

which he was convicted and condemned, we see merely that of a felon of the baser sort: a man who associated with low companions; married a low wife; entered into low sharpening schemes with a poor dishonest creature, whom, early in his career, he used to accompany at nights in stealing flower-roots, — for they possessed in common a taste for gardening, — and whom he afterwards barbarously murdered, to possess himself of a few miserable pounds, — the proceeds of a piece of disreputable swindling, to which he had prompted him. Viewed, however, in another phase, we find that this low felon possessed one of those vigorous intellectual natures that, month after month, and year after year, steadily progress in acquirement, as the forest-tree swells in bulk of trunk and amplitude of bough; till, at length, with scarce any educational advantages, there was no learned language which he had not mastered, and scarce a classic author which he had not read. And, finally, when the learned felon came to make his defence, all Britain was astonished by a piece of pleading that, for the elegance of the composition and the vigor of the thought, would have done no discredit to the most accomplished writers of the day. The defence of Eugene Aram, if given to the public among the defences, and under the name, of Thomas Lord Erskine, so celebrated for this species of composition, would certainly not be deemed unworthy of the collection or its author. There can be no question that the Aram of Bulwer is a well-drawn character, and rich in the picturesque of tragic effect; but the exhibition is neither so melancholy nor so instructive as that of the Eugene Aram who was executed at York for murder in the autumn of 1759, and his body afterwards hung in chains at “the place called St. Robert’s Cave, near Knaresborough.”