expires! Ida runs frantically through the streets, and falls into the arms of the English traveller, who is now become a lord, and very gallantly renews his offers, which are again rejected. In consequence of an advertisement in the public papers, Ida discovers a rich uncle, who dies very opportunely, and leaves her 'the most opulent heiress of Great Britain.'

The fair Greek abuses her prosperity; but before her fortune and reputation are quite gone, the slave makes his appearance once more,—not as a Janissary, but as a General Officer in the Russian service; and being now convinced that the familiarity of the Disdar-aga led to no unseemly consequence, marries his quondam mistress *for good and all*, and carries her to Russia, 'a country congenial by its climate to her delicate constitution'

* Wrong:—he turns sick as he is running after the "Capadilger Keayassa," and dies in a ditch.—See vol. iii. p. 143. *Printer's Devil.*