

lements of York Minster. In York Castle he was imprisoned, and wrote his Defence and his Autobiography; at York Assizes he was tried and convicted; and on York gallows he was hung. The city is as intimately associated with the closing scenes in his history, as with the passing visit of Jeanie Deans, or the birth of Robinson Crusoe. But there is this important difference in the cases, that the one story has found a place in literature from the strangely romantic cast of its facts, and the others from the intensely truthful air of their fictions.

Eugene Aram seems not to have been the high heroic character conceived by the novelist, — not a hero of tragedy at all, nor a hero of any kind, but simply a poor egotistical *litterateur*, with a fine intellect set in a very inferior nature. He represents the extreme type of unfortunately a numerous class, — the men of vigorous talent, in some instances of fine genius, who, though they can think much and highly of themselves, seem wholly unable to appreciate their true place and work, or the real dignity of their standing, and so are continually getting into false, unworthy positions, — in some instances falling into little meannesses, in others into contemptible crimes. I am afraid it is all too evident that even the sage Bacon belonged to this class; and there can be little doubt that, though greatly less a criminal, the elegant and vigorous poet who described him as

“The greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind,”

belonged to it also. The phosphoric light of genius, that throws so radiant a gloom athwart the obscurities of nature, has in some cases been carried by a frivolous insect, in some by a creeping worm: there are brilliant intellects of the fire-fly and of the glow-worm class; and poor Eugene Aram was one of them. In his character, as embodied in the evidence on