FAITH AND UNFAITH

FAITH AND UNFAITH

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

C. KEGAN PAUL

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.
MDCCCXCI

PREFACE.

The seven essays in the present volume are all that I care to preserve (apart from "Biographical Sketches" already published in similar form) of my contributions to various Periodicals for some years past. I recognize that in addition to their own inherent defects, of which none can be more aware than I, they have no such link each with the other as had the parts of the previous volume; though to myself there appears a spiritual affinity in most of them, in that they were the outcome of doubts and difficulties now at rest. It has seemed right, however few the matter may concern, that since the record of inward strife was given to the world, the same essays should be published with trifling necessary changes showing that the strife is over, and with the intimation that if I have been

in

in error in what I have said concerning any of the Church's doctrines, I submit in this, as in all things, to her teaching.

I have to thank the Editors and Proprietors of the Nineteenth Century, the Fortnightly, Theological, British Quarterly, and Century Guild Hobby Horse Reviews, and the Guardian Newspaper for permission to reprint the substance of the book.

C. K. P.

MARCH 8, 1891.

CONTENTS.

FAITH AND UNFAITH.

IN looking back to the beginning of any great schism of thought it is often difficult to understand why so vast importance attached to what now seem trifles; the parties which opposed each other with the utmost vehemence said much the same thing, "only in slightly different words." The strifes of the schoolmen are held to be mere phrases; it is hard for any who are outside the pale of the Churches to see wherein lies the essential variance between the Catholic and the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist; a devout Churchman or Wesleyan of these days does not easily understand the grounds of separation in the last century, or, indeed, the precise point at which the "Methodists" ceased to be a stricter section within the Established Church. The currents of thought are like those of rivers rising in the same watershed; no reason is evident why they should not take the same direction, only when their later course is considered we see how wide was the ultimate distance involved in their earliest channels.

The

The wish, on the one hand, to change, and, on the other, to refuse all change of that which has once been defined, is instinctive. There are in the one case the dim stirrings of life, such as take place in the spring long before the feelings are conscious of alteration in climatic conditions, or

> "Even as the prisoned silver, dead and dumb,
> Shrinks at cold winter's footfall ere he come;"

in the other the mind is no less sensitive.

Without in any degree underestimating the great controversies in the early centuries of our era, while the rule of faith was forming, or those others when the scholastic philosophy issued from the shock of opposing forces, we may safely assert that, from the time that the Church arose to develop the monotheism of Judaea and supplant the religions of heathendom, no such event took place in the Western, or civilised world, as that which on its secular side is called the Renascence, and on the religious side the Reformation. To the movement the Church could not, and did not, as a whole, object. The new learning, if it were true, could not only not conflict with truth, but would throw many side lights on it. Sciolism and stupidity, the dark shadows which attend the light of knowledge, were alone to be disliked and dreaded. The greatest and holiest minds recognised the need of reform in high places and in low; in the luxury of some popes and the laxity of friars much called for

for amendment, somewhat for radical change and destruction. Perhaps this could not have come wholly from within. Outside resistance and criticism are always good for the criticised, if not for the critic, just as now the very fact of living in the light of opposition makes the Catholic Church more fair, morally and socially, in England, than, let us say, in Madeira. But, however this may be, the Renascence and the Reformation had hardly begun, when the Church instinctively knew that liberty would soon grow into license, and separation would become destruction. Erasmus made merry over pilgrimages, and Ulrich von Hutten over the meagre Latinity of certain monks; but though they fell out among themselves, and though no one would ever have attempted to justify much of what is told, not untruthfully, in the *Peregrinatio religionis ergo*, or the amazing ignorance of Pfefferkorn in the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, the Church looked askance on both reformers, even on him who remained within, as on him who definitely withdrew from the pale of salvation.

Assault on dogma was implicitly involved in opposition to abuses even when the assailants were unable to recognise that they doubted dogma at all. Each party soon called the other antichristian, but there was a difference in the meaning with which the term was used. The Protestants asserted that the pure teaching of Jesus had been overlaid by a multitude of useless ceremonies, and that, if these were

were stripped off, the underlying truth would again be manifest, while, as regarded the hierarchy, they thought they recognised the mystical opponent of Jesus of whom the Apocalypse had spoken. But they could not mean that Christ was nominally or implicitly assailed by a Church which had his image on every altar, claimed to preserve his body in every tabernacle, to consecrate and consume it daily, whose whole ecclesiastical year was founded on the life of Christ, whose very saints, even if, as their enemies said, they had taken his place, were saints only in, and because of, their relation to him. But the Catholics meant far more than this; that the new spirit of revolt had implicitly in it the denial of Christ, and ultimately of God; that if the premisses of the reformers were accepted, then logically followed the downfall of all faith in Christ, in God, and in the supernatural, and of course the utter abandonment of the name and office of a Church. In the material destruction of roods, in the denial of the doctrine of the Mass, this was, they thought, involved, and that which was to their enemies a figure of rhetoric was to them a very bald, but terrible truth when they used the word antichristian.

Yet even then, and in the heat of controversy, it was scarce seen whereunto the difference would grow. The Protestant parties expected to keep to the end large portions of faith and ritual which gradually dropped from them; the Catholics scarce thought

thought that the revolt would be of long duration. And many, while they held the dangerous and unrighteous nature of the new tenets, no doubt hoped that these would not issue in their logical consequences; just as now those who most assert the antinomian character of the utilitarian philosophy are among the most ready to admit that its adherents are moral, law-abiding, and excellent men.

But now that we can regard the controversy with the cumulative experience of three hundred years, we see how wide is the divergence of those opinions which seemed parallel at their first separation; that, while the Church is one and the same, Protestantism is not one; it has divided into a thousand parties, but the tendency in all is to get rid of such dogma as it once possessed, and more and more to denounce the outward semblance and the inward spirit of the organisation from which it sprang. The Church of England alone stands as an apparent exception, all the more remarkable because a large portion, perhaps even a numerical majority, among its clergy have in the last fifty years gradually recurred to the outward likeness of many Catholic forms, and reasserted many long-neglected doctrines. But this reaction is far more apparent than real; to render it a reality there must be authority and discipline. It is notorious that the men who carry reaction furthest scoff at discipline, since their bishops, as a rule, will have nothing to do with either

either their teaching or their practice; nor is there any central authority to decide who goes right in the bewildering maze. The people at large, even those who attend the churches in which ritual is most carried out and dogma most asserted, regard the whole matter in the light of a pleasing imitation, and look on it as provisional, longing for the time when Christendom once more shall be united, by which they mean when they themselves can see their way to joining the Church of Rome. For no one seriously thinks that Rome will yield to them, recognise their orders, and allow married priests to officiate, nor would they make any concession whatever to the sects, who, without very large allowances, for which it is fair to say they do not ask, could play no part in an united Christendom.

But if we take all the other Protestant sects, and the still large portion of the English Church which is not reactionary, we find as a fact that dogma has faded to a very few articles, and that these are always diminishing in number and importance. The creeds are recited in the English Church, but few doctrines are, save in the high churches, dwelt on with any insistance; in the nonconformist churches the creeds are not even recited, and the very notion of a body of all-important doctrines, each one in close interdependence on the others, is rapidly vanishing. While in all, no doubt, the excellence of a moral life is studiously upheld, enforced

enforced by scriptural precept and example, supernatural aid is almost disregarded, or at least is vaguely described as the help of the Holy Spirit. How that aid is given and applied is left to each believer. He is to discover in himself the workings of that which is never defined to him ; an uncertain form of words of little meaning takes the place of elaborate sacraments which of old fortified the Christian at every turn. Grace has become a sound instead of a reality, whereof the channels were once so visible that the invisible current seemed almost apparent to the senses. In the broad church portion of the Church of England, and in some of the sects outside of it, there is an increasing tendency to approximate to the theology known as Unitarian. Almost all the chapels which belonged to the old Presbyterian Church in England, to those clergy which separated themselves on the enforcement of the Act of Uniformity, have become Unitarian by insensible gradations, and in America the gulf between the sects once known as orthodox and unorthodox is not always apparent.

The Unitarian body is by no means stationary, and among the leaders of thought in that community the teaching grows less and less dogmatic, tending to restrict itself to the simple enunciation of theism, and the need of a life morally correct and intellectually graceful. There are next to no Unitarian poor.

The disintegration of dogma has gone further than

than persons generally suppose. The adherents of all sects would be startled at the vast number of those who hold no form of religion at all, or who, if they attend worship, do so as an act of compliance, or for a season of rest, and not on any grounds of faith. There is no need to do more than assert that which is to some a commonplace, and which others can easily verify for themselves if the inquiry is not too painful. None who have marked the swift change and abandonment of faith during the last quarter of a century, the tolerance extended to those who but a few years ago would have been ostracised, the acceptance, as commonplaces of criticism, of statements which would not long since have been counted as daring infidelity, can doubt that opinion is still changing with increasing swiftness. All that lies between the Catholic Church and extreme free-thought is whirling and surging, but gradually setting into two streams, the one recurrent, the other dashing rapidly to some unknown cataract, whose roar is heard by almost all, however smoothly glides their barque.

Those who are called on to take part in the strifes between the Churches may for a while shut their eyes to the fact, but few thoughtful men whose attention is drawn to it will refuse to grant, that ultimately, later or sooner, the great contest of thought must be fought, not between two varying forms of the Christian faith, nor between the Protestant

testant sects and unbelief, but between that historic Church of which the sects are but rebellious children, however they may deny their parentage, and the modern spirit, call it by what name we will. It is not fairly to be called the spirit of unbelief or atheism, for it is not dogmatic, and atheism is dogma as much as theism, but it is a spirit of patient waiting, which is content not to know. If pressed, and obliged to define itself, it says frankly that, whatever may be guessed or hoped, nothing can be concluded, accurately and positively, of which the senses cannot take cognizance, nothing beyond what is material and physical. Minds penetrated by this spirit have no desire to force the contest prematurely, which, indeed, none can hasten, which will come only, like all that is, when the time is ripe; yet none the less are they content to see the two lines distinctly forming themselves for the great battle of Armageddon, and think it well when one or another who has wavered decides to range himself under either banner. Such an one, though separated by a vast intellectual distance from the Roman position, may yet admire the pomp of that august army which comes on as of old, with banners flying and censers waving, chanting its olden hymns of faith; nor refuse his partial sympathy to the phalanx of men who do not much strive nor cry, nor let their voices be heard in the streets, but prepare their way in the lecture-room, the laboratory, and the library; yet who, when need is, their faces

faces set like flints, advance without pomp, but with unshrinking steadfastness, to the overthrow of what they hold as superstition.

Such an one may do more than this. He may attempt to clear the ground for others, if it seem to him that he has in any degree succeeded in doing so for himself. For it is a singular fact, in this controversy more than in any other, that the magnitude of the issues involved blinds men to the logical outcome of their own opinions. Many who deem themselves to be in an intermediate position are totally unaware that it is already carried, and that they are bound by all rules of reasoning to take one or the other side. They assail the historic Church with unmeasured vituperations, while their own principles, or what they take to be such, implicitly involve the admission of their adversaries' dogmas; the extremest opinions of Rome are to be justified by, and deduced from, the premisses they themselves admit. Or, on the other hand, the orthodox will occasionally make liberal concessions which involve the denial of what they hold most dear, will reject this or that miracle, not on grounds of insufficient evidence, but for rationalistic reasons which may equally apply to those which they accept.

I am of course aware that a vast number of persons do not think that a strict logical process is needful in matters of faith; they bear, like Canute, their chairs to the edge of the sea of theological change

change, tuck up their feet and shut their eyes, and, because they feel dry, deny that the water has passed them and is around them, believing that they have controlled the flood because it has not actually washed them away. And there are those also who can deliberately shut their minds, and clasp them with a clasp, and, having once determined on a rule of life which then seemed to them sufficient, have never again paid any attention to controversies which do not affect their practical life. Happier they, perchance, than those whom an inner impulse drives ever to weigh, to sift, to accept or reject all that is presented to them, or to which they can reach, yet perchance also not happier, for it may be there is no real evil but stagnation, which is but another name for death.

To aid in clearing my own mind, and, if it may be, to enable others in some degree to do so too, I wish to show that on Christian premisses, by which are here understood those accepted by the majority of Christian folk, the very dogmas of Rome which often give most offence, and are considered most extreme, are not only to be justified, but maintained, with even greater ease than those which find less opposition, and to ask whether it be not a logical necessity that whoso denies them should deny much more, or, accepting them, should at least not judge harshly those who go on to beliefs which are implicitly involved in them. Such an inquiry

inquiry has at least the advantage of dealing with grave and momentous issues, and leaves on one side minor points, on which are often sharp wranglings by which nothing of profit can be decided. If, for instance, the subject matter of difficulty or discussion be whether the Being who created heaven and earth can be localised in a wafer and consumed by the faithful; or whether the same Being have given to men who stand in a certain relation to him the power of changing, or seeming to change, the usually unvarying course of nature; if he have endowed fragments of their bodies, or relics of the Passion of Christ, with abnormal virtues of healing and restoration; if from the merits of those who live holy lives there be laid up such an overplus of goodness as avails to cancel the temporal punishment of sinners unconnected with them save by the general bond of a common humanity, how mean and petty become the disputes about vestments, or jurisdiction, or the excellence of an Establishment! If it can be shown that the majority of religious persons assert that which involves much of what they most abhor, the strifes between the Churches are as naught; the one Church which claims adhesion is that which carries out accepted premisses most fully, or else the rejection of the conclusion necessitates rejection of all that involves it.

There is perhaps no dogma which has called forth more indignant remonstrance from its opponents than that of the Mass, and in this the one

one point that Christ, whole and entire, God, the Saviour of mankind, is, so to speak, localised in the wafer or bread consecrated by the priest. This doctrine may be stated with refined metaphysical subtlety; it may take the crude yet poetical form in which it appears in the legend of the Holy Grail, when the knights of Arthur's Round Table saw the Fair Child who came "and smote himself into the bread," so that the onlookers saw the very act of transubstantiation by which the wafer became the Flesh of God. Or, again, it may assume a ghastly form in the tale of those mediaeval Jews who, stealing the sacred particle to mock and insult the Christian faith, and lancing it with their knives, saw flowing forth from the pierced wafer red streams of sacred blood. Nor can it be said that this mode of stating the doctrine is, even in these days, alien to the feeling of clergy or laity of the Catholic Church, since this very miracle and its consequences have been taken as the subject of a modern painted window in the cathedral of St. Gudule, at Brussels. But whether stated in subtler or grosser terms, the doctrine is one and the same, and it may not inaptly be stated as the localisation of the Infinite.

Now we are not concerned to deny or to minimise the enormous difficulties involved, but simply assert that it is not more difficult than the ordinary admissions of ninety-nine out of every hundred believing Christians. We need not enter into Athanasian

Athanasian niceties of the distinction between the nature and offices of the Father and the Son. Enough that the Son is stated to be God, infinite and incomprehensible. But if God be infinitely great, he is also infinitely little: size has nothing to do with the question, and in fact one of the commonplaces about Almighty God is his care for the smallest of his creatures, and the manifestation of his power in the minute finishings of his work. It is brought to our notice by a thousand writers from Job to our own day that he has made the firmament and the blade of grass, the behemoth and the gnat.

> "Each little flower that opens,
> Each little bird that sings,
> He made their glowing colours,
> He made their tiny wings,"

runs the children's hymn; and Pope, the Catholic poet, says precisely what every Christian would admit, that the power of God is "as perfect in a hair as in a heart." But unless a man be prepared to go much further than this he might be only a pantheist, and the charge of teaching pantheistic doctrine has been freely brought against Pope and others who, as Wordsworth, have seen God revealing himself in nature. To assert that he is everywhere would at first seem to be the very contradictory of such a dogma as that under consideration. Yet the mind of man has not felt the doctrines destructive the one of the other. The Bible, to which

which all appeal, asserts, from its first page to its last, that in some sense and in some modes God, who is everywhere, is present more particularly in certain places. The same notion has descended to, and become emphasised in, modern days. The majority of persons who go to church would certainly give as one of their reasons for doing so, that God is in a special manner there, and that his presence hallows the altar yet more. On what principle do they decline to go a step further, and to admit that it may have pleased him to place himself, in a still more special mode, and under certain conditions, in the sacrament, in that which Christ gave as the express sign of his abiding with the Church? Once let it be granted that he is in any degree and under any conditions localised, the size of the particle is naught, and he who framed the exquisite meshes of the fly's wing, or the microscopic fibres of the lichen, may choose the smallest spot in which to show his greatest and divinest power.

And if any say that the localisation of the Deity may be granted, but not the change of the substance of bread into the substance of flesh, with which in this case it is intimately and to many minds inseparably linked, it lies with them in contradicting this to define what substance is, since he who declares himself a believer in transubstantiation, fully admits with those who deny it, that the outward semblance, species, and accidents of bread and wine remain wholly unchanged.

Or

Or we may take the point of relics, whether of Christ or of the saints. When an eager controversialist laughed at Cardinal Newman because he did not at once refuse credence to the statement that a healing virtue still attaches to an oil supposed to flow from the bones of St. Walburga, his standing as a clergyman would scarce have permitted him categorically to deny the story in the Book of Kings that a dead man was raised to life so soon as his body touched the bones of Elisha, into whose sepulchre it had been lowered. If the new dispensation be, as all Christians maintain, superior to the old, a saint living under the graces and gifts of the Gospel might be expected to have more, not less, inherent virtue than a prophet of the former faith. If it be claimed for the holy coat at Trèves, for the sacred thorn at Paris, for fragments of the true cross, that miracles are wrought by their agency, objectors have scarce an obvious right still to believe the statement in the Acts of the Apostles that to the sick were borne handkerchiefs and aprons which had touched the body of Paul, that healing might and did result; or that other, how folk too weak to walk were carried into the streets, that the shadow of Peter passing by might fall upon and invigorate them. The question in each case would be one of evidence, whether the relic were indeed what is asserted, and assuredly for some miraculous fragments the evidence that they are what they profess to be is overwhelming. There is less room for

for doubt than in the case of many an authentic historical relic, at which to cavil would be the very wantonness of scepticism. If, then, there be likelihood that any object associated with Jesus be indeed what is claimed, then from it might still flow the same virtue that healed the sick woman when she touched his garment's hem; for surely it would be the extremest materialism to maintain that a kerchief or a robe had efficacy only while warm from the living bodies of those who wore them.

Again, conversely, if miraculous agency be admitted at all, and evidence show that any have been healed by such and such relics, the miracles would go far to prove the authenticity of the relics by placing them in the same category with those sacred garments which once were the channels of healing. If, it may be asked, the bones of Elisha had a sanative or even a life-giving power, why not the bones of St. Walburga; if the hem of Christ's garment, why not the holy coat of Trèves; if the sacred spittle, why not the holy blood in the treasury at Reichenau, or that which was spilt on the sacred thorn? And if one of these relics, or a link said to be of Peter's chain, have done as much as is claimed for Peter's shadow, will not the admitted fact prove, or go far to prove, the asserted fact, at least to the same extent that the typical miracles are proved? I admit the enormous difficulty; it is not my present business to obtain credence for either, but to point out

out that the rejection or admission of one class may involve the admission or rejection of the other.

The doubt may of course be pushed back yet further, to the point of asking whether there be such a thing as miraculous interposition at all. Though it is not easy to frame any satisfactory definition of miracle, that is fairly complete which is usually accepted—an interruption or reversion of the ordinary laws of nature, whether this take place by the suspension of those laws, or by the interposition of a law that is higher and overrides the lower. Indeed, a God who never wrought miracle would seem to many in the position of a God who had deliberately abdicated his functions, or rather to be no God at all. For such is the imperfection of human intellect that we can only think of the sovereign ruler of all under the figure of an earthly monarch, and it would seem to us that one who set the affairs of his government in motion, to retire to an inner chamber, whence indeed he could see all that happened, but never interfered nor communicated with his subjects, would be but a poor ruler, a *roi fainéant* without even the semblance of an authority he had ceased to wield. We may go further, and assert, without danger of serious contradiction, that whoever has ceased to believe in miracle has lost all true faith in a personal God. He may use, if he pleases, the name, but "a stream of tendency" or even an undefined "power which makes for righteousness"

can

can but be called God in a sense alien to that which has been put on it, and on analogous names, since human consciousness first woke to the conception of a Being like to but greater than ourselves. Unless he were like us, he could not expect us to be like him, while the thought of one whose goodness is the explanation and model of human virtue is to many that which alone makes moral life possible. And if God be living and personal, and the Church a living body sanctioned, even framed by him, premisses taken for granted by the enormous majority of professing Christians, it is absurd to suppose that the organs, so to speak, of miracle became atrophied at some date not precisely fixed, and that the Being who once acted through organs and agents, has now ceased to act at all in any true manner. Once more we are not here asserting nor denying a personal God, the ruler of the world, but if there be such, he must act, and if he have not retired from governing must show that he governs. The difference between the maker of a machine which continues to ply its appointed task mechanically and even brutally, and the intelligent upholder of a living organism such as the Church is usually assumed to be, is the gift of miracles. And this the Catholic Church claims as her constant birthright, potentially wherever there are relics of her Master and his followers, or traces of their special presence and interest, actually in the daily mystery of the Mass, and indeed in all sacramental graces. Two

Two doctrines, closely connected one with the other, act on many persons as red rags on a bull—purgatory and indulgences. It is difficult to see what harm the first of these can do to any one. We all remember the witty remark of the Catholic bishop in Ireland to his Protestant rival who declined to accept the doctrine of purgatory, "Faith! you may go further and fare worse"; and it is a curious fact that the stoutest opponents of the cleansing fire are those who most earnestly uphold the doctrine of hell; for others and not for themselves. Unless, however, it be maintained that the mere pronunciation of a shibboleth is to free the soul from sin, and make it fit for the joys of heaven, the very conception of a penal, involves that of a purgatorial, fire. For there are surely those who, as the Scotch proverb has it, are "ower bad for blessing and ower guid for banning," for whom there must needs be a time in which to purge themselves, before they rise to the clear vision of eternal day, a place or state in which pardonable offences may be pardoned, and the earthly dross be burned away from the pure gold of the immortal soul. Purgatory is logically involved in the thought of hell and in the thought of heaven; the true alternative to it is not the immediate severance between the sinner and the saint, the transference of the one to eternal torment, the other to eternal delight, but the *ἀτέρμονα νήγρετον ὕπνον* of the Greek poet, the sleep that knows no waking. For who

who is fit for hell or heaven? Even of the evil, a Catholic theologian, who did not mince his words nor take a rose-coloured view of the future state, has said, that Judas is the only soul of whose damnation we are quite certain, and surely there are many believers at least equally hopeful.

On the other hand, it was no Catholic, but one of the strictest of Scotch Protestants, the great Edward Irving, who objected thus vehemently to that shibboleth of the saving power of Christ. In his "Discourse on Judgment to Come," he says:—

> Now what difference is it whether the active spirit of a man is laid asleep by the comfort of the holy wafer, and extreme unction, to be his viaticum and his passport to heaven, or by the constant charm of a few words sounded and sounded, and eternally sounded, about Christ's sufficiency to save? In the holy name of Christ and the three times holy name of God, have they declared aught to men, or are they capable of declaring aught to men, which should not work upon men the desire and the power of holiness? Why then do I hear the constant babbling about simple reliance and simple dependence upon Christ, instead of most scriptural and sound-minded calls to activity and perseverance after every perfection? And oh! they will die mantled in their vain delusion as the Catholic dies, and when the soothing voice of their consolatory teacher is passed into inaudible distance, Conscience will arise with pensive Reflection and pale Fear, her two daughters, to take an account of the progress and exact advancement of their mind.

By all means let those who please deny purgatorial fire and purgatory of any kind, but, in consistency, the joys of heaven must vanish at the same time, with

with the dismal hell appointed for those who sin in a different manner to the assertor of it, and for the holders of a different faith. Where in such a case would be the hope and comfort of many a Christian?

Ever since, and even before, Luther nailed his theses on the church door at Wittenberg, the very name of indulgences has been a by-word among men. Catholics themselves have often had to speak of them with bated breath, and in a Protestant country the word is little pronounced. Every Catholic is quite aware that his doctrine is capable of the most complete defence, or he would not profess to hold it; but he would fully admit that the traffic in indulgences, developed to so large an extent for financial reasons, to supply the money needed for St. Peter's in Rome, and carried to an excess by vulgar monks who turned pedlars with these as their wares, has brought discredit on the doctrine itself, as well as on its abuses. But this, however natural, is unfair. What is really held by the Roman Church is briefly this: for the sake of good deeds, done either by a man himself or by some other person, certain penalties of misdeeds may be, under conditions, set aside; or to speak technically, an indulgence is a "remission of the punishment still due to sin after sacramental absolution, this remission being valid in the court of conscience and before God, and being made by an application of the treasures of the

the Church on the part of a lawful superior." As in the social so in the moral code, a transgression may be of the slightest or of the gravest character. We may offend against social law by neglecting to raise our hat to a lady, or by running away with our neighbour's wife. For the one transgression the penalty may be that the lady forgets to ask us to her next evening party; for the graver offence are the law-courts, possibly a heavy money fine and exclusion from all decent society. So, in the same way, an offence against the moral law may vary from an indulged tendency to lie too long in bed, or to be drowsy in church, to the gravest sins of which poor human nature is capable; and the Church draws a very intelligible distinction between mortal and venial sin, making also a difference between two kinds of punishment which fall on the offender and the two kinds of forgiveness needed. The one punishment is temporal, and, if we may say so, trivial, the other spiritual and eternal, and it is to the passing punishment, whether in this world or the next, that an indulgence can alone apply.

Now if it be a shocking thing that, for the remission of temporal punishment, men should be entitled to draw on a store of merits not their own, or on their own previous good deeds, the objector, if consistent, must refuse to accept any kind of vicarious merit, and apply his law of stern and unflinching morality to all cases in which aught is done for another's sake, or in remembrance of the past.

Some

Some years ago there was an usage at Eton, which seemed to the present writer, when only a boy of thirteen, exactly, though perhaps unintentionally, framed on the lines of ecclesiastical indulgences. The "Remove" was a part of the school in which geography and history were especially studied, and the making of maps was a weekly exercise, to which an importance was attached beyond their real value as a means of teaching. The masters of this form, and, as far as I remember, of this form alone, were in the habit of giving what were termed "exemptions" for well-executed maps. A small piece of the corner of the map which deserved praise was torn off, signed with the master's initials, and handed to the artist. Perhaps a day or two afterwards the same boy was accidentally late for school, and ordered to write out fifty lines of Virgil as a punishment. When the time came for producing the lines, he presented instead his "exemption," which was accepted without a word; his previous merits had gained him an indulgence. I have some impression, though my memory in this serves me but imperfectly, that the transfer of exemptions was at least tacitly allowed, even if not directly sanctioned, but I speak under correction. If it so chanced that a graver fault had been committed than the mere venial offence of being late for school, talking in class, or the like, and that the offender then presented an exemption, not only was it not received in lieu of punishment, but the very pleading

pleading the excuse was held to deepen the fault; and here, on a lower ground, was all the distinction between mortal and venial sin. At the same school an extra week of holidays has often been granted on account of the marriage, that is to say, the "merits," of a royal Prince or Princess.

If there be nothing immoral in giving boys a holiday because some one else is married, or in forgiving a trivial misdeed for the sake of previous good conduct, we fail to see the moral iniquity of remitting temporal punishment of sin on account of the merits of the saints, or of a devotion sedulously performed. And this is all that was ever claimed for indulgences, rightly understood. The acts are, it is true, on altogether different planes, but the principle is the same, and a principle is independent of magnitude; it "shuns the lore of nicely calculated less or more." And if indeed there be no such thing as the application of the merits of one to the needs of another, a far larger fabric than was at first contemplated must crumble under the blast of displeasure, for surely the whole Christian religion stands on no other foundation, and it must be remembered that objections to the intrinsic morality of the whole "scheme of Revelation," as it is called, have been based on the simple fact of its vicarious character.

To pass to another subject. The elder Quakers, strict Jews, and Mohammedans are consistent in the objections they raise to the use of images, and hold

hold as literally binding on all the order to make no representation of any creature. But, apart from such stern Puritans, it is hard to see how any possessor of a book of photographs, one who hangs in his room the portraits of relatives who tend him no longer on earth, or the great and wise who have helped to nurture his mind, can reasonably object to such aids to thought and devotion as hang and stand in the churches. If in rude and barbarous countries the symbol is now and then in danger of being mistaken for the thing signified, it may possibly be a question whether the authorities in that place or country would not do well to minimise, as far as in them lay, the devotion paid to such sacred objects. But it is difficult to see on what grounds they should be bound to do even so much as this, unless the whole theory that the divine power is exhibited through material symbols is denied. So long as any graces and gifts are so given, there can be no reason why to this or that sacred emblem God may not have attached them in a special manner; and just as he is often understood to grant a large portion of his spirit to one marred and uncomely like St. Paul, so it were not unlike his usual dealings that the image or picture specially chosen by him should be not the work of a Michael Angelo or a Fra Angelico, but some rude doll or daubed canvas, into which the simple workman had put more piety than art. So long as in things of everyday life, some special human interest may centre in this

this or that portrait, quite apart from the artistic merits, so a special sacred interest may be given to some particular portrait of Christ or his saints; and the same power which directs the affections, on the hypothesis that devotion and piety are the gifts of God, may grant corresponding benefits in answer to that devotion. The whole cultus of images seems a part of that sentiment which flows out in all portraiture of those we love. It is absurd to deny to the deepest affections, that which is useful and praiseworthy when applied to those more shallow and fleeting.

The whole claims and powers of the priesthood appear to be involved in the very conception of a Church, as a Church is involved in that of a living and ruling God. Of all the absurd notions which ever obtained large sway over the human mind, perhaps the most singular is that a Supreme Being, who for ages had spoken to men by direct communication, or by ministers and prophets having a special gift of his own Spirit, who at the last sent his Son with a message, should, when he recalled that Son, have simply put the record of all these transactions in a book and given to none any authoritative power of interpretation. Conceive a codification of the laws of the realm, without judges to declare, interpret, and administer, or a work on medicine which, without training, without study of physiology or anatomy, every one should understand as he pleased; yet an uninterpreted Bible is more incoherent, more monstrous

monstrous than either of these. It unfolds to the uninstructed eye contradictory statements, and upholds for admiration and pattern states of society and theories of morals wholly alien to our own, and to others approved by itself. But the claim of the Catholic Church, that in all points of faith it has divine guidance, and therefore speaks with authority, is intelligible, and it would seem involved in the very idea of a living, active, yet unseen and unheard ruler, that there should be some interpreter of his will to men. From another point of view the priesthood is the organised and orderly ministry of those powers which belong to the Church as a whole. If it should be maintained that the Church is another name for collective humanity considered on its religious side, in such a conception may lie the reconciliation of opinions which now are widely separated. Considered in this light, should the priest declare the forgiveness of the penitent, his absolution has its human side. He expresses the judgment of humanity that the sin is not one which should shut out the penitent from the fellowship or the kindly relations of men. If men are hard and merciless, unforgiving and unjust, Man is not so; the ultimate judgment is of the best of the race; humanity is the ideal man. And in this aspect, we do not forget that there is another and a higher, the absolution of God pronounced by the priest is the ratification of the absolution of man. "Hath no man condemned thee, neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more."

We

We may, it is true, take a wholly different view of the human race and of the world. We may assert that all we see and know is an assembly of men, how placed here we know not, from whom deriving their being we cannot tell, yet probably elaborated by the slow toil of the ages from creatures infinitely below our present state. We may trace their development from the first organic blastules, themselves resultant from chemical changes, of which we know nothing, in organic matter, till, after ages the very enumeration of which makes the brain reel, "at the last arose the man." Then, dismissing all thoughts of their origin, we may see these beings gradually casting off habits which are called evil because they make fellow-life and society impossible. We may see them striving ever upward, pressing forward to some absolutely unknown goal, forming to themselves visions of what it may be, bright and beautiful, or dark and hateful, to dismiss them with a sigh, and acquiesce in their ignorance once more. So far as any man dare to speculate on the days to come, he may foresee that this collective humanity of which he forms a part has in the future a grander outlook, grander possibilities, than have ever yet been realised. If the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change, and no end comes within the ken of the wildest speculation, he may be content not to know. So also he may be ignorant of the destiny of each separate unit of the great

great whole, but think it most probable that each, having fulfilled his term of years, is resolved mentally and bodily into the elements from which he came, leaving his imperishable part, the few good deeds he has done, and the few noble thoughts which have been his, to be used up again, transmuted and carried forward by those who shall come.

And such are conceptions which satisfy many. But those whom they do not satisfy, those who cling to the words of the old beliefs, *Credo in unum Deum*, will surely and increasingly find more than they thought enwrapped in the notion of a God, of a Church, of a priesthood. A large number of men will constantly be constrained to admit, at least in some mystical and transcendental sense, the very dogmas of the Church Catholic they have most spurned. If, admitting the postulates of Christianity, they admit also the spirit of criticism, they may find themselves denying such fundamental principles as *omne majus continet in se minus*, and, that there is no escape of a logical conclusion from given premisses. He who begins to deny that a God who is infinitely great is also infinitely little, to scoff at the efficacy of relics, to scruple at the power of multiplication which may exist in portions of the true cross, as under sacred manipulation loaves and fishes multiplied by the lake of Galilee, may find that his criticism leads him far, first to the denial of biblical histories, then to that of the whole

whole supernatural guidance of life and the universe.

And if such be the case, the morality which is now based on the supernatural may fail him, and leave him stranded and wrecked on the rocks of his passions, unless he shall have replaced it by a morality founded on naturalism, not on supernaturalism; on evolution, and not on revelation. But this scheme of morals is not as yet formulated; we may be allowed to doubt whether it will ever become a rule of life for the ignorant, the sorrowful, and the humble.

No doubt for many years to come there will be those who walk on some middle way, accepting a portion, yet rejecting much, of what once was undoubted by all but a bold and eager minority. Men are not yet guided wholly by logic or by reason; their prejudices, their fancies, and their wills are equally to be considered in the calculation of what any may do. Yet the conflict is becoming more apparent, the issue is narrowing, and it has seemed not out of place that one who feels the enormous importance of the struggle between faith and unfaith should state in a few clear words his view of this great dilemma.

THOMAS À KEMPIS

AND THE

IMITATION.

THESE pages speak of a man and a book, both of them in very sharp contrast with us, our life, our society, and our time. The man is Thomas, a brother of the Order of Canons Regular under the Augustinian rule; the book is a treatise written by him, known as *De Imitatione Christi*, "Of the Imitation of Christ," or "The Following of Christ."

I have said, in another essay, that for the business of our everyday life the one author whom it does us most good to study is Shakspere, but that for our hermit hours, those few which the ordinary man gives to communing with his own heart in his chamber, such a work as the *Imitation* best befits our needs. To many whose constant companion it has been in those quiet times, the reading it is as though a breath of cool

free

free wind swept through this crowded life; our complex interests, duties, and schemes are as nothing when placed side by side with the writer's great simplicity. The impression is salutary and bracing; it is, perhaps, fleeting because indistinct; to make this more precise and permanent is the aim of this essay.

Ever since this book has been known, it has been the chosen volume of all such as wished to live the inner life, and to recognise that "the world is too much with us." Though it was written by a monk for monks, by a Catholic for Catholics, it has gone far beyond them, and its power has been acknowledged by those who repudiated the whole dogmatic teaching of the writer. Catholics have accepted it as the spiritual book pre-eminent above all others; it was the only one besides the New Testament which St. Ignatius of Loyola selected to guide him when he laid down the rules of his great Society. But John Wesley and Dr. Pusey both adapted it to their separate communions; and the most eloquent among modern testimonies to its power over the soul is from the pen of one who was not only not Catholic, but not Christian. We all know the passage in *The Mill on the Floss* in which Maggie Tulliver has learned the content which lies in renunciation; but it may be quoted afresh:—

"I suppose that is the reason why the small, old-fashioned book, for which you need only pay sixpence at a bookstall, works

works miracles at this day, turning bitter waters into sweetness; while expensive sermons, and treatises newly issued, leave all things as they were before.

"It was written down by a hand that waited for the heart's prompting; it is the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish, struggle, trust, and triumph—not written on velvet cushions—to teach endurance to those who are treading with bleeding feet on the stones. And so it remains to all time a lasting record of human needs and human consolations, the voice of a brother who ages ago felt, and suffered, and renounced, in the cloister, with serge gown and tonsured head, with much chanting and long fasts, and with a fashion of speech different from ours, but under the same silent far-off heavens, and with the same passionate desires, the same strivings, the same failures, the same weariness."

