

preaching several sermons to defray the expenses of altar pictures and other decorations than to obtain funds for a carved and gilt organ. Illustrations of the proverb, "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel," are too frequent; for, besides the anomalies referred to, there are others, such as the admission of numerous monumental effigies, combinations of variegated marbles, &c., brilliant velvet cushions fringed with gold; embellishments, denied the church, liberally bestowed on prayer-books and bibles. Again, insisting on the strict adherence to the precept, "thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image," and yet permitting the representation of Moses over the altar bearing the tablets of the law which contain it—pulling down sculptured representations of the passion, setting up the royal arms or the banners and escutcheons of noblemen and gentlemen. How long will men exhibit the capriciousness of children? To push notions to their limits, a church must have some form and colour; these are conditions which cannot be banished from being; colour is peculiarly a manifestation of health and life; the church that endeavours to banish it is pale and sickly; colour will find its way into the temple even if its walls be reduced to black and white: deny these to be colours, bright hues steal in on bonnets—ribbons—silks—reduce these to grey—the rosy tints still modestly blush on the lips and cheeks of the fair Christian; banish it from hence, and it is an unmerciful and gloomy creed—a foul blotch on nature's visage—the sooner removed the better for society.

The following are the heads of arguments, addressed to churchwardens in particular and others whom it may concern. To enunciate the law of alternation, or of action and reaction, particularly as regards the affections and disaffections of society and individuals. The expediency of meeting the reaction in favour of ecclesiastical decoration, that the advantages of the persuasive influences of painting and sculpture may not accrue to those opposed to Protestantism, by yielding them the power of attracting men from the pale of its teachings. To show that form and colour are like musical sounds, mere agencies, edifying and elevating when ordered by virtue, noxious and degrading under the tyranny of vice. To suggest to those who would admit ornamentation in churches, without sanctioning the introduction of the human figure, painted or sculptured, abhorring idolatry; that if worshipping in presence of an image be idolatry, then all worship is idolatrous; and lastly, an argument on a lower basis—the importance of church decoration to the manufacturing community and general prosperity of the country.

It appears to be a universal law of nature to oscillate between extremes, and from any condition under which it has previously existed to seek its contrasting or opposing quality. The moral world of man, like the globe he inhabits, alternates between the laxity of summer and the severity of winter, dark night and bright day, storm and calm, action and repose, life and death; the same holds in regard to his physical being, which if excited exclusively in any one direction demands its complementary reaction.—fast leads to hunger, surfeit to disgust and abstinence. The artist and musician perceive the same physiological tendency to opposite states with regard to colour and sound. Society is the aggregate manifestation of man's individual nature, and is, therefore, similarly necessitated, as witnessed in its revolutions: when oppression of one kind has reached its limit, it is succeeded by one of an opposite nature—the oppressed become the avenging oppressors—examples are too familiar, even within our own times, to need any comment, save reminding the oppressor that there will inevitably be a day of retribution. Again, when the Latin church had run into excesses, it was opposed by the austere and iconoclastic extremes of the early reformers. The awe inspired by contemplating the convulsions of the earth, or of society, is somewhat abated, however, on reflecting there is consoling evidence that every successive convulsion oscillates, as it were, in an arc less than the preceding, the antagonistic reacting extremes being less violent than those which ultimately guide nature to that mid-point, the goal of peace and harmony.

Does not this law of alternation give the clue—the perception of the necessity of the reaction which has visibly commenced with regard to church decoration? Men begin to pall of whitewashed churches and chapels, the extreme in this direction having been indulged in long enough—the good no longer exists which pricked it onward in its course—the tide is on the turn—the antagonistic feeling which urged public opinion in this direction is fast dying, men begin to reflect calmly and rationally, whether they may not have gone too far in the spirit of opposition, and whether there be not danger in abstaining,—in fasting the senses on bare walls,—the danger of denial is, that when its gates are once unlocked, the imprisoned sense at once rushes into excess; it chafes in its chains and narrow cell impatient of restraint, and when liberated, turns its freedom to abuse till it finds itself again at the extent of its tether in the opposite extreme: men ought to have learned from experience—from historic precedent, that true social and moral liberty is alone left when their chains hang loosely about them, becoming conscious of thralldom only when they forsake the "in media tutissimis ibis" of reason—

"Austerity, severe and cold,
Or wild excess—
Voluptuous ease, in halls of gold,
Not happiness:
They true enjoyment find alone
Who, bound between
The torrid and the frigid zone,
Observe the mean."