Other words I will quote, not only because they are, with the exception of one sentence, true and admirable, but also because they are the words of a dear dead friend of my own, Dr. Charles Beard, from whose work, left by him as a finished portion of an unfinished whole, "Martin Luther and the Reformation in Germany," I take the following passage:—

"That famous book, which . . . . next to the Bible, has perhaps counted more readers than any other, the *Imitation of Christ*. That it should have met with so much acceptance at the hands of other than Catholic readers, is a striking testimony to the depth and sincerity of its religious feeling; for the odour of incense is upon it, and its ideal of human perfectness is distinctly monastic. Indeed it is justly liable to the charge of being only a manual of sacred selfishness; the domestic and social virtues are entirely overlooked by it; it points the way to the salvation of the solitary soul. But within these limitations its devoutness is so direct, so pure, so profound; its vision

vision of divine realities so unclouded, its insight into human nature so deep and clear, as quite to obscure and overbear for the pious soul the difficulties of the form into which it is thrown. . . . . In the *Imitation* we are still in communion with the whole Latin Church; the language of Augustine and of Jerome, moulded indeed by centuries of monastic use, is upon our lips; we have not passed from the universality of mediaeval to the national separations of modern Christianity. It was only twelve years after Thomas à Kempis died that Luther was born."

The sentence with which I do not agree is that in which Dr. Beard calls the *Imitation* a manual of sacred selfishness, ignoring the social virtues. On this I would say briefly that he who cares most for his own personal holiness is, as a rule, he who cares most for the holiness of others; you might as well say in regard to the bodily life that the man who takes care to eat his own dinner neglects to feed the hungry. And next, that the *Imitation* is full of lessons on the social duties of a monk to other monks. If in all these passages you translate the words implying community life into others which express family and domestic relations, they will be as applicable to ourselves as they were to Thomas and his brethren.

It were needless to cite other writers, for it is scarcely too much to say that for 450 years the writer of the *Imitation* has been the unseen guide and friend of all devout souls, of whatever communion, nor has it lost its charm. It gave strength in the desert to Gordon, whose devout soul made a still

still chamber for itself even in the stress of his arduous life. It penetrates now in cheapest form to humble homes; the curious in books have gathered whole libraries of its editions, translations, commentaries, and treatises thereon, while a recent version in Japanese has shown how it can appeal to that which in the mind of man is not European, nor Catholic, but simply human. Such a book, if only as a curiosity from the outside, and apart from its spiritual influences, well deserves our thoughts, and the first thing in that study is to know, if possible, what he was who wrote it. Then, again, in turn, the study of the book itself will bring us back near the inmost heart of the writer.

He, as I have said, was Thomas, of the Monastery of Mount St. Agnes, near Zwolle, in Holland. Thomas was born in May, 1380, at Kempen, about forty miles north-west of Köln, and he died at Mount St. Agnes, being of the advanced age of ninety-one, on the Feast of St. James-the-Less, July 26th, 1471, "in the evening, after Compline had been said." Kampen, eight miles from Utrecht, also aspired to be declared his birthplace, but that is now proved to be a mistake. Both towns take their name from the wide expanse of level country in which they are situated (*campi* in Latin). The birthplace of Thomas is a pleasant little German town, of some 5,000 inhabitants, cleanly, healthful, and prosperous.

The

The claims, however, on behalf of others to the authorship of the book have been far more numerous, and the matter has been more hotly contested. Such claims seem to have been made at first out of simple wantonness and desire of thieving, afterwards out of the joy of controversy and the interest of literary puzzles. Ten names have been proposed, the grandest being that of St. Bernard, who died in 1153; the most plausible that of Jean Charlier de Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, who died in 1429; the least likely that of Walter Hilton, an English Carthusian, who died in the reign of Henry VI., about 1470. Neither the terms "plausible" nor "not plausible" can be adopted for one person, Gersen, Abbot of Vercelli, who has had numerous and enthusiastic supporters, since it is now conclusively proved that he never existed at all. To weigh these claims would be wearisome here; and it is needless, since it has been done with great care and patient minuteness by two English writers, one Catholic and one Protestant, the Rev. Samuel Kettlewell, an Anglican clergyman, and Dr. Francis R. Cruise, a physician in Dublin. These have summed up the whole controversy, and justify most fully by proof of fact as well as of tradition that Thomas is the author of the *Imitation*. The dispute, indeed, may be considered as closed. Anyone who studies the question with a fair mind can come to no other result than that the constant tradition is right, and that Thomas

Thomas will only be shown not to have written the *Imitation* when Shakspere is proved not to have written Shakspere's plays.

The circumstances of his life may be told in a few words. His father was John, called Hämmerlein, or Hemerken, the hammerer, probably a worker in metal, who cultivated also a small farm. Such artisans were commonly to be found near each large church, as was that of Kempen, at whose stall might be bought both votive offerings and memorials of a visit; and Dr. Moren, a recent biographer of Thomas, finds in some of his writings indications that he had a practical acquaintance with the trade. It has been supposed that an elaborate and artistic description of the crown of St. Agnes, in a sermon delivered by Thomas to the novices, is a special proof of this. Perhaps the deftness of hand thus obtained, aided also by the effect of the then famous art-schools at Cologne, influenced him and his brother in after-life. For John à Kempis, the hammerer's elder son, became very expert as an illuminator and illustrator of manuscripts, and Thomas a highly-accomplished scribe. The hammerer and his wife Gertrude were able to give their sons a good education. The elder, John, was trained in the school at Deventer, and at an early age joined the Society of the Brothers of Common Life, a congregation living under less strict rules than the monastic Orders, engaged chiefly in the copying of manuscripts.

scripts. They also lent a helping hand to lads who came to Deventer for study, giving them a home, and, if they needed it, money, while attending classes at the public school.

John and Thomas both joined the Congregation at their house on Mount St. Agnes, and John became first Prior thereof. Thomas took orders at the age of thirty-three, and shortly thereafter is supposed to have written the *Imitation*, between 1415-1420. A celebrated MS., undoubtedly written by his own hand, is dated 1441, and is probably one of many which he made, his time being mainly spent in such work. His great labour in this kind was the transcription of the whole Bible in four folio volumes, which occupied him fifteen years. He rarely left the monastery, except for three years, during which the Brethren were expelled from their home, and had to wander from place to place. The cause of this exile was a contested election to the bishopric of Utrecht. It is enough to say that the Papal was not the popular candidate, and the district in which Mount St. Agnes lay was therefore placed under an interdict. Pending an appeal to Rome, the Pope being then Martin V., the district affected by the cessation of public religious offices took the law into its own hands, calling on the monasteries of the diocese to disregard alike the Papal candidate and the interdict, or to depart the country.

The Canons Regular chose rather exile than to abandon principle. They were dispersed among various

various monasteries in the Low Countries outside the diocese, till the disputed election was settled, on the accession of Pope Eugenius IV., when the interdict was removed. The restoration of the Brethren to Mount St. Agnes was one of the first consequences of this happier state.

Thomas died at Mount St. Agnes, and was buried at the eastern end of the cloister. There, for two hundred years, and long after the cell in which he lived, as well as the church in which he worshipped, had fallen into ruin, his remains rested, till in 1672 Max Heinrich, Elector of Cologne, identified the place of his burial, and opened the grave. The Elector seems to have done this reverently, and out of a desire to honour one whom he regarded as a saint. The grave was opened on August 1st, and on August 3rd the relics were borne in triumph to Zwolle. On the bones of the left foot was a growth of lichen, which, resembling minute yellow, pink, and white flowers, was by some regarded as a miracle. The Elector and the Archbishop of Cologne cared for the construction of a reliquary, in which the body still rests, and in which it has been reverently examined and handled very recently. Had the relics been discovered somewhat earlier, it is probable that Thomas would have been canonised. When Cardinal Fabius Chisi, who became Pope in 1655, under the style of Alexander VII., was Papal Nuncio to the Rhine Provinces, he wished to promote the canonisation of

of Thomas, if only he could find his bones. But the Pope had passed away before the day of Max Heinrich, and Thomas, not technically a saint, is canonised only in the hearts of men.

Thomas and his community, living in so remote a corner of the world, were probably little affected by external events other than the almost domestic contest about the archbishopric. The great strife between Pope and anti-Pope broke out in the year in which he was born; it came to an end about the time he was ordained; but it was throughout a political rather than a religious question, and scarcely touched in any degree the life of a remote monastery. It affected Zwolle no more than the ex-King at the Court of St. Germains interfered with the affairs of any secluded village in England after our own Revolution.

Still less did the fall of Constantinople, and the strife between the Eastern and Western Churches, without which the Saracenic power would have been unable to establish itself in the Eastern capital, bring alarm to Mount St. Agnes. In days of imperfect and slow communication it was impossible for dwellers by those northern dunes to realise that the very Christianity of Europe was hanging in the balance, and that the whole course of modern history might have been changed.

So, too, it may be doubted whether the beginnings of those heresies which preluded the Reformation were heeded or even heard by Thomas and his companions.

companions. If Jerome of Prague and John Huss were so much as named, it would be only as the utterances of some Mormon apostle in a remote Welsh village might find faint and careless mention in the columns of the *Tablet* or the *Guardian* of to-day.

And, clearly, the revival of classical learning, the renascence, the invention of printing, did not present themselves in their full significance to the Canons Regular, or to Thomas, their Sub-Prior. No thoughts of the length to which the last would grow stayed his busy hand, as he patiently covered page after page with his neat and fair writing of sacred Scripture, or multiplied the copies of his own immortal book. The picture of the external events of the time, however minutely it may show itself to our mind, is rather as a background to the portrait of Thomas in his cell, musing on the duties of a good monk, saying his office, or training his penitents, than as the representation of anything which really blended with his life or influenced one line of his book.

I pass now to the book itself.

The language is Latin; not classical, but good; very far from being rough and barbarous, such as the Latin of monasteries had often become, which Ulrich von Hutten caricatured with unsparing humour in the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum.* It is colloquial Latin, such as Erasmus wrote, sprinkled with some unusual words, phrases, and technicalities,

ties, arising from the writer's nationality and mode of life.

It is certain that the writer thought in Flemish, and this is one of the proofs that Thomas, and not Hilton nor Gerson, was the author. In the first chapter of the first book occurs the curious expression, "Si scires totam bibliam *exterius*"—"If thou didst know the whole bible *outside*." This is not a Latin expression, and is, at first sight, absolutely untranslatable, so that many MSS. copied in Italy omit the word; the copyists did not understand it; one inserted the words "*in mente*," "in the mind," translating the evident thought of the writer, so as to avoid the barbarous term. The idiom is Flemish, *van buiten*, "outside," being the recognised phrase for "by heart."

In Book I., chap. 25, is a very curious idiom from the speech of the Netherlands: "Et ideo turpe esset ut tu deberes in tam sancto opere pigritari"—"It would therefore be a shame for thee to be sluggish in so holy an exercise"—where "*debeo*" is used as its equivalent in the Teutonic languages "shall" and "should," but not at all according to the wont of the verb in Latin.

In Book III., chap. 25, we find: "Ita ut una aequali facie in gratiarum actione permaneas,"—"So that with the same equal countenance thou mayest continue the giving of thanks." *Aequa mente* is good Latin, but *aequali facie* is not, and therefore some of the best foreign translators have avoided

avoided the difficulty; but the idiom again is good Flemish, *met een gelyk aengezicht.*

In Book III., chap. 59, we have: "Et ideo post te gemere clamare et exorare necesse est." This again is good Flemish, *naer u*, "after thee," good also in English and other Teutonic languages, but in Latin it would be *ad te.* Hence the Italian and French translators have left it out, or rendered it wrongly: "Je ne puis loin de vous, que soupirer et gemir." These examples might largely be multiplied, but are probably enough. So much then for the original tongue and nation of the writer.

We come now to the ecclesiastical expressions peculiar to Thomas. And first there is a word that comes often from his pen, which we his readers naturally understand and apply in a broad, but which he used in a narrower, sense—*devotus*, or devout. The *devoti* were the Brothers of Common Life, and when Thomas records that he had lived familiarly among them, and was stirred up by their great piety to his own humiliation, he is speaking of a definite society, and not, as we should say, of pious persons in general. One passage may suffice for the word. Book IV., chap. 9: "Offero quoque tibi omnia pia desideria devotorum, necessitates parentum, amicorum, fratrum, sororum, omnium-que carorum meorum"—"I offer to thee also all the pious desires of thy devout servants, the needs of my parents, friends, brethren, sisters, and all who

who are dear to me." As all these last five classes of persons have a certain definite relation to the author, so the first is also such a class, those who lived under the same monastic rule as he. It would not be difficult to reconstruct a considerable part of this rule from the various passages in the *Imitation* wherein the word *devotus* occurs.

And another such term is *conversi*, not the converted, but the *frères convers*, or lay brothers.

There is a word of great interest when considering the book as the work of a monk, in Book I., chap. 3:—

> "Tell me where are now all those great doctors and masters, whom thou knewest so well whilst they were alive and flourished in learning? Others already possess their offices." *Jam eorum praebendas alii possident.*"

The word *praebenda*, best rendered "offices" for modern days, less well "livings," was in fact an allowance of food and drink answering to college "commons" at the Universities, or "rations" among soldiers: thus we find in the monastic books *praebenda puerilis* = choir-boys' commons; and even *praebenda equi* = rations for the convent horse. The cell was part of a monk's prebend; *praebenda doctrinalis* was the daily allowance to the scholastic who taught any branch of theology, the *praebenda missae* was the priest's fee, now called in French *honoraire de messe*. In the Roman basilicas and elsewhere the distribution of commons is still made daily, so much for each office

office the clergy join in saying; if absent they get nothing. This is their *prebend*, and they are called *beneficiati*, "beneficed." The word here implies probably the *praebenda doctrinalis*, but in any case he who succeeded to the prebend succeeded to the office. It would be, in religion, strictly equivalent to the arrangement in the world by which members of the board of some public companies receive fees for attendance, but none if absent from their duty.

In Book I., chap. 19, "Atque omnem observantiam strictius custodire"—"to keep all our rule more strictly," *observantia* is a technical and special word, retained in English monasteries of strict observance, the old unmitigated rule.

Book I., chap. 21, "Compunctio multa bona aperit; quae dissolutio cito perdere consuevit"—"Compunction opens the way to much good, which dissipation of mind is wont quickly to destroy." A consideration of this passage opens the whole question of what Thomas meant by "dissoluteness" and "vice," *dissolutio*, *vitia*, and other words of the kind. No doubt he is here and there using such familiar hyperbolical expressions as that by which St. Paul called himself the chief of sinners, but far more often he is thinking of little breaches of monastic rule, rather than of his shortcomings as a man. Whoever has watched in England the weariness of merely perfunctory choirmen, or, in a foreign country, the snuff-boxes of the Canons in full play during the recitation of sacred offices; whoever will think

think of the little dispensations tending towards ease and comfort which a religious might gain, will understand what is meant by *vitium* or *dissolutio*. Louis of Blois, born about the beginning of the sixteenth century, writes in the same way to monks. "Take heed that no *vice*, *vitium*, be found in you, such as are excess in food and drink, exaggeration and triviality in talk, foolish gestures and movements," &c. The want of remembering this has led to mistranslations as well as exaggerations. In one well-known passage (Book I., chap. 8) we find "Non sis familiaris alicui mulieri," which has been rendered "Be not familiar with any woman," as though the reader were cautioned against grave sins of the body. It has not been sufficiently remembered that the book is addressed to those already holy, and that the sentence is "a counsel of perfection." The true sense is, "Be not a friend to any one woman," advice often needed for the cleric who may be too much under the dominion of some holy lady or penitent of his flock.

Now and then the reader is struck by the way in which shrewd common-sense breaks through what would be to a lesser man commonplaces of religion, when they come into conflict with fact. Thus he does not admit that ill health has necessarily and of itself a purifying effect, nor that pilgrimages were certainly means of grace. "Pauci ex infirmitate meliorantur, sic et qui multum peregrinantur raro sanctificantur"—"Few are improved by sickness;

ness; they also who go on many pilgrimages seldom become holy." In Book IV., chap. 1, he speaks of stated pilgrimages which had for their end, not the visit to the Holy Land, so common in the thirteenth century, but that to the relics of the saints:—

"Currunt multi ad diversa loca pro visitandis reliquiis sanctorum. Et mirantur auditis gestis eorum ampla aedificia templorum; inspiciunt et osculantur sericis et auro involuta sacra ossa ipsorum."—"Many run to sundry places to visit the relics of the saints, and are astonished to hear of their wonderful works; they look at the spacious buildings of their churches, and kiss their sacred bones, wrapped up in silk and gold."

And he disparages "the sacred bones wrapped up in silk and gold" in comparison with that presence on the altar day by day, "Thou, my God, Saint of saints, Creator of men, Lord of angels." The usual translation of the first quoted passage, "they who travel much abroad," is clearly wrong, however true the fact may be, since travelling for the sake of travelling was not common, and to a monk impossible; while the way in which the devotion of a pilgrimage might be neutralised by the behaviour of the pilgrims will easily be understood by the readers of Chaucer.

The remark is very natural, taken in connection with the well-known historical facts of the Netherlands and the Rhine Provinces. Long before the fifteenth century the great pilgrimages of those countries had for their object the remarkable relics at

at Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, Trèves, Maestricht, and Tongres. Relics, exposed every year with a certain ceremony, were every seventh year exhibited with exceptional pomp, attracting great crowds of pilgrims. In 1391 and in 1405 the magistrates of Maestricht published an order regulating the exchange of foreign moneys during the "kermesse." In 1440 the concourse was so great at Aix-la-Chapelle that the roofs of several houses fell in under the crowds which had mounted them to see the exposition of the relics. Fourteen years later the gates of the same town had to be closed against an excessive number of pilgrims. The sacred ceremonies were held in the different towns nearly at the same time, in order that pilgrims might attend several functions. Well might Thomas say "Currunt ad diversa loca"—"They run to divers places."

In Book III., chap. 7, is a passage which is true at all times, when devotion is not chastened by common-sense, but which when Thomas wrote it had a special application to two of his brothers in religion;—

"Quidam incauti propter devotionis gratiam se ipsos destruxerunt; quia plus agere voluerunt quam potuerunt, non pensantes suae parvitatis mensuram; sed magis cordis affectum sequentes quam rationis iudicium. Et quia maiora praesumpserunt quam Deo placitum fuit; idcirco gratiam cito perdiderunt. Fact sunt inopes et viles relicti; qui in coelum posuerunt nidum sibi; ut humiliati et depauperati discant non in alis suis volare; sed sub pennis meis sperare."

sperare."—"Some, wanting in caution, have ruined themselves by reason of the grace of devotion; because they were desirous of doing more than they could, not weighing well the measure of their own littleness, but following rather the inclinations of the heart than the dictates of reason. And because they presumptuously undertook greater things than were pleasing to God, therefore they quickly lost grace. They became needy, and were left wretched, who had built themselves a nest in heaven to the end that, being thus humbled and impoverished, they might learn not to soar on their own wings, but to cherish hope under mine."

Busch, who edited the *Chronicles of Windesheim*, tells us of two of the brethren who forgot that to obey was better than sacrifice. The fervour was great at Windesheim and at Mount St. Agnes, especially in the first years after their foundation; for it must not be forgotten that the Brothers of Common Life were tacitly reproving the negligence which had crept into some of the older and strictly conventual orders; and the zeal was wont at times to lack discretion:—

"There were," we are told, "two brethren at Windesheim who by their rigid abstinence and *secret* diminution of their food upset their brain and natural faculties and became deprived of their reason."

The one, Brother Berthold, a sub-deacon, while thus insufficiently nourished, took to studies beyond his mental capacity, to frequent meditation, and active discussion on El and Eloi and other names of God, till he became half foolish. The other, Brother Nicolas, had been professor in the University

University of Paris. He, too, reduced himself by excessive fastings to the same state. Their mistaken self-denial had gone too far when discovered, and they both died mad.

There is possibly, even probably, a further recollection of Nicolas in the unexpected question in Book I., chap. 3, "Et quid curae nobis de generibus et speciebus?"—"And what need have we to concern ourselves about genera and species?" To the companions of Thomas the words would not have seemed, as to us, dragged into the context with little relevance. For in the *Life of Wessel Gansfort*, one of his intimate friends, we find the account of the disputes at Paris between the real, nominal, and formal theologians.

In the whole of the fourth book the advice is not to a monk as such, but to a priest as such, and in order to understand it aright, it must be remembered that the contrast is not between the priest and the layman, but the celebrant and non-celebrant. When one Mass alone is said, as on Holy Thursday, even the Cardinals, or the Pope himself, if he be not the celebrant, receive in one kind. The offerer of the sacrifice consummates it, the *receivers* of the sacrament do not—they communicate.

There is a curious passage in Book IV., chap. 4, which would seem to show, in this connection, that a fragment of very early ritual was still practised in the Low Countries. "Wherefore, if I cannot draw out

out of the fulness of the fountain nor drink my fill;" apponam tamen os meum ad foramen coelestis fistulae; "I will at least set my mouth to the orifice of this heavenly pipe," wherein is an allusion to the ancient mode of communion through a pipe of gold or silver.

So much for the words used, in so far as they were affected by the writer's surroundings. The style is more absolutely simple and unadorned than perhaps that of any other book in the whole world; and its marvellous eloquence arises from the very fact that it is naked thought, manifest directly to the mind without any interception of metaphor, which may turn us aside from the bare thought. Of external nature Thomas knows next to nothing. Nor can we account for this simply by the want of fair scenery in the country round Zwolle, for, as a rule, those writers who have the keenest eyes for natural objects are those nursed in the tamest countries, who find a beauty in herb and flower, in the colour of sky and sea. When he goes beyond the walls of his cell for a phrase, he finds a stock one from the Bible, as "Let us lay the axe to the root," for most assuredly he had seen no, or few, trees felled in the treeless dunes. At most he speaks once or twice of the thirsty soil without water, when the summer cracks in the convent garden were before him, and the drooping pot-herbs drank the shower from his hand; once or twice of the ships driven along the tumbling northern

northern wave; once, and once only, the vast immensity of the sea seems to have overcome his insensitiveness to external nature. Then he thinks of it with Matthew Arnold's thought:—

> "A God, a God their severance ruled,
> And bade between their shores to be
> The unplumbed salt estranging sea."

O pelagus intransnatabile!—"O sea, which none can overpass by swimming!" he breaks out, for once, in metaphor, when he would speak of God's unfathomable judgments.

Of the form of the work apart from the language somewhat must be said. Just as the Bible was not divided into chapters and verses till some time after the invention of printing, so the verses and paragraphs in the *Imitation*, now convenient for meditation and for reference, do not exist in the MSS., and are more or less arbitrary. Henry Somalius, a Jesuit, in an edition published at Antwerp in 1599, was the first to divide the chapters into paragraphs; the verses were only fixed as now usually received in the seventeenth century. Dr. Hirsche, of Hamburg, who has recently edited the book after Thomas's autograph copy of 1441, has made a discovery which is in the main demonstrative and final, even if it be open to dispute in some minor details. This is that according to Thomas's own pointing and arrangement it was probably meant to be chanted like the Psalter, and was certainly, for convenience

convenience of memory, arranged rhythmically, even to a large extent in rhyme. This is noticeable in the words about sickness and pilgrimage, but open the book where we will, with this fact in our mind, we find the same thing now in a greater, now in a less degree.

Thus take the opening sentences:—

> "Qui sequitur me non ambulat in tenebris;
> dicit Dominus."

That is a quotation from the Gospels needing no *memoria technica*. But now listen to the music of these lines:—

> "Haec sunt verba Christi quibus admonemur,
> quatenus vitam eius et mores imitemur;
> si velimus veraciter illuminari,
> et ab omni caecitate cordis liberari.
> Summum igitur studium nostrum sit;
> in vita Jesu Christi meditari."

Or, again, taken at random from the 48th chapter of the third book:—

> "O supernae civitatis mansio beatissima.
> O dies aeternitatis clarissima:
> quam nox non obscurat;
> sed summa veritas semper irradiat:
> dies semper laeta, semper secura
> et numquam statum mutans in contraria.
> . . . . . .
> Dies huius temporis parvi et mali:
> ubi homo, ...
> multis timoribus stringitur,
> multis curis distenditur;

multis

multis curiositatibus distrahitur,
multis vanitatibus implicatur:
multis erroribus circumfunditur,
multis laboribus atteritur tentationibus gravatur;
deliciis enervatur,
egestate cruciatur.
O quando finis horum malorum:
quando liberabor a misera servitute vitiorum?"

And that this sonorous rime is intended mainly as a help to the memory is proved by the fact that whenever a catalogue or contrasted list is given which impresses itself easily on the mind without such aid, he cares for the rhymical arrangement only or chiefly; though the rimes might have been multiplied with perfect ease. An illustration of what is meant will be found in Book IV., chap. 7. To those who are in the habit of reading the *Imitation* in the Latin I would earnestly commend Dr. Hirsche's small edition of the text, published at Berlin in 1874. There is a singular likeness between these passages and the hymns written for music by Thomas, into which it were too long now to enter, as also into the question of punctuation adopted by him, which is not without its great interest for those who have time to follow it out.

I now pass from the form to the matter of the book; and, first, to consider in what manner Thomas was dependent on and linked to those who went before him. Less perhaps than any man who ever lived would he have cared to be considered original. He knew that in the fullest sense he had nothing

nothing which he did not receive, that he was the steward of the past for the future, created by his time, helping to form that which was to come.

He was almost a man of one book, and that, of course, the Bible. This is so interwoven in the texture of the *Imitation* that it is not always easy to say what is and is not quoted, for some passages are introduced apparently from memory, with more or less variation; others in which there is the merest hint or allusion, so that the passage may not have been consciously in the mind. But the Bible is not treated as literature, or to be read as a scholar would read it, but solely with a devotional end:—

"Truth," he says, "is to be sought for in Holy Scripture, not eloquence. . . . . We must seek rather for profit in the Scripture than for subtlety of speech. . . . Inquire not who said this, but attend to what is said. . . . . Our own curiosity often hinders us in reading the Scriptures when we wish to understand and discuss where we should simply pass on."

The extracts from the Fathers and the Saints are perhaps a dozen in number at most, taken chiefly from St. Augustine and St. Bernard. The few quotations from secular books would appear to be familar words which had become common property:—

"Principiis obsta; sero medicina paratur.

"Withstand the beginning, after-remedies come too late."

From Ovid.

"Quoties

"Quoties inter homines fui minor homo redii.

"As often as I have been amongst men, I have returned less a man."

From Seneca.

"Non tibi sit curae de magni nominis umbra.

"Have no care for the shadow of a great name."

From Lucan.

"Omnis homo naturaliter scire desiderat.

"Every man naturally desires to know."

From a Latin translation of Aristotle.

Beyond these are a few quotations from the canon of the Mass and hymns of the Church.

And as there is scant literature so is there little history. St. Laurence, St. Sixtus, and St. Francis are the only saints of whom he speaks by name. Even the spiritual experiences introduced are his own, or those of his friend and master Florentius, whose life he wrote, Superior of the Canons Regular. It may be admitted fully that in such a book is small occasion for introducing historical facts, but in scholars and students such lore becomes part of the life, and is indicated unconsciously at every turn.

Beyond these negative matters we ask with interest if there be any autobiography in the *Imitation* which we can read between the lines? On one such passage there is no doubt; and it is a parallel to that of St. Paul, "I knew a man in Christ fourteen years ago." It tells of the time when there came to Thomas that hour of deep spiritual

spiritual dejection through which all men of any greatness must pass, the hour in which Dante descended into hell, and Shakspere conceived the soliloquies of Hamlet; and thus he records the trial (Book I. 25):—

"When one who often anxiously wavered between hope and fear, was one day consumed with sadness, he prostrated himself in prayer in the church before a certain altar, and revolved these things within himself, saying, 'Oh, if I did but know that I should persevere on and on!' All at once he heard within himself the divine answer: 'And what wouldest thou do if thou knewest this? Do now what thou wouldest then do, and thou wilt be safe enough.'

"And presently being comforted and strengthened, he committed himself to the divine will, and his anxious wavering ceased.

"Neither had he a mind to search curiously to know what should befall him hereafter, but he studied rather to inquire what was the acceptable and perfect will of God for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work."

. . . . "I do not ask to see
The distant scene, one step enough for me,"

was the lesson he learnt, the lesson which all have to learn, out of whatever faith or bitter experience they may attain it.

There is another passage in which we may find himself. Thomas was at one time sub-Prior at St. Agnes. Then at the time of the dispersion all offices, of course, were in abeyance, and at the restoration he was not replaced in his post. It was his again at a later date, but he was never the head of the community, and for the greater part of his life

life he was in a subordinate position. Now in every life which is under rule, even in our own home, much must be irksome and petty, if every action, however trifling, is not considered as part of a great whole, and as ennobled by the end it subserves. How does he raise and transfigure the small trials incident to monastic life!—

"Thou must oftentimes do that which thou willest not; and let alone that which thou willest.

"That which is pleasing to others will go forward; that which thou wouldest have will not succeed.

"That which others say will be hearkened to; what thou sayest will be esteemed as nought.

"Others will ask and will receive; thou wilt ask and not obtain.

"Others will be great in the mouths of men; but none will speak of thee.

"Others will have this or that office; but thou wilt be accounted fit for nothing.

"Nature will sometimes repine at this, and it will be no small matter if thou bear it with silence."

A member of a Catholic community, corresponding in some degree to the Brothers of Common Life, wrote to me some time since in regard to the above:—

"Here is a picture of monastic life as it will, nature being what it is, tend to be, in the general run of monks. At the triennial distribution of offices you will be set aside. Some 'junior' will be preferred; you will have had your day; no one cares for you. In Chapter the advice of others will be taken—you will be thought stupid, prosy, behind the age, &c. *In ore hominum;* 'great in the mouths of men.' What a preacher Brother A. is! and what a cellarer is Brother B.

Brother B. But *de te tacebitur*, none will speak of thee. You want some little permission, the Abbot says *No*. You would like to be illuminating some pet capital, you must go and thresh corn," &c.

There is the hard, prosaic reality, but the saint sees these trivial matters in the light which transfigures and illuminates all that is lowly and mean. It is none the less a bit of genuine autobiography.

There are many other passages which could only have been written by a devout monk, but not especially personal, and I notice them only to draw attention to the fact that, however applicable they may be and are to all of us, it is not because they give any uncertain note on monachism or Catholicism. Nothing is ever gained by compromise, or by minimising religious convictions ; hence those translations which omit or falsify passages in the *Imitation* are as needless in their changes as they are dishonest. It is a Catholic book, written primarily for Catholic monks.

But it is ours also because it appeals to that central desire of rest, which finds place even in the busiest life, the desire for the "whirlwind's heart of peace," for the cell into which we must at times retire, to be alone with that which is not ourself.

It is ours because it teaches us that the Cross, type of self-abnegation, is the part of every true life; and this is the teaching of every noble soul from the Hebrew prophets in Jerusalem to Goethe at Weimar.

Listen

Listen to the way Thomas puts it :—

"Walk where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, and thou wilt find no higher way above, no safer way below, than the way of the holy cross. . . . . .

"The cross is always ready and everywhere awaits thee.

"Thou canst not escape it, whithersoever thou runnest; for whithersoever thou goest, thou carriest thyself with thee, and always shalt thou find thyself.

"Turn thyself upwards, turn thyself downwards, turn thyself without, turn thyself within thee; and everywhere thou shalt find the cross.

"And everywhere hast thou need of patience, if thou wouldest have interior peace and merit a lasting crown.

"If thou carry the cross willingly, it will carry thee and bring thee to thy wished-for end; thither, to wit, where there will be an end of suffering, though here there will not be. . . . . .

"If thou fling away one cross, without doubt thou wilt find another, and perhaps a heavier."

The *Imitation* is ours, again, because it asserts vehemently the shortness of time, the great need of doing our tale of work while yet it is ours to do. Listen :—

"'Ah fool! Why dost thou think to live long, when thou art not sure of one day?' . . . . . .

"How often hast thou heard it related such an one was slain by the sword, another was drowned, another falling from on high broke his neck, this man grew stark in chewing his food, that other came to his end when he was at play? . .

"Thus death is the end of all; and man's life passes suddenly like a shadow."

"Love is our principle; live for others," said Auguste Comte, the latest founder of a religion which

which claims to be world-wide, all-embracing, sufficient for the needs of humanity. In so far as it is useful at all it is only because it puts into modern language the old words, and the old Christian teaching, the lessons of Jesus and St. John.

This is how Thomas puts the axiom "Love is the fulfilling of the Law;" the command "Love one another":—

"Love often knows no measure, but warmly glows above all measure.

"Love feels no burthen, regards not labours, would willingly do more than it is able, pleads not impossibility, because it feels sure that it can and may do all things. .

"Love watches, and sleeping slumbers not; weary is not tired; straitened is not constrained; frightened is not disturbed; but like a living flame and a burning torch, it bursts forth upwards, and safely overpasses all. . . .

"He who loves must willingly embrace all that is hard and bitter for the sake of the beloved, and must never suffer himself to be turned away from him by adverse hap."

The dangers of our time are not likely to be increased by any taking to ourselves the lessons of the *Imitation* in excess. Not ours is the danger that we should become over spiritual in a material age. Not ours that we should become too full of mystic quietism in the unrest that is around us. And, therefore, we may, in our daily meditation, welcome that voice which speaks to us out of the ages, welcome the calm hand reached out from the cloister to rest on our fevered brow and still the beating of our troubled heart.

PASCAL'S "PENSÉES."

AMONG the books which have moved, and continue to move the world, is one which, considered in itself and in its history, is unique. For, properly speaking, it is not a book at all, but rather an undigested heap of detached thoughts and fragments for a book which was only partially written, if even fully planned.

Pascal took in hand his great work against atheists and unbelievers in the thirty-fifth year of his age, after finishing the "Provincial Letters" in the spring of 1657. A certain languor had succeeded to that vast intellectual effort, and, always in feeble health, he was able during that year only to sketch in part the course his work would take, to write fully, and with great elaboration, certain paragraphs and portions of definite chapters, and to make notes, afterwards to be expanded *viva voce* for lectures at Port Royal. But in the following spring he was attacked by neuralgia in the face, which proved to be the beginning of other nervous affections, taking from him all power of sustained labour, racking his body with pain, and obliging him either to depend not

not a little on the aid of an illiterate servant as amanuensis, or to jot down his own thoughts on separate slips of paper, which he was never able to work out nor to fit into their place. These have lain strewn, so to speak, on the world like the feathers scattered by the fairy Disorder; it has been the task of many editors to try and restore them according to the plan in Pascal's mind, not fully known to them, and only in part described by him to his most intimate friends.

Then, when the pen fell from the dead hand, and his family determined that the thoughts so left should be given to the world, the MS. was entrusted to a committee, who conceived themselves at liberty to retrench, to prune, and to modify, to shape what was formless; so giving of necessity a different result to the first idea; and to weaken what was strong. Yet in spite of this, and in spite of the wholly different minds of the men affected by the "Pensées," they have had Condorcet as an editor, and Voltaire as a commentator; Sainte-Beuve, in his great work on Port Royal, brought to bear on them and on the character of Pascal the whole power of his searching and luminous criticism; while no less than three modern editors in France, MM. Faugère, Havet, and Molinier, have gone back to the original MS., have discussed each line and word and marginal mark, have arranged and re-arranged each fragment to see where best it would fit, and, in

in a word, have treated this book, which is no book, as one of the sacred scriptures of the world. These men have laboured, and entering into their labours we may study the thoughts, the man, and the time with pleasure and profit, and find order arise out of the disorder.

As justifying and explaining mediaeval monachism and asceticism, a modern writer has said: "The very ferocity and foulness of the time, by a natural revulsion, called forth at the same time the apostolic holiness and the Manichaean asceticism of the mediaeval saints. The world was so bad that to be saints at all they were compelled to go out of the world."[1] In the same manner the terrible laxity of what is called Society in France, a laxity which had invaded the sanctity of cloistered life, and poisoned the pure wells of religion, called out the austere holiness of Port Royal, and of the lives associated with it during, roughly speaking, the last century of its existence. Among these lives, that of Pascal is the one which most naturally, even more than that of Le grand Arnauld, or La Mère Angélique, rises to our mind when we hear the name of the great abbey.