Let the Church of England and dissenters consider this law well—consider whether there be not a probability that the multitude will be attracted within the pale of those churches and chapels which offer them—

"Storied windows richly light,
Casting a dim religious light;

the splendours of painting and sculpture, or the glorious anthem vibrating in the choir—

"There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full voic'd choir below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

Let Protestantism recollect that these quotations are tributes to the influences of such powers by one of its bulwarks and chief ornaments. Are not such influences a relief to the monotony of work-day life? Is not the Protestant church relinquishing advantages which might secure to it complete victory? Would it not be good policy to adopt it as a principle of allurements as well as defence? It may believe itself too strong to require such aids—but there is a danger in the supineness of fancied security. He would be but a bad general who should consider his position strong enough when opportunities present themselves to make it stronger: "watch and prepare." The beautiful in form and colour enlisted in the worship of the Creator, might allure the indifferent with soft persuasion, within reach of argument and reason, and while softening man's grosser nature, open the gates of his understanding, that sound principles may enter freely. If such means be despised, the English church may rest assured that others will continue to avail themselves of them whose doctrines it does not esteem, and the advantages to be derived from the use of such persuasives will thus be reaped by its enemies. Is it more criminal to starve the belly on Friday, than the eye, which has been famished the work-day week, on Sunday? Will not the hungry sense have a tendency to seek those who will give it food, and willingly agree as the price of its enjoyment to abjure flesh on the Friday? Theatres owe half their attractive influence to the fulsome and meretricious excitements of form and colour which vitiate taste, wanting a presiding influence to offer pure and holy beauty to the eyes of the people. The power of such excess is the greater under the denial and limited opportunities which the public have of gratifying the higher tastes; it is no wonder, therefore, that when adverse powers offer sense-excitements, they are readily embraced. This effect of denial to precipitate in opposite extremes, is of constant occurrence in society; and 'tis pity that legislators, instructors, and

parents cannot foresee the inevitable consequences of many of their acts. It may be observed, that all are more susceptible of gross influences, who have been under restraint and denial: children that have been overworked and drilled into unwilling anchorites, at last break loose; the parent mourns too often the wickedness of his children, instead of his own folly; the youth from the country often falls a victim to the seductive influences of the city; the extravagance of the sailor a-shore, and the improvidence of the poor, are proverbial; princes seek retirement and relief in the employments of their subjects; the libertine and anchorite often retrace their steps.

Forms, colours, and sounds, are mere agents, not guilty in themselves. In the service of good they should contribute to its effulgent glory, that its intense light may extinguish the fascinating eyes of the serpent. They are in one shape or another the common weapons of good and evil. Both good and bad spirits may inhabit beautiful dwellings,—the angel to awaken love to good,—the devil to seduce to evil. All that is lovely on the earth has been given for our use, not abuse.

"For nought so vile that on the earth doth live,
But to the earth some special good doth give;
Nor aught so good, but, strain'd from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth stumbling on abuse."

What evil is there in the form of the lily, the tints and perfume of the rose? Poisons may lurk in their juices, but the form, colour, and perfume may be abstracted from the noxious qualities which wear them. It is with form and colour as with gold, in a moral point of view,—all its good offices are forgotten, and only its crimes remembered; it is forgotten they are but mediums, subject to conflicting powers, and that only figuratively can we qualify them as bad or good. In this sense, with regard to gold, it is good that it has ransom'd the captive—it is bad that it has purchased the slave; it may be alike used by the ministrants of charity and abettors of crime. Parallels of use and abuse might be drawn with regard to form, colour, and sound.

The Reformation, in its antagonistic fanaticism, consign'd all that was beautiful in the Latin church to destruction, considering it as being tainted by its connection; but pure beauty, like pure virtue, might stand unscathed, uncontaminated, even in hell. If there had been evil in the glorious tints of flowers, the broidery on Nature's robes, Nature might, as an anchorite, have been clauked in universal grey; and what ideal then would have been framed of heaven but cold monotony? But as we ascend from one beauty of the earth to another—as we mount up to the contemplation of its full splendour—the imagination still exclaims "excelsior." It is from things terrestrial alone that men are enabled to form some feeble idea of the aspect of heaven and revelation: still to exalt our vision within the pale of our limited understanding, brings all the splendours of earth, even gold and precious stones, to frame an idea in our minds of a heavenly city. If such means are not considered derogatory in the sacred writings, why should men abjure that which has been consecrated? Let our churches and chapels then be typically adorned with the treasures and beauties of earth, that after our utmost powers have been exhausted, the imagination may still travel beyond. The Chinese believes his celestial empire transcends all others, because there is no mental liberty and progress. The American Indian is superior in imagination, and dies in the anticipation of the delights of his beautiful hunting grounds, which having found to graduate in superiority on earth, he believes will be transcended in the next world. We smile at his credulity, at his humble notion of heaven: yet the "excelsior" of mankind, in all its grades of progression, is analogous,—it is the anticipation of a more superlative enjoyment than the most elevated experienced on earth,—is more physical in its character in the first stages of civilisation, more refined and rational in its latter or advanced condition. The more the prospect of man's intellectual vision is extended, the nearer it is to heaven.

Before dismissing this part of the subject, it may be asked what sins lurk in the hues of the prism? who will impugn that which has