The Cistercian Convent of Port Royal des Champs is, or rather was, for scarce one stone is left upon another, about eighteen miles from Paris, in a pleasant and narrow valley, such as the order of St. Bernard always chose. "He established his

[1] C. Kingsley, Preface to "The Saint's Tragedy."

his monasteries," says one of the Port Royal historians, "in deep valleys where the view of the world was excluded, and nothing but the heaven could be seen." Or, as the old lines have it—

Bernardus valles, colles Benedictus amabat,
Oppida Franciscus, magnas Ignatius urbes.

Valleys Bernard chose, but Bennet built on the mountains,
Francis in smaller towns; where men throng thickest Ignatius.

Founded in the first decade of the thirteenth century, and presumably fulfilling its functions as a place of pious retreat and prayer for many years, it had become lax and irregular at the opening of the sixteenth century. The Abbot of Citeaux, visitor of the convent, made his formal visitation in 1504, and found, firstly, that the Divine offices were ill sung, and celebrated with extreme irregularity. Before all things, he says, they must get an abbey clock as one means to punctuality. Secondly, the dormitories were ill arranged; in fact, there was a common dormitory; the rule of strict seclusion was not at all observed. Thirdly, the nuns wore fashionable dresses with wide sleeves and trains, the price of which, said a preacher of those days, would have maintained a whole poor family; and when the fashion changed they thought that they did much for God in making these dresses, used and soiled though they were, into

into altar coverings. They even wore jewels, forgetting that a nun was dead, and that trinkets were ill suited to a corpse.

In 1572 and 1574 further visitations showed a still worse state of things, under a careless abbess, who was threatened with excommunication, and ended by deserting her convent, on the pretext that she was troubled by the wars of the League. She betook herself to an abbey in Normandy, where, presumably, she was less looked after. These visitations discovered irreverent services, sacraments disregarded, confessions neglected, and these made, when made, to any priest, and not to him appointed by authority, sick sisters uncared for, the food of the community stinted, together with grave personal imputations against the abbess. The lady who succeeded her, when she ran away, reformed the kitchen at any rate, and does not appear to have been open to blame. But; and nothing shows the whole state of feeling outside and inside the convent more than this; she took as assistant superior, with, as it would seem, the vested right of succession, a little girl aged seven years, Jaqueline Marie Arnauld, whose parents had caused her to enter into religion for that end.

The whole circumstances were amazingly discreditable, and go far to justify the cynical remark of a distinguished judge of our own days, who said that "it is always the very best persons who do the

the very worst things." M. Antoine Arnauld, the father of the infant nun, came of a good family in what would now be called the upper middle class; he was an advocate in great practice, a man esteemed by all as honourable and religious, selected by the University of Paris as their counsel against the Jesuits, the confidential adviser of half the great world of Paris. He had ten children, and not unnaturally in those days looked to the convent as the destiny of some of his daughters; since to a man in his position to ask for them the post of abbess, or at least of assistant superior, was to gain it. The appointments were in the patronage of the Crown, and it was easily arranged that the abbess of Port Royal should nominate Jaqueline Arnauld as her assistant, and that a similar post at St. Cyr should be filled by Jeanne, a still younger sister; the office of abbess then vacant being given to a lady who was bound to resign when Jeanne reached the age of twenty. The future abbess of Port Royal was placed for her religious education at yet another Cistercian abbey, that of Maubuisson, the superior of which was a pluralist, being also abbess of Bertaucourt near Amiens. These high positions Madame Angélique d'Estrées owed not to any exalted spirituality; such is scarcely to be expected when ecclesiastical offices are Crown appointments; but to the fact that she was the sister of La Belle Gabrielle, the mistress of Henry IV. The easy manners of the time placed no barrier between the intercourse

intercourse of the cloistered lady and her of the court, who often retired for a while to her sister's convent for country air; and Madame Angélique d'Estrées obtained the second abbey as being within an easy distance from Paris, not too far for a visit from the King when hunting. Under this singular instructress Jaqueline Arnauld passed her novitiate, and at the age of nine made her profession, changing her name to Angélique in compliment to Madame d'Estrées. It was, and is, common that a nun on quitting the world should take a new name, but there was a special reason in the case under consideration.

For when the original arrangement that Jaqueline should afterwards succeed to Port Royal was proposed at Rome, the ratification of the royal appointment was absolutely refused by the Pope, and the whole affair was for some time in abeyance. But now the abbess was dead, and without sanction from Rome the assistant superior could not take her place. In applying to the Pope all mention of *Jaqueline* Arnauld was dropped, and Angélique was named to his Holiness, accompanied by the false statement that her age was seventeen. This age seemed scarce sufficient, and it needed all the diplomacy of Cardinal Ossat to carry the point and gain consent at last to the King's nomination. It is difficult to see why, if a direct falsehood were to be told at all, the Arnaulds and their supporters drew the line at seventeen, and shrank from declaring Jaqueline

Jaqueline to be of any age which might have satisfied the Pope without further trouble.

The condition of the community over which this infant was called to preside was scandalous beyond measure. There were thirteen nuns, of whom the eldest was thirty-three, and as she was the eldest, so was she the worst of the whole, so that Madame Arnauld, mother of the abbess, had to exert her influence to have her removed. Religious ceremonies had been reduced to their lowest possible measure, the official confessor could barely read, but he was able more intelligently to take his part in the masquerades, a favourite diversion of the community. The nuns also wore masks on occasions, and, which seems to have been considered almost as worldly, gloves. Much of this, however, was at once set to rights. Madame Arnauld, having turned out the dissolute nun of thirty-three, found a prioress, a Madame Du Pont, to take the management of the house, which she did fairly well, and being herself a busy practical woman, she and other members of the family were constantly driving over from Paris without notice to visit the young superior. While manifesting no remarkable sanctity, la Mère Angélique said her offices regularly, and read a good deal; romances and Roman history being her chief study. M. Arnauld, when the law courts were not sitting, came to stay occasionally at the nunnery, and the great patron of the family, King Henry IV., knowing

knowing that the father of the abbess was there, himself arrived, during one of his hunting excursions. The little abbess, preceded by her cross-bearer and followed by her train of nuns, went to meet his Majesty, and had prudently put on pattens, so that the King thought her very tall for her age. *He* had never even affected to believe the fiction which had been presented to the Pope.

It is not strange that this life of routine, undignified by devotion, yet undiversified by the distractions which had made the life of worse nuns endurable to them, became intolerable to Angélique; she saw a way of escape in the fact that her profession had been made before the lawful age. She determined to leave the religious life; and, as a preliminary, good Catholic though she was, determined to run away and take shelter with her Huguenot aunts. She was only prevented doing so by an illness, during which she was removed to her mother's care and tenderly nursed. Her father, becoming at any rate partly aware of what was passing in his daughter's mind, insisted on her signing a paper in which she renewed her vows; and she returned to her post, still weak, but more resigned, touched by the pleasure with which the nuns saw her return, and disposed to find comfort and rest in reading religious books, rather than romances, as heretofore.

But the great awakening of her own religious life, and as a consequence that of others, was at hand.

hand. A certain Père Basile passing by one evening, came to the convent, and offered to preach. The abbess, then just coming in from the garden, refused, as the hour was late, but afterwards consented. His subject was the humility of the Son of God in his birth and in his cradle. But how he treated the subject, or what were his words, la Mère Angélique could never tell. She only knew that her heart was touched by Divine grace, and that the hour was as the dawn, the light whereof increased unto the perfect day.

The instrument of this conversion was strangely ill-adapted to carry on the work begun through his means. He was dissolute in his life, he had already proved the cause of scandal in more than one religious house, so that any help from such a man to a girl of sixteen wishing to reform herself and her convent was out of the question. Nor did much assistance come from other advisers to whom she turned. One was too stern and another too little able to understand what this new crisis in a spiritual life meant; so that, thrown on her own resources, la Mère Angélique plunged into excesses of unchecked austerity. Neither from within nor without could she gain aid or sympathy, for her father disapproved of the attempted reform, as well as of its exaggerated asceticism. But on All Saints' Day, 1608, after she had returned from a visit to her home more sad and discouraged than she had ever been, and, as it would seem, some six months after the

the visit of the itinerant Capuchin, there came another outpouring of grace, which made all clear, and was the true beginning of what concerns us in the history of Port Royal.

This time the moving cause was the preaching of a Bernardine monk, for M. Arnauld had found means to keep away the too exciting Capuchin. He spoke on the Beatitude, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake," and the shaft from his bow, aimed at a venture, was driven home where it struck by one of the nuns, who said to the abbess, "You, madam, if you choose, may be one of the blessed who suffer for righteousness."

Hence came struggles of spirit and of conscience, which once more seriously undermined her health, also entreaties and discussions with the sisters, till on a certain day they were wrought up to a great renunciation, and renewing their vows of poverty, cast all their little private possessions into the common stock. It were long and needless to relate all that happened thereafter in the conventual reform; the new and unaccustomed sanctity of the cloister, even against M. Arnauld himself, the rigid enforcement of poverty, the seclusion, even within the seclusion of the convent, in which the abbess and the stricter nuns shut themselves; and with all this, as the inner motive of the whole, the passionate fervour of religion which steeped the souls of la Mère Angélique and of those who fell under her influence.

From

From Port Royal the reform spread. The most relaxed convents, even Maubuisson, still under the profligate rule of Madame d'Estrées, felt the influence of, or were directly set in order by, la Mère Angélique ; and, refuting the proverb that a prophet has no honour in his own country, the whole Arnauld family one after another succumbed to the holy zeal of this first convert. Six sisters became nuns of Port Royal, two brothers and four nephews were specially connected with it. La Mère Angélique was fortunate in the confessors and directors whom she chose in this time of change, her spiritual advisers for many years ; but neither their names nor they themselves are of importance in our rapid sketch of the reform at Port Royal.

Nor is it necessary to distinguish between the two houses which belonged to the community, that in Paris and that in Port Royal des Champs, or to trace the migrations from one to the other. It is enough to explain that from the great reform there arose not only the strict and populous convent or convents with their schools of girls, but also a community of brothers at Port Royal, worshipping in the convent church, under, for the most part, the same confessor. It was headed, so far as we can speak of a head in so democratic a community, by relatives of the abbess, these brethren having under them a number of young men and boys also pursuing their studies. It need hardly be said that the separation between the

the two bodies was carefully maintained, close as was the community of sympathy of religion and interest, made more intimate by the bonds of neighbourhood and of united worship.

It was a part of the peculiarity of this religious revival, extending over many years, of which the above is a hurried sketch, that it necessarily affected the great world of Paris, and that nothing could be done in a corner. The bishops and even the saints of those days were men of the world; Saint François de Sales interested himself in the fortunes of Port Royal, and was a correspondent of la Mère Angélique; Richelieu, and afterwards Mazarin, were ministers on whose will and word depended the imprisonment or release of the Port Royal solitaries in the time of trouble; the shades of theological dogma were eagerly debated in fashionable *salons;* the Church and the world crossed and mingled very strangely; strangely because it was a time of monstrous corruption in politics and of wanton licence in morals.

It would be impossible, however, to go at any length into the controversies which arose between the two parties in the Church, and especially in France, on the doctrines of grace, as laid down by St. Augustine, and as interpreted by Jansenius; enough to say that the Jesuits were the chief representatives of one party in the controversy; the Port Royalists, and pre-eminently at first M. de St. Cyran, the director, were the representatives of

of the other. The dead embers of this theological controversy can scarcely be blown into light and fire by even the breath of one so eloquent as the great French critic and historian of our time, Sainte-Beuve; and it is better to turn from its ephemeral phases, once so important, to the moral question which underlay the whole difference between the Jesuits and their opponents.

Given, and the point is assumed in the very existence of a Church, an Ecclesia, those called out of a larger body, that the world is corrupt, and that the function of a Church is to save, if not the world, at any rate the souls of the men who come under its influences, the modes in which this is to be done divide themselves sharply into two, each of which has its logical and consistent basis. One is the mode of which monasticism is the highest expression. "The world is rushing to its ruin, come out and be ye separate," is the cry of those whose view of life is that of religious pessimism. And though, as matter of fact, only a limited number can act on the impulse or obey the call, yet the enormous danger of those entangled with the things of this life, the few that are saved, are considerations to be kept ever before the minds of men.

> The world is very evil, the times are waxing late;
> Be sober and keep vigil, the Lord is at the gate,

is the watchword of such. It was that of the nuns and brethren of Port Royal. "Between us and you,"

you," they seemed to say, "there is a great gulf fixed," and they who would cross to us must leap; there are no bridges, and the return is attended with deadly peril. Oh, high ascetic souls, such as was Augustine, whence once the call of the Divine voice was heard; and à Kempis, by the rolling sea; and Pascal, as a solitary of Port Royal; have you ever asked yourselves how your view, if it be the only view, is to be reconciled with the existence of the world? The law is laid down, God and his Will are supreme; if he call and infuse his grace into the heart, man can but obey, the consequence is in God's hands.

On the other hand there have been, and always will be, those who, without setting for themselves a lower *personal* standard than the others, aim at establishing a *modus vivendi* between the world and the Church. The law remains, but its rules are rather to show the ideal than the actual. "Thou shalt not kill"; true, but, if taken literally, how does the soldier differ from the assassin, the hangman from the criminal he executes? "Thou shalt not lie"; but what of him who, tender-hearted, sends the hunters on the track the hare has *not* taken; or who uses an *équivoque* or even direct false statement to save a human life? "Thou shalt not steal"; but can anyone class the mother who takes a loaf for her starving child with the ordinary thief? Now the moment that the smallest deviation is allowed, cases of conscience arise, and

a whole casuistry grows up, which almost all would admit must be scientific rather than haphazard, and cannot be defined at will by each more or less rigid moralist. The school which within the Church has most made casuistry a study and a science finds its culmination and its aptest expression in the Jesuits; who at the time of the Port Royal reform were the chief religious directors of society, and had established a *modus vivendi* between the world and the Church.

No one who reads the lives of the early Jesuits can doubt for a moment the purity of their intentions, the personal holiness of their lives, and their hatred of sin. The society was originally founded in order to the propagation of the faith and the conversion of infidels; and it was not unnatural that, existing for that end, and considering the whole subject broadly, the *most* important matter was that in days of heresy the outward integrity of the Church should be preserved in her form and doctrine, since within her alone were faith and morals secure. Better for a while relax morals in some of whose ultimate conversion there was hope while they still remained within the pale, than that erroneous doctrines should sap the very foundations of faith and morals alike, and that the rising tide of Protestantism should carry all away. Therefore the first Jesuits were very bold in fixing the minimum of moral obedience demanded of one who, in spite of sin, yet remained in the faith; they became

became complaisant in certain cases, where graver evils would have resulted to the Church at large had they not been so. For instance, and it is an instance given by Sainte-Beuve, the Church lays down rigid rules for fasting, but permits relaxations in the case of the sick. Now supposing a man have given himself up to dissipation and excess for a whole day, and on the following day is ill in consequence of that excess, is he bound to fast? Given the original sin, as admitted, confessed, repented, or at least nominally repented; and no human director can judge of the heart; given a penance inflicted, is the duty of fasting to be laid on, say, a Louis XI., an all but absolute monarch, whose weakness from want of food for a single day might interrupt the whole functions of Government? The same sort of case in another form comes almost daily before the police magistrate, when he has to decide whether drunkenness, the original and admitted fault, is to condone or excuse an after assault. As a rule, he judges according to the *case*, and if that be serious, according to precedents laid down in the law books, but always with a view to the larger interests of society. No one would dream of accusing such a magistrate of lax personal morality should he in such a case incline to a lenient view.

On the other hand, the Jesuits were keenly on the watch for the least hint of false doctrine; even more active, if possible, than were their opponents for the least hint of light morals. Those who have watched

watched the controversy, or rather the silent but earnest struggle on difficult points of philosophic doctrine, which has now for years gone on between the Society of Jesus and the Fathers of Charity, will understand how strongly the Jesuits felt when they considered that St. Augustine's doctrines, misstated by persons of the holiest lives, were the more dangerous because of their personal holiness. Being in power when M. de Saint Cyran, the director of Port Royal, espoused the Jansenist interpretation of St. Augustine, the Jesuits used their influence with Richelieu, and took their first step against Port Royal by causing the Abbé to be imprisoned for his teaching and for his attacks against their society.

How from his prison the Abbé de Saint Cyran directed the affairs of Port Royal, and emerged more powerful than before; how the war against the Jesuits was carried on by him, as well as by the important book of Arnauld on Frequent Communion, which may still be read with a languid interest by those who have a turn for theology; how after his death the tradition of wise and holy direction was carried on at Port Royal; there is no need here to speak; nor concerning M. de Singlin, nor of M. d'Andilly, M. de Saci, and others of the Arnauld family, nor of all the other men whose names rise vaguely in the memory when any allusion is made to the events of those times; these things must be read in a history of Port Royal. All that has been said

said is only to make the position and the surroundings of Pascal clear, when he appears on the stage as one of the solitaries of Port Royal. But for him all these names and events, these fervid controversies and eager hearts, the memories even of miraculous interpositions, the dramatic scenes of conventual reform, the pangs of passionate self-abasement, as well as the high diplomatic strife of Cardinals and Popes, would have been lost as completely as are the traces of the very walls of Port Royal des Champs. Or, if remembered, it would have been, as one stirring the immemorial grass may find a fragment, here and there, to show what once had been. But in Pascal all lives; because he wrote, men have written histories of Port Royal, dissertations on the Jesuits, &c.; in gathering his relics, what was buried with him has been laid bare.

Blaise Pascal, born at Clermont-Ferrand in Auvergne on June 19, 1623, sprang, like the Arnaulds, from a well-known legal family, many members of which had held lucrative and responsible positions. His father, to pass over points of interest to any student of the time, but unconnected with our special subject, held the post of intendant or provincial administrator in Normandy, where, and at Paris previously, Pascal lived from the age of sixteen to twenty-five, almost wholly educated by his father on account of his precarious health. His mother had died when he was eight years old. Étienne

Étienne Pascal appears to have been a pious but stern person, by no means disposed to entertain or allow any undue exaltation in religion ; and thus, unlike the Arnaulds, refused, to the end of his life, permission that his daughter Jaqueline, who had an earnest desire for a cloistered life, should take the veil. But he had the usual faiths and superstitions of his time, and a very singular affair, wherein he played a part, which of course became a matter of family tradition, had, as it would seem, no small share in forming the mind of his son, disposing him to accept those uncommon modes of Divine or supernatural manifestation, about which most men require greater evidence than is always forthcoming. When Blaise Pascal was a year old, a woman reputed among the peasantry of Auvergne to be a sorceress, whom his father refused to aid in a lawsuit, was supposed to have bewitched the infant, who forthwith began to pine visibly away. M. Pascal, who for some time paid no attention to the gossip, at last grew alarmed, and threatening the woman with the direst pains and penalties, brought her to confess that she had indeed bewitched the child, and that his sickness was unto death. The only remedy was that the charm should be laid on someone else, a life for a life, but as the exchange with a human being was not to be thought of, she consented to take a cat. Undeterred by the remonstrances of two monks who came to console Madame

Madame Pascal, the family gave her the cat, and with a plaister made from herbs plucked before sunrise by a girl under seven years old, no doubt bruised down with the cat's blood, the sick infant recovered. But M. Pascal, who afterwards repented that he had, in his eager desire to save his child, allowed this new appeal to the powers of evil, must have seen that the witch's ability was stronger to hurt than to save, since the child's feeble health remained feeble to the end.

Intellectually, Blaise Pascal grew rapidly to the strength and stature of a giant, and his genius chiefly showed itself in mathematics. He was but twelve when, without the aid of any books, for his father did not approve this direction for his thoughts, he worked out for himself some of the most difficult problems resolved already by Euclid; he was but fifteen when his studies on conic sections were thought worthy of being read before the most scientific men of Paris; at nineteen he invented the calculating machine; he was only twenty-three when his experiments on the vacuum, in support of Torricelli's hypothesis, took its place for ever among renowned treatises. But his actual reading was at all times narrow. He had little Latin and less Greek; Montaigne, Corneille, and Mdlle. de Scudéry were his favourite modern authors. Madame Perier, his elder sister, was a tender and pious woman, who admired, though she never quite understood, her brother, and afterwards became his

his biographer, working with the Port Royalists as editor of his Remains.

But Jaqueline, the younger sister, was a very different person. Thwarted during her father's lifetime in her desire of becoming a nun of Port Royal, she lived in her own home as austere a life as though she had been professed; without fire in the coldest weather, spending her whole time in prayer, in hard manual labour, and in nursing the sick. On Étienne Pascal's death she entered Port Royal, and became one of the most enthusiastic and strict of that rigid rule. It was characteristic of the Jansenist movement that it often took hold of entire families, and not of isolated members only. But while the whole Pascal family obeyed the influence, it was felt in its extreme form by Jaqueline and Blaise. With him, however, as he would have been the first to admit, there was a certain struggle against his calling. He was twice converted. In 1646 his father, having broken his thigh from a fall on the ice at Rouen, came under the influence of two members of the Jansenist body at that place, who attended him in his illness; and from this dated the more serious thought of the family. But Blaise Pascal, having with his usual enthusiasm thrown himself into theological, as before into mathematical, studies, injured his health; he was advised to abstain from intellectual labour, and returned to the world of Paris, where his friends the Duc de Roannez,

Roannez, the Chevalier de Méré, and M. Miton were among the best known and the most fashionable names. His father's death gave him the command of considerable means, and he used them freely, not at all, though it has been so hinted, in a vicious manner, but with no exclusion of the pleasures of society. There is some evidence of a proposal that he should marry the Duc de Roannez's sister, and no doubt with some such scheme before him he wrote his celebrated "Discours sur les Passions de l'Amour." But the memory of the religious influence once exerted over him had never died wholly away. Jaqueline's fervent and exalted piety, though her brother had also opposed her entrance into the cloister, was slowly telling on him, and, at last, suddenly, as all great crises come, however prepared beforehand, occurred the second conversion, from which there was never again a moment of backsliding.

It is perhaps not possible to specify the immediate cause, but it may be that an accident at the Pont de Neuilly was not without its effect on this sensitive mind, so ready to believe in the supernatural and in special providences. We are told, though the story comes filtered through many channels, that on a certain fête day, Pascal and several friends in a carriage with him, were taking the fashionable drive over the bridge, when the leaders, in a spot where was no parapet, bolted and fell into the water, but the traces breaking, the coach

coach itself was stayed upon the very brink. However this may have been; whether from some outward shock or some inward temptation, some relapse into an abandoned evil habit, some glimpse by imagination into the world to come, or some word or letter of his sister; there came a dread night in which for two long hours he wrestled with God as did Jacob of old; and without some such conflict, as Goethe says, no man knows the heavenly powers.

Here are Pascal's own words in reference to this supreme moment:

This year of grace, 1654,
Monday, Nov. 23rd, day of St. Clement, Pope and Martyr, and others in the Martyrology,
Eve of St. Chrysogonus, martyr, and others;
From about half-past ten at night to about half after midnight,
Fire.
God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,
Not of the philosophers and the wise.
Security, security. Feeling, joy, peace.
God of Jesus Christ. *Deum meum et Deum vestrum.*
Thy God shall be my God.
Forgetfulness of the world and of all save God.
He can be found only in the ways taught in the Gospel.
Greatness of the human soul.
O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee.
Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.
I have separated myself from him.
Dereliquerunt me fontem aquae vivae.
My God, why hast thou forsaken me? . . .
That I be not separated from thee eternally.

This

This is life eternal: that they might know thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ.

I have separated myself from him; I have fled, renounced, crucified him.

May I never be separated from him.

He maintains himself in me only in the ways taught in the Gospel.

Renunciation total and sweet, &c.

This writing, the record of the second beginning of a new life, was found after his death sewn into his doublet, copied both on parchment and on paper; and his servants believed that at each change of dress he had been accustomed to stitch this "profession of faith," as a sort of charm or amulet, into the folds of the new garment.

From this hour there was a complete change in Pascal's life; austerity, self-denial, absolute obedience to his spiritual director, boundless almsgiving, succeeded to what at most had been but a moderate and restrained use of worldly pleasure, and he threw himself into the life, controversy, and interests of Port Royal with all the passion of one who was not only a new convert, but the champion of a society into which those dearest to him had entered even more fully than he. For Jaqueline was a nun of that convent, and Mad^lle^. de Roannez, under his influence, was there also with a view of taking the veil, though after Pascal's death she left the cloister, to make an unhappy marriage with the Duc de la Feuillade.

When

When Pascal engaged in the Port Royal struggle, the Abbey, and all that was attached to it, greatly needed aid from without. For though the nuns and their school showed no signs of falling off, though fresh men of the world were still enrolling themselves among the solitaries, the power of the Jesuits was ever increasing, and their attacks on the Abbey grew more and more violent. Theologically, their aim was to gain condemnation from Rome for certain propositions in the works of Jansenius, hoping that the immediate and practical result would be the destruction of the whole spiritual basis on which Port Royal was founded. A Bill condemning Jansenius was gained at length from the Pope, and a formulary, minimising the effect so far as was possible, was drawn up by the General Assembly in France, which was ultimately accepted by Port Royal itself. That the condemned propositions were not, in precise terms, what Port Royal had held, was a statement involving some little intellectual agility.

But if the Port Royalists minimised the defeat, so their adversaries exaggerated the victory. A confessor at St. Sulpice refused absolution to a parishioner because he had a Jansenist residing in his house, and had sent his granddaughter to school at Port Royal. Hence pamphlets and letters from M. Arnauld to the Sorbonne, a recrudescence of irritating controversies without much point, and on which, being in Latin, the public at large could form

form no opinion. It was at this point that Pascal dashed into the controversy with his "Letters to a Provincial," the first three having reference to the special matter in dispute between M. Arnauld and the Sorbonne; after which, no longer taking a merely defensive line, he turned the attack against the enemy in his entrenched camp of morals.

It would be as impossible as it would be needless to speak at length here on the Provincial Letters; they would require a study to themselves, and they are noticed solely as a link in the history of the events which led to the "Pensées." To those who are unable to enter fully into the controversies of the time; and to read the "Provinciales" without this were idle waste of time over an incomprehensible book; the chapter relating to them in Sainte-Beuve's "Port Royal" will perhaps give information enough on this most interesting subject.

In the "Provinciales" Pascal found his true style, and took rank at once among the great French writers. He had probably been himself unaware of his own powers, since his previous papers on the Vacuum, and on his Calculating Machine, though clear and simple, show no trace, nor was it necessary they should show trace, of the admirable language, polished, witty, indignant, or pathetic of the "Lettres Provinciales." These contributed largely to turn the scale of feeling for the time against his adversaries; they and an occurrence in which he saw the visible finger of God saved Port

Port Royal for the time, as did also in part the acceptance by the Port Royalists of the papal Bull, with whatever mental reservations they accepted it. The great strife, however, outlived Pascal, and outlived Port Royal. A century afterwards, in 1762, the society was expelled from France, as at other times it has been from other countries, but always to return after a while.

And in this the Jesuits have shown persistency and constancy; their labours and the record of them have filled the world: never have sufferings and martyrdom been borne more courageously than by the Jesuit fathers. The controversy is not yet closed. The devotion and the goodness of individuals is admitted, but the word Jesuit is still the synonym in many quarters for all that is sly and underhand, even where the charge of lax morality in other matters is for the time in abeyance. Sainte-Beuve goes so far as to say: "If we take them one by one, they are often excellent people, honourable in spite of all their subtlety; there have been among them men of vast erudition, of heroic devotion. But if we take the whole of their conduct and their influence, our tone must change. The individuals may be in general good, but the body, and the spirit of the body, are detestable." He quotes a certain Abbé, a friend of Grimm and Diderot, and correspondent of Mme. d'Epinay, who said in one of his letters, "Every Jesuit was charming, moral, useful,

useful, but the society as a whole, which however is only the individuals in a body, hateful, morally corrupt, pernicious. Others may explain this phenomenon; I am lost when I try to do so."

This seems very like nonsense, if it does not shirk the question. To say that a congeries of sweets make a sour, or of moral men an immoral body, is a contradiction in terms. Pascal would never have given such a crude explanation. Here is what he did say, in the fifth letter—

"Know, then, that they do not intend to corrupt morals; that is not their design, but on the other hand the reformation of morals is not their sole end, which would be bad policy. Their thought is this. They have so good an opinion of themselves as to think that it is useful and even necessary to the good of religion that their credit should be everywhere extended, and that they should have sway over all consciences. And because the severe maxims of the gospel are fit to govern some kinds of people, they use them whenever these are favourable to them. But as the same maxims do not accord with the designs of the majority of men, they abandon them in regard to these, so as to be able to satisfy everybody."

Making allowance for the tone of the sentence, which has a deliberate bitterness in it intended to give offence, no Jesuit need object to this, while we ourselves admit that the Jesuits are right, if they are to be considered, and if they consider themselves, as ruling and moving the world.

This, moreover, may be said without hesitation, that unless there be a certain practical giving and taking between ordinary human nature and that higher

higher nature which is the ideal, the ordinary nature would be crushed out, and the world would come to a speedy end. It is well to aim at the highest even when in our inmost mind we know we cannot attain it, for, as says George Herbert, "Who aims the sky shoots higher far than he that means a tree;" but this once admitted, the degree of giving and taking must always be uncertain, and each case here also must be judged on its own merits.

All honour to Pascal that he set before him the highest ideal, and endeavoured to raise every man to it. If the Fathers whom he mentions by name went too far, if certain maxims involved the danger that they might be unwholesomely applied, it is well this should be pointed out; and we may for ever be thankful to Pascal that he has shown us danger or vice wherever it lurks. The evils which he calls, and which have since been called Jesuitical, exist, and are to be condemned; but as under the old law Pharisaism was not confined to the Pharisees alone, neither were all Pharisees Pharisaical, so when Pascal assailed Jesuits as his Master assailed the Pharisees, there were many who did not deserve the condemnation, and no doubt some of those he named were living holy and self-sacrificing lives. It must always be remembered that the "Provinciales" was a political pamphlet as well as a religious treatise, and that Pascal, like many another man of strong opinions and convictions, was a thorough-going partisan. And,

And, taking the world as it is, little work is done in it except by those who are partisans. But with this caution, and with this remembrance, we may give ourselves wholly to Pascal in his abhorrence of the moral evils which he assailed.

He had no doubt that God was fighting for him and in him, that the strength which was in his words was given to him from above, and that visible signs and wonders came to confirm the side he was defending. There are few passages more eloquent than the famous outburst in the 16th Provincial :—

"Cruel and cowardly persecutors, are not even the most secluded cloisters an asylum against your calumnies? While night and day these holy virgins adore Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament, as is their vow, you cease not night and day to declare abroad that they do not believe that He is in the Eucharist, nor even at the right hand of the Father, and you cut them off publicly from the Church, while they are praying in secret for you and for all the Church. You calumniate those who have neither ears to hear you nor lips to answer. But Jesus Christ, in whom they are hidden, that they may one day appear with Him, hears you, and answers for them. We hear, at this very day, that voice holy and terrible which astounds nature and consoles the Church; and I fear, my Father, that they who harden their hearts and stubbornly refuse to hear Him when He speaks as God, will be forced to listen with terror when He shall speak to them as Judge."

The voice had spoken in what was known as the miracle of the Holy Thorn, to which we must turn for awhile.

M. Arnauld

M. Arnauld had been condemned by the Sorbonne, and his enemies said he had been excommunicated, which was not technically true; he was in danger of arrest, and had to seek various hiding-places; the solitaries of Port Royal were almost all scattered; the schools were thinned of their pupils, and on the point of closing; the confessors were about to be withdrawn and the nuns dispersed; when the miracle took place.

Jaqueline Perier, Pascal's niece, a child of ten years old, was one of the pupils not as yet dismissed to her home. She was at Port Royal in Paris, tenderly nursed for a terrible complaint, an ulcer in the lachrymal gland, which had destroyed the bones of the nose, and produced other horrors of which there is no need to speak. A relic of the Saviour, a thorn of his crown of mockery, which had been entrusted to the nuns, and was venerated in the chapel, passed, as it would seem, from hand to hand, in its reliquary. When the turn of the scholars came, Sister Flavia, their mistress, moved by a sudden impulse, said "My child, pray for your eye," and touched the ulcer with the reliquary. None at the time noticed any change, so absorbed were they in devotion, but after the ceremony Jaqueline told another child that she thought she was cured. As soon as it came to the ears of the superior, then la Mère Marie des Anges, she desired silence on the subject, and sent for the surgeon who had already declared the disease beyond remedy. When he recognised his patient,

patient, he, without looking closely, said, "What do you wish me to do? Have I not already said the case is incurable?" When pressed to examine the patient, he declared the cure miraculous, but at the instance of the superior, who was afraid of drawing further attention to a house so persecuted, he kept silence. However, he fell ill with fever, and feared he had done wrong in not publishing and attesting the miracle, which he then accordingly did. Thus it happened that it was not for full three weeks after the cure on March 24, 1655, that the matter was really noised abroad. But the effect was immediate; the remaining solitaries were not dispersed, some of those who had gone returned, the confessors were not dispersed, the school was not closed, and Port Royal was respited for a time.

That a cure, rapid, unexpected, and singular took place is a fact of which there cannot be the smallest doubt; there is scarcely any event of those days so well attested. A miracle, supposing one really to have been proved, would work on different classes of minds in quite different ways. If it were really shown beyond a shadow of doubt that the disease in question had destroyed, not merely affected, a part of the living organism, that the application of the reliquary had recreated perished tissue, that it had, in fact, reversed the whole ascertained course of nature, there are those who would see in such cure the authenticity of the relic of Him from whom

whom healing powers proceeded. They would enter on a course of thought widening ever from this small point of the sacred thorn to include all supernatural, all Catholic dogma, so that the belief in relics would thenceforth become not the most difficult but the most easy article of faith. There are, again, minds holding the faith firmly, who would see in this one more surprising manifestation of God's power, a *voix de tonnerre*. We can imagine others equally faithful, equally confident that the age of miracles had not ceased, to whom the matter would present scarcely any points of interest, because it was so trivial in comparison with the stupendous event involved in the Christian scheme; as Cardinal Newman enumerates some of the most astounding occurrences narrated in the lives of the saints, and concerning relics, and then says:—

"I do not see how we can scruple at any miracle on the mere ground of its being unlikely to happen. No miracle can be so great as that which took place in the holy house at Nazareth; it is indefinitely more difficult to believe than all the miracles of the Breviary, of the Martyrology, of saints' lives, of legends, of local traditions put together, and there is the grossest inconsistency on the very face of the matter for any one so to strain out the gnat and to swallow the camel, as to profess what is inconceivable yet to protest against what is surely within the limits of intelligible hypothesis. If through Divine grace we are once able to accept the solemn truth that the Supreme Being was born of a mortal woman, what is there to be imagined which can offend us on the ground of its marvellousness?"

Pascal

Pascal was in the second of these classes. The miracle was at once a solemn matter of religion and a family occurrence; he took henceforward as his cognizance, not perhaps with the best artistic taste, an eye encircled with a crown of thorns, and the motto, "Scio cui credidi"—I know in whom I have believed. In the miracle we see the link which joins two sides of Pascal's character, that chiefly shown in the "Provinciales," and that chiefly in the "Pensées," which latter book hangs, as it were, on the miracle of the holy thorn.

The conversation with M. de Saint Saci, so well known as prefaced to several editions of the "Pensées," took place, if indeed it was one conversation, and not rather a recollection of many, between the spring of 1657 and that of 1658. It was the last year of his good health, if that can be called good which was at best but feeble. In that year he indicated the plan of his intended work, and wrote the most finished paragraphs, generally the beginnings of the chapters. The detached thoughts which make up the bulk of the work were sketched as they occurred to him, during the last four years of his life, on scraps of paper or on the margin of what he had already written, often when from his nervous malady he was quite incapable of sustained employment, except in the problems of geometry and the higher mathematics; for in his deep application to these he sometimes succeeded in forgetting and overmastering the terrible pains which tortured him.

They

They ended only with his life, on August 9, 1662, at the age of thirty-nine, the last years of which had been spent in an ecstasy of self-denial, of charity, and aspiration after God. Not for six years after his death were his family and friends able to consider in what form his unfinished work should be given to the world. Then Port Royal had a breathing space, the peace of the Church was established by Clement IX., and it was clear that the time had come to set in order these precious fragments.

The duty of giving an author's works to the world as he left them was little understood in those days, and the Duc de Roannez had even suggested that Pascal's whole work should be rewritten on the lines he had laid down. Some editing was on all hands allowed to be necessary; thus the arrangement of chapters and the fragments to be included in chapters were matters for fair difference of opinion and discussion. But the committee of which mention has already been made, went further, and even when the text had been settled by *them*, it had to undergo a further censorship by various theologians. Finally, in January, 1670, the "Pensées" appeared as a small duodecimo, with a preface by the Perier family, and no mention of Port Royal in the volume. But it was all the same a Port Royalist and Jansenist book, and as such had much exercised the mind of the Archbishop of Paris, M. Pérefixe, before its publication. He wished to see a copy before it was in the hands of others, and was

was put off till the book was published, under the allegation, on the part of the bookseller, that no copies had been bound earlier. Then he wished that there should be bound with the work a statement by the Curé of St. Étienne du Mont, to the effect that Pascal had retracted his Jansenist opinions on his deathbed. This was cut short by a new title-page, calling the unsold copies "second edition," so that further change was impossible. The book had its effect at once; it took its place among the glories of Port Royal from which the storm was for a time more and more clearing away.

It is well to hear what the writer said of his work before taking our own view of it.

"I do not undertake to prove here by natural reasons either the existence of God, or the Trinity, or the Immortality of the Soul, nor aught of that kind, not only because I do not feel myself strong enough to find in nature wherewithal to convince hardened atheists, but also because without Jesus Christ such knowledge is useless and barren. Though a man should be persuaded that the proportions of numbers are immaterial truths, eternal and dependent on a first truth in which they exist, and which we call God, I do not find him much advanced in the way of salvation."

The General Introduction is one of the portions of the work which, though remaining fragmentary, is here and there finished, and lays down certain principles lying at the root of Pascal's whole system. That God is hidden, and can be perceived only by those who seek him with their whole hearts, that those who have not found have not sought,

sought, that those who do not seek must be living immoral and careless lives, are the theses laid down. That men denied out of carelessness or bravado was an axiom; that they could have a system alternative to the orthodox was inconceivable, or at least was not conceived by Pascal. "How," he says, "can such an argument as the following occur to a reasoning man?"

"I know not who has sent me into the world, nor what the world is, nor what I myself am; I am terribly ignorant of everything; I know not what my body is, nor my senses, nor my soul, nor even that part of me which thinks what I say, which reflects on all and on itself, yet is as ignorant of itself as of all beside. I see those dreadful spaces of the universe which close me in, and I find myself fixed in one corner of this vast expanse, without knowing why I am set in this place rather than elsewhere, nor why this moment of time given me for life is assigned to this point rather than another of the whole Eternity which was before me or which shall be after me. I see nothing but infinities on every side, which close me round as an atom, and as a shadow which endures but for an instant and returns no more. I know only that I must shortly die, but what I know the least is this very death which I cannot avoid.

"As I know not whence I come, so I know not whither I go; only this I know, that on departing this world, I shall either fall for ever into nothingness, or into the hands of an offended God, without knowing which of these two conditions shall eternally be my lot. Such is my state, full of weakness and uncertainty; from all which I conclude that I ought to pass all the days of my life without thought of searching for what must happen to me. Perhaps I might find some ray of light in my doubts, but I will not take the trouble, nor stir a foot to seek it; and after treating with scorn those who are troubled with this care, I will go without

without foresight and without fear to make trial of the grand event, and allow myself to be led softly on to death, uncertain of the eternity of my future condition.

"Who would wish to have for his friend a man who should thus speak; who would choose him rather than another for advice in business; who would turn to him in sorrow? And indeed to what use in life could we put him?"

And among certain detached notes, which seem clearly intended to be woven into the General Preface, we find striking sentences like these—

"Is it courage in a dying man that he dare, in his weakness and agony, face an almighty and eternal God?"

Again—

"A man in a dungeon, who knows not whether his doom is fixed, who has but one hour to learn it, and this hour enough, should he know that it is fixed, to obtain its repeal, would act against nature did he employ that hour, not in learning his sentence, but in playing piquet.

"So it is against nature that man, &c. It is to weight the hand of God."

Again—

"Between us and hell or heaven, there is nought but life, the frailest thing in all the world."

In all this we must remember the views of the time. On the one side was Catholic doctrine, all but untouched. The Huguenots had but little influence on French life, they probably entered less into it than the Quakers do into that of our own days; on the other hand there was the frivolity and the

the scandalous lives of French men of pleasure, whose interest it was to flout that which they feared. Of a life spent in striving after the highest human ideal without fear of punishment, and without hope of reward other than that of seeking all which is noble and true and of good report, of men who felt that

> "because right is right, to follow right
> Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence,"

Pascal knew nothing; he was, as every man is, the child of his time, and it would have been as impossible for him to understand the position of a religious unbeliever, or sceptic, or positivist, as it would have been for Plato or Socrates to understand the life and faith of a mediaeval monk. But he made the further mistake, not uncommon, of confusing the sceptic with the man who denies; he insisted that whoever suspended his judgment on any matter must be taken to affirm the opposite; and this though there was in him a deep vein of unconscious scepticism. He clung as passionately to the least secure points of his faith as to the more stable, lest allowing any one to slip from his grasp he might fall into the abyss. And now and then, by the very vehemence of his assertion, he shows that he is endeavouring to cry down a rising doubt.

"The disproportion of man with nature" is one of the thoughts which he uses the most, to intensify, so to speak, the greatness of God. And in the chapter

chapter wherein he sets forth this thought occurs one of his most sustained passages, and one of the best known sentences. We must quote this, though feeling keenly that the force and majesty of the words evaporate when transferred to another language than that in which they were first conceived and written:

"Let man then contemplate the whole realm of nature in its full and exalted majesty, and turn his eyes from the low objects which hem him round; let him observe that brilliant light set like an eternal lamp to illumine the universe let the earth appear to him a point in comparison with the vast circle described by that sun, and let him see with amazement that even this vast circle is itself but a fine point in regard to that described by the stars revolving in the firmament. If our view be arrested there, let imagination pass beyond, and it will sooner exhaust the power of thinking than nature that of giving scope for thought. The whole visible world is but an imperceptible speck in the ample bosom of nature. No idea approaches it. We may swell our conceptions beyond all imaginable space, yet bring forth only atoms in comparison with the reality of things. *It is an infinite sphere, the centre of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere.* It is, in short, the greatest sensible mark of the almighty power of God, in that thought let imagination lose itself.

"Then, returning to himself, let man consider his own being compared with all that is; let him regard himself as wandering in this remote province of nature; and from the little dungeon in which he finds himself lodged, I mean the universe, let him learn to set a true value on the earth, on its kingdoms, its cities, and on himself. . . .

"For after all what is man in nature? A nothing in regard to the infinite, a whole in regard to nothing, a mean between

between nothing and the whole; infinitely removed from understanding either extreme. The end of things and their beginnings are invincibly hidden from him in impenetrable secrecy, he is equally incapable of seeing the nothing whence he was taken, and the infinite in which he is engulfed."

Like a host of other striking thoughts, Pascal's claim to the invention of the magnificent sentence about nature which we have italicised, has been disputed; it has been traced through Montaigne, Rabelais, Hermes Trismegistus, to Empedocles, in the middle of the fifth century before Christ. But he would have cared little had anyone told him the thought was none of his. He anticipated such objections in a fragment which he called "Preface to the First Part"—

"Let no one say I have said nothing new; the disposition of my matter is new. In playing tennis, two men play with the same ball, but one places it better.

"It might as truly be said that my words have been used before. And if the same thoughts in a different arrangement do not form a different discourse, so neither do the same words in a different arrangement form different thoughts."

From man's disproportion Pascal passes by a natural transition to the thought that neither nature nor self can satisfy man. His restlessness requires perpetual distraction and diversion.

"Men have (he says) a secret instinct prompting them to look for diversion and occupation from without, which arises from the sense of their continual pain. They have another secret instinct, a relic of the greatness of our primitive

primitive nature, teaching them that happiness indeed consists in rest, and not in turmoil."

Again—

"Man is weary, and seeks a multitude of occupations only because he has the idea of a lost happiness. And not finding this in himself, he seeks it vainly in external things, without being able to content himself, because it is neither in us, nor in the creatures, but in God alone."

In these words we come upon the similarity of devout souls in however distant ages. "The heart has no peace," said St. Augustine, "until it rest in thee." Thomas à Kempis said much the same: "Walk where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, and thou wilt find no higher way above, no safer way below than the way of the holy Cross." Outside the Church also, but in a most catholic spirit, Toplady sang "Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in thee." And Watts, "His dying crimson like a robe, Spreads from his body o'er the tree, And I am dead to all the globe, and all the world is dead to me." Even Auguste Comte found a motive outside self in the motto wherein he gathered up all the self-denials and renunciations and martyrdoms of the past: *Vivre pour autrui.* Little as he knew it, was not even he feeling after God, not far from every one of us? When we go out of self, in whatever way, we are linked to all great souls past, present, and to be.

A chapter on "The Greatness and Littleness of Man," which unfortunately remains in a very fragmentary

fragmentary state, sums up and completes the two which precede it. But it is extremely interesting as showing how, try as he will to make little of man, he breaks out into praise of the ideal man, who, it must ever be remembered, is the Only true Man, the ideal to which we all tend, after which we all strive. There is in it an outburst like that of the Psalmist in the same topic, who said—

"When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained,
What is man, that thou art mindful of him,
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
To crown him with glory and worship."

And here is Pascal—

"The greatness of man consists in thought. Not from space must I seek my dignity, but from the ruling of my thought. I should have no more if I possessed whole worlds. By space the Universe encompasses and swallows me as an atom, by thought I encompass it.

"Man is but a reed, weakest in nature, but a reed which thinks. It needs not that the whole Universe should arm to crush him. A vapour, a drop of water is enough to kill him. But were the Universe to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which has slain him, because he knows that he dies, and that the Universe has the better of him. The Universe knows nothing of this.

"All our dignity therefore consists in thought. By this must we raise ourselves, not by space or duration, which we cannot fill. Then let us make it our study to think well, for this is the starting-point of morals.

"The

"The greatness of man is great in that he knows he is miserable. A tree does not know that it is miserable.

"It is therefore little to know ourselves little, and it is great to know ourselves little.

"Thus his very infirmities prove man's greatness. They are the infirmities of a great lord, of a discrowned king."

We must pass over much that is full of interest, on "Justice, Habits, and Prejudices," on "The Weakness, Unrest, and Defects of Man," in which are deep thoughts and pregnant sentences implicitly containing volumes, to dwell for a moment on a passage concerning "Self-love," as an instance of Pascal's dexterity as a controversialist. He is showing that a true appreciation of self would prevent anger at those who think ill of us, "since it is but just that men should know us as we are, and despise us if we are despicable." This is in the exact spirit of Thomas à Kempis, who says—

"Son, take it not to heart if some think ill of thee, and say of thee what thou dost not gladly hear.

"Thou oughtest to think worse things of thyself, and to believe that no one is weaker than thyself."

When Pascal has laid down this general truth and pointed out how often we wish others to have an erroneously favourable opinion of us, he suddenly localizes, so to speak, and narrows the controversy in the most unexpected manner.

"One proof of this fills me with dismay. The Catholic religion does not oblige us to tell out our sins indiscriminately to all, it allows us to remain hidden from men in general, but she excepts one alone, to whom she commands us to open the

the very depths of our heart, and to show ourselves to him as we are. There is but this one man in the world whom she orders us to undeceive; she binds him to an inviolable secrecy, so that this knowledge is to him as though it were not. We can imagine nothing more charitable and more tender. Yet such is the corruption of man, that he finds even this law harsh, and it is one of the main reasons which has set a large portion of Europe in revolt against the Church.

"How unjust and unreasonable is the human heart which finds it hard to be obliged to do in regard to one man what in some degree it were just to do to all men. For is it just that we should deceive them?"

Thus suddenly, and as an *argumentum ad hominem*, he sharpens a general principle for the men around him who were leading light lives. While it is not necessarily true, as theologians often assume, that a man who denies their principles and therefore neglects their practice is immoral, it is more often true than not, that he who admits their principle, and yet neglects the consequent practice, hates the light because his deeds are evil.

As the introduction to the whole work was more elaborated than much which was to follow, so also there are portions worked out in great detail in the earlier chapters of the second part, wherein Pascal passes to his more constructive argument that the Scripture reveals a Redeemer who will give man his true happiness. Perhaps no single passage shows his method, his own absolute security of faith, his daring statement of the other side, his changing from argument into passionate pleading, more

more than the celebrated comparison of belief and unbelief to a great game of chance, in which the probabilities are on the side of belief, on which side therefore it were better to stake. There is a danger of making this most luminous of writers obscure through excess of concentration, in not giving the passage in full, but it is too long to quote entire.

"Let us (he says) examine this point, and say 'God is, or he is not.' But to which side shall we incline? Reason can determine nothing about it. There is an infinite gulf fixed between us. A game is playing at the extremity of this infinite distance in which heads or tails may turn up. What will you wager? There is no reason for backing either one or the other, you cannot reasonably argue in favour of either. . . . Yet you must wager; this depends not on your will, you are embarked in the affair. Which will you choose? . . . You have two things to lose, truth and good, and two things to stake, your reason and your will, your knowledge and your happiness; and your nature has two things to avoid, error and misery. Since you must needs choose, your reason is no more wounded in choosing one than the other."

Then, after working out this in great detail, he clinches the matter thus—

"It is of no avail to say it is uncertain that we gain, and certain that we risk, and that the infinite distance between the certainty of that which is staked and the uncertainty of what we shall gain, equals the finite good which is certainly staked against an uncertain infinite. This is not so. Every gambler stakes a certainty to gain an uncertainty, and yet he stakes a finite certainty against a finite uncertainty without acting unreasonably."

At

At last he makes his antagonist say that he admits what has been said, but—

"My hands are tied and my mouth is gagged: I am forced to wager, and am not free, none can release me, but I am so made that I cannot believe. What then would you have me do?

"True. But understand at least your incapacity to believe, since your reason leads you to belief and yet you cannot believe. Labour then to convince yourself, not by increase of the proofs of God, but by the diminution of your passions. You would fain arrive at faith, but know not the way; you would heal yourself of unbelief, and you ask remedies for it. Learn of those who have been bound as you are, but who now stake all that they possess; these are they who know the way you would follow, who are cured of a disease of which you would be cured. Follow the way by which they began, by making believe that they believed, taking the holy water, having masses said, &c.

"If my words please you, and seem to you cogent, know that they are those of one who has thrown himself on his knees before and after to pray that Being, infinite, and without parts, to whom he submits all his own being, that you also would submit to him all yours, for your own good and for his glory."

In this daring balance of dread chances, in the warm affection for human souls, in the way in which he considers that the greater not only includes but supposes the less, so that there is nothing mean nor insignificant in the remedy of holy water, when once the fact is grasped that finite things are sacraments of the infinite, and in the sudden turns from the abstract to the concrete application, Pascal is strangely like our great modern, by whom the Catholic faith is shown at its fairest, yet who never shrinks

shrinks from placing before us its greatest stumbling-blocks, John Henry, Cardinal Newman.

There is a final fragment to the section from which a quotation has already been taken which is most characteristic, and especially so in this, that it is impossible to say whether Pascal meant to say it in his own person, or to put it into the mouth of his opponent. At any rate it has so autobiographic a ring that we cannot doubt the thoughts had been his own in those dread hours of doubt, whereof he spoke with such pathos.

"This is what I see and what troubles me. I look on all sides, and see nothing but obscurity; nature offers me nothing but matter for doubt and disquiet. Did I see nothing there which marked a Divinity I should decide not to believe in him. Did I see everywhere the marks of a Creator, I should rest peacefully in faith. But seeing too much to deny, and too little to affirm, my state is pitiful, and I have a hundred times wished that if God upheld nature, he would mark the fact unequivocally, but that if the signs which she gives of a God are fallacious, she would wholly suppress them, that she would either say all or say nothing, that I might see what part I should take. Instead of this, in my present state, ignorant of what I am, and of what I ought to do, I know neither my condition nor my duty. My heart is wholly bent to know where is the true good in order to follow it, nothing would seem to me too costly for eternity."

It may frankly be admitted that while detached thoughts in many chapters in the second part, on "Philosophy," on the "Sacred Books," on "Prophecy," and the like, are of value and interest, the whole manner of dealing with biblical criticism is

so totally unlike that of our days, so apart from all our train of thought, that it would be unprofitable to summarize this portion of the work. It will always be read to show Pascal's method; gems of thought and diction are imbedded in it, but the present state of biblical criticism renders it quite impossible to consider Pascal's views on these points as a serious contribution to it. Yet let none who study the man rather than his knowledge of the Bible, none who look for spiritual guidance apart from the particular form in which, according to the time, it has clothed itself, pass by these chapters. If they do, they will miss such grand passages as this—

"All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life; *libido sentiendi, libido sciendi, libido dominandi.* Woe to the accursed land which these three rivers of flame enkindle rather than moisten. Happy they who are on these rivers, not overwhelmed nor carried away, but immovably fixed upon the floods, not standing but seated, and on a firm and sure base, whence they rise not before the dawn; but where, having rested in peace, they stretch forth their hands to him who will lift them up, and cause them to stand firm and upright in the porches of the heavenly Jerusalem, where pride may no more assail nor cast them down; and who yet weep, not to see all those perishable things crumble which the torrents sweep away, but at the remembrance of their dear country, that heavenly Jerusalem, which they remember without ceasing while the days of their exile are prolonged.

"The rivers of Babylon rush and fall and sweep away.

"O holy Sion, where all is firm and nothing falls.

"We must sit upon the floods, not under them or in them,

them, but on them; not standing but seated, being seated to be humble, and above them in security. But in the porches of Jerusalem we shall stand.

"Let us see if our pleasure is stable or transitory; if it pass away, it is a river of Babylon."

The final sections in Molinier's edition of the "Pensées," the last word on the arrangement of this most perplexing book, are those on "Miracles, with Special Reference to that of the Holy Thorn," on "The Jesuits," on "Style," and one composed of "Various Thoughts," for which no other place could be found. That on miracles is exceedingly fragmentary, but the fragments throw much light on Pascal's whole attitude in regard to the supernatural. He is bold enough to attempt a definition of miracles, and then draws a curious deduction from his definition.

"Miracle. An effect which exceeds the natural force of the means employed, and non-miracle an effect not exceeding the natural force of the means employed. Thus those who heal by invocation of the devil work no miracle, for that does not exceed the natural power of the devil."

No doubt he was considering the tale handed down from his own nursery days, and made up his mind that the old woman who had first bewitched him, then healed him by herbs and the blood of a cat, had worked no miracle, but used only the natural means of her master and ally. But the miracle of the thorn was the clear will of God.

"Here is a sacred relic, here is a thorn from the crown of the Saviour of the world, on whom the prince of this world has

has no power, which works miracles by the immediate power of the blood that was shed for us. Thus God has himself chosen this house wherein openly to show forth his power.

"Here are not men who work miracles by an unknown and doubtful virtue, obliging us to a difficult discrimination; it is God himself, it is the instrument of the passion of his only Son, who being in many places chose this, and made men come from all sides, there to receive miraculous succour in their weaknesses."

And being thus sure in his own mind, he propounds this dilemma—

"Which is the most clear?

"This house is not of God, for they do not there believe that the five propositions are in Jansenius.

"Others: This house is of God, for in it strange miracles are done.

"Which is the most clear?"

Then on a detached scrap of paper he flings this ecstatic meditation—

"As God has made no family more happy, he should also find none more grateful."

The fragments on Jesuits and Jansenists need not long detain us. We have already seen Pascal's position in the matter, and those who will know it in detail must turn to the "Provinciales." But one passage is most valuable, as showing the human revolt which broke out now and then even in so obedient a son of the Church, when he saw his enemies gaining the upper hand, and he was conscious of his own integrity and confident of the soundness of his cause.

"The

"The Inquisition and the Society are the two scourges of the truth.

"If my Letters are condemned at Rome, what I condemn in them is condemned in heaven.

"*Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello.*"

Nor need the remaining sections detain us, though in them there occurs the interesting passage on the differences between the mathematical mind and the mind of the practical man of business, and other thoughts, worthy of attention, did space allow; but it has been necessary, since somewhat must be overlooked, to dwell almost exclusively on the religious side of Pascal's mind.

Enough has been said to show the exceeding value and interest of a book so much talked of, yet so little studied, in England; of the life of one whose name is on the lips of many, but, again in England, written in the hearts of few. In France it is very different; the prophet has honour in his own country, may he have it increasingly among ourselves, for he deserves all we can give, as one of the great thinkers of the world, who, like all such, has given thought a new impulse even when he sought to restrain it in the interests of what he deemed truth. He has been like some weir cast across a mighty river, which seeming to check its course has given it a fresh impulse and added to its picturesqueness and beauty. Thought would indeed be a sluggish stream had there been no such limitations through which it had to burst.

THE STORY OF JEAN CALAS.

NOT only idle and vulgar curiosity leads people to throng courts of justice when any remarkable case is brought forward for judgment. Lower and baser considerations, no doubt, attract some of the crowd, and enter in some degree into the minds of all; but the true, even if unconscious, motive always seems to be, that in such trial there is unveiled to human eyes a part of the great judgment which is ever in secret being transacted; the world's sifting of falsehood from truth, right from wrong, is here gathered up into the concrete; men hear both sides fairly stated—a rare circumstance, save in a legal trial; and in the great majority of cases the verdict of the jury is also that of the public, who, at the same time, silently and unofficially try the case. The records of *causes célèbres* have the same sort of interest, but with this element superadded, that history and time have judged the judges of each old case, have stilled the passions which sway the minds of even judicial persons in seasons of strong political or religious excitement. And it may happen at

at times that, in reading such an old trial, we find it, as it were, still in progress; the feelings have not died away which were yet keener when all the actors were alive; we sit as a sort of court of appeal, in which the whole question has to be argued over again; and the ultimate verdict, which time and the human conscience are sure to give in the end, may yet be in suspense, awaiting a calmer future. Typical trials like those of Mary Stuart and her grandson, in the region of politics, will rise naturally to the minds of all as instances of what we mean; though they are dead, they are not yet judged by the final court of appeal; in each case "adhuc sub judice lis est."

And in reading the accounts of past causes, we have to consider a point which the original and formal court ought seldom to notice at all, and which, if it affected the verdict, did so wrongly, as we now think. When a prisoner is on his trial, the only question should be, "Does the evidence support the charge?" but we may calmly consider this further question, "Is it likely the prisoner should have acted as he is said to have done?" and we may pronounce the mental verdict of "Guilty," when the spoken verdict, according to the evidence, ought to have been "Not guilty." Once this maxim of modern judicial procedure was not so understood, so acted on as now; premisses were laid down, conclusions drawn, in support of a position which evidence alone failed to substantiate;

tiate; and, since the premisses were not always stated, the accused, if rebutting the evidence, was yet condemned by a conclusion drawn formally enough from propositions which he would have denied as vehemently, nay sometimes far more vehemently, than his accusers.

Such a *cause célèbre* was the trial of Jean Calas, in the middle of the 18th century; but its interest is still further intensified by the facts, that in it were and are enlisted the feelings of Catholic against Protestant, and Protestant against Catholic, and this in the south of France, where religious controversy has ever been bitter; that even now the side taken in the "*affaire Calas*" depends, far more than many eager partisans would like to admit, on creed and not on evidence. And as if the differences between religious men on either side were not enough, the story interested Voltaire, who took a vehement part in the long controversy which has not died away in the space of a century; and from the premisses, Jean Calas was a Protestant, and Voltaire vindicated his memory, have been drawn the conclusions, the man was a villain and his memory is accursed.

We propose here to tell the story of Jean Calas, summarising the facts mainly from two books, one called "Jean Calas et sa Famille," by the late Athanase Coquerel, Fils, written with Protestant bias, but singular fairness; the other, "Histoire du Procès de Jean Calas," written as an answer to M. Coquerel,

M. Coquerel, by M. l'Abbé Salvan, Honorary Canon of Toulouse. The Abbé seems a worthy and painstaking, though extremely stupid, person. M. Coquerel's book is one of a class more common both in France and in Germany than in England, a treatise which is absolutely exhaustive of its subject. Convinced of the importance of the case as bearing on the social and religious life of the period, he has thought it worth while to place the facts and the actors in all possible lights, and to tell the story with the most circumstantial minuteness. The reader is reminded of Mr. Browning's Ring and the Book; and the comparison is a compliment to both authors. For the highest poetry is intensely realistic; and the vein of tragedy which is in every life, coming to the surface in that of Jean Calas, lends a dignity to the mean surroundings of his station, and raises the linen-draper's shop into the stage of an awful drama.

The scene is Toulouse; the time, October 13th, 1761. At half-past nine o'clock on that warm autumn night, numbers of people had been coming and going along the busy Grand'rue des Filettiers; for though the shops were closed betimes, the citizens were, many of them, sitting before their doors, and even entertaining their friends, as is the mode in more genial climes than ours, in the open street. Sieur Jean Calas, the linen-draper, was not in the open air, however, as was his neighbour the demoiselle Brandelac; he

and

and his family had remained indoors after supper; and, indeed, he was not a man likely to be much at his ease in the light give-and-take gossip of the public pavement. In business, the great leveller of parties and creeds, he could hold his own, nor so long as his wares were good would even the ladies of Toulouse care to enquire into the orthodoxy of the seller. But business over, the townsfolk were quick to remember that he was a Protestant, one of a proscribed caste, against whom the hatred was such as we can scarcely realize even with the facts before us.

Up to the time of which we write, every child born of a Protestant marriage was by law a bastard; only nine years earlier the assemblies of Protestants for worship had been put down by dragonnades, and infants who had been baptised as Protestants were re-baptised under military force. Less than three years before, there had been dragonnades to disperse congregations of the Reformed in two provinces of the south. Toulouse itself had an annual *fête* in commemoration of a provincial massacre of Huguenots, which, ten years before that of St. Bartholomew in Paris, had given a frightful hint of how best such an extermination of heresy could be conducted. A Protestant household would naturally keep much to itself in Toulouse. Madame Calas, moreover, was not only a Protestant, but of somewhat higher birth than might be expected from her position, and allied to many noble families in

in Languedoc; hence, in a country and an age when such ties were more considered than now, she ruled her small household in a noticeable dignified manner, "and, though the wife of a simple tradesman, retained much high breeding."

The family was neither united nor alone on this October evening. The two daughters, Rose and Nannette, were paying an annual visit to some friends in the country; Donat, the youngest son, a lad of fourteen, was apprenticed to a merchant's house in Nismes; Louis, the second son, was living in Toulouse, but away from home, and, though seeing his family from time to time, by no means on cordial terms with them. He had become a Catholic; and this, which of itself was enough to cause a coolness, in those days, between himself and the other members of his family, was rendered still more bitter to his father by a demand, enforced by law, for a separate home and maintenance, which the finances of the latter could ill afford. There remained at home only Monsieur and Madame Calas; their elder son, Marc Antoine, now in his twenty-ninth year; their third son, Pierre, and the servant, Jeanne Viguière, who had been with them for nearly thirty years, a Catholic, and a main instrument in the conversion of Louis. At supper, and remaining with the family through the evening, was a young man, named Lavaysse, who, accidentally delayed in passing through Toulouse, had spent his time between

between the Calas family and that of another Protestant friend.

From this house, thus peopled, where all that was orderly, peaceable, and perhaps a trifle dull, might have been expected, came cries of murder on the still night. Though the street was now emptier than it had been, no less than fourteen persons heard the cry for help; and though, as was natural, there was some difference as to the actual words heard in that moment of confusion and alarm, they seem to have been, in the patois of Toulouse, "Ah, moun Diou! l'an tuat." (Oh, mon Dieu! on l'a tué), and, therefore, probably, as was in fact declared by several witnesses, they proceeded from the servant Jeanne. Before any neighbours from without could enter the house, Lavaysse and Pierre Calas had rushed out for assistance. Pierre seems to have returned, gone out, and back again more than once before Lavaysse returned at all, and had brought with him, first the assistant of a neighbouring surgeon, next an intimate friend, a tradesman named Cazeing, at whose house Lavaysse was staying, and finally a lawyer, the Sieur Clausade. The first of the neighbours to enter was a friend of the two young Calas, Antoine Delpech. He saw the body of Marc Antoine Calas lying in the shop, his head supported by some bales, his father leaning against the counter, but coming from time to time to bend over his son, and try

try to make him swallow some cordial. Delpech, thinking his friend had been wounded in a duel, felt the body, and found it cold, and the surgeon's assistant having come in, confirmed his fear that death had long taken place, but on examination declared it had been by hanging or by strangulation. The Sieur Clausade, seeing that medical aid was of no avail, suggested that the police should at once be summoned; Lavaysse, who had now returned, offered to go, and started with Clausade for the chief magistrate and the clerk. On his return, he found the police in possession, and a magistrate engaged in a hurried examination; he was admitted after some difficulty, and only on his assertion that he was almost a member of the family, as having supped in the house that very night. No sooner had he entered the house than he found he was under arrest; and his fate for the next four years was linked with that of the Calas family.

For while the magistrate was making his examination, with the aid of the surgeons he had brought with him, the busy crowd around the door were giving rise to the wildest stories. As A. H. Clough has said of the sudden development of marvellous fables:

"As circulates in some great city crowd
A rumour, changeful, vague, importunate and loud,
From no determined centre, or of fact
Or authorship exact;
Which no man can deny
Nor verify;
So spread the wondrous tale," that

that the Sieur Calas, or even the whole of this Huguenot family, had killed Marc Antoine because he was about to declare himself a Catholic. To the blundering, over-officious, fanatical magistrate, "this anonymous cry appeared the voice of truth. This suspicion was for him a ray of light." M. David de Beaudrigue, whose interpretation of the adage "Vox populi, vox Dei" was in this case so extremely literal, acted on his sudden conviction, accepting it as only too likely that a Protestant would be guilty of any crime, and by his precipitate haste did much to increase the difficulty of those who would form a dispassionate opinion on the facts. Supposing Marc Antoine to have been murdered at all, he yet made no search in the house for any concealed assassins; he did not examine whether the clothes of those who were accused of having strangled a young man in the vigour of his age were at all disordered; he did not examine the bedroom of the deceased to see if perhaps any Catholic books of devotion, any *objets de piété* might substantiate the assertion that he was inclined to become a Catholic, but, arresting all who were found in the house, including the young Lavaysse and Cazeing, he carried off the corpse and the coat of the dead man, which had been found folded on the counter, and destroyed in so doing, and in the haste of his proceedings, much which might have thrown light on the true cause of death.

So

So little did the relations of the deceased realize their arrest and approaching imprisonment, that they believed they were taken to the Hôtel de Ville to give an account of the facts of a suicide. Pierre Calas even lighted a candle, to be left burning in the passage against their return; but this was extinguished by the orders of David de Beaudrigue. At the Hôtel de Ville a brother magistrate ventured to suggest to his impetuous friend that he was going too fast, and, in fact, the arrest was in itself illegal without a warrant; but he answered, "I take all responsibility on myself;" and again, "The cause of religion is at stake." Here also he drew up the *procès verbal*, which, according to law, should have been done on the spot, while everything remained in its usual state; here also was the formal surgical examination made, which, again, according to law, should have taken place where the body was found. After a brief and separate examination of each of the persons arrested, they were imprisoned for the night, Jean Calas and his son in windowless cells, the two women in somewhat better quarters, Lavaysse and Cazeing in the guard-room.

M. David de Beaudrigue, whose knowledge of law was so much less than his zeal, who had formed so strong an *à priori* opinion on the case, who took on himself the position at once of police officer and prosecutor, was also one of the judges who would have to try the case. He was one of the eight elected

elected magistrates who bore at Toulouse the title of Capitouls, the body to which they belonged being called the Capitoulat. The account given by M. Coquerel of these persons, who remind us a good deal of some modern town councillors and mayors, is full of interest to anyone who wishes to understand the state of France before the Revolution. So also is the constitution of the provincial Parliaments, the various obsolete modes in which law causes were then conducted, the terrible tortures adopted to wring from the accused whatever their accusers might desire to hear; but into none of this need we enter. The accusation was now fairly started, which has never yet died away, which is even now the subject of fierce controversy, and two questions present themselves first of all to us: Was Marc Antoine Calas on the point of confessing Catholicism? Was he murdered at all, or did he commit suicide?

MM. Coquerel and Salvan find themselves greatly opposed to each other with regard to the character and habits of Marc Antoine Calas, and to his father's relations with him; the former has no doubt that he was a Protestant, who did small credit to his religion; the latter, following the traditions of Toulouse, would fain find him to be a Catholic martyr. And, in truth, it is not easy to decide any point but the last; it appears perfectly clear that he was no Catholic or likely to become so. In other matters, M. Coquerel seems to us to paint

paint him in somewhat too dark colours. His life had been somewhat shaded by a severe disappointment just as a career which suited him was opening to him. He had chosen the legal profession, had taken the degree of Bachelor of Laws by special licence before the legal age, and was about to be called to the bar, when a technical difficulty came in his way. It was necessary that he should present a certificate that he was a Catholic; and this was about to be given him as a mere form, and without examination, when the servant of the priest to whom he applied officiously announced that she knew him to be a Protestant. The priest, thus warned, had of course no alternative but to say he could only grant the certificate when the Catholicism of the applicant was attested by his own confessor. The case is not without analogy in our own day, when the law that the burial service of the Church of England shall not be read over unbaptised persons, is often evaded through the fact that no special inquiry is made, but can scarcely be escaped if the non-baptism of the deceased is directly and formally brought before the notice of the officiating minister. M. Salvan would have us believe that the promise that the certificate would be granted in case of conformity would be a powerful inducement, though not a very noble one, to the desired end; but he overlooks the fact that even without such promise it must have been granted as a mere formal matter, and that a fellow-pupil deposed

deposed at the trial that Marc Antoine, in spite of his bitter disappointment, had at once and for ever renounced his hopes of the bar, with the words that "he never would make any act of Catholicism." And with this profession were closed also all careers save that of some few trades. One royal decree after another had restricted to Catholics the professions and trades of attorney, attorney's clerk, clerk of court and his subordinates, printer, bookseller, goldsmith, physician, surgeon, apothecary, grocer, servant and apprentice in a Protestant household, and even that of midwife, which, though it did not affect the young man in question, serves to show how completely and severely test acts were applied in France. A share in a trading business was found impossible, when offered, because of the large premium required ; and his father would not formally take him as a partner in his own shop because, according to one account, he was idle— to another, because the Sieur Calas was habitually hard and stern towards his eldest son. On this, "Irritated against the present, and without hope for the future, the unhappy young man became a gambler, . . . and played high for a man of his condition. . . . It is certain that on the very day" (of his death) his father had ordered him "to change silver money into gold, that he rendered no account of it, and that the money was never found." He also "had in his pockets at the time of

of his death indecent poems and songs."[1] M. Salvan softens this severe judgment into "Marc Antoine tried to amuse himself by innocent diversions, theatrical declamation, tennis, fencing, billiards. There is no reason for saying that his father was very angry with his conduct; we shall produce a deposition of Jean Calas, in which he declares that Marc Antoine had never given him any trouble."[2] It is most natural that a father should say this of his dead son, when all that was evil was forgotten, and what they had loved in him was alone present to the mind of the family; and the balance of evidence is certainly in favour of the son's conduct having been such as to vex the father, though he by no means appears to have been exceptionally vicious, or to have led such a life as to account for suicide; the implied theft from his father cannot be considered as proved, nor do we know what amount of impropriety may have been the characteristic of the papers found about him.

It is a phenomenon, unhappily not confined to one creed, that zeal for dogma may exist to a degree which is almost fanaticism, without any real and vital religion. Protestantism, founded on free thought, which has no true *raison d'être* if this be denied, is yet often bitter and narrow. And Marc Antoine Calas, so far from being inclined

[1] Salvan, p. 4. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 49.

inclined to Catholicism, was, on the contrary, most intolerant of it. A priest declared that he had heard him maintain that no one could be saved in the Roman Church, and that every Catholic would be damned eternally. No one of his family was so angry as he was at the conversion of his brother Louis; it was from his anger at the separate maintenance for Louis that we learn, what otherwise would have remained a profound secret, that the Calas family were in somewhat embarrassed circumstances owing to the general depression of trade. This being the case, on evidence which seems irresistible, it is wonderful the report should have spread that he intended to turn Catholic. Probably the supposition was launched wholly at a venture, and only afterwards an attempt was made to substantiate it. The Abbé Salvan quotes the testimony of fifteen witnesses, on whose evidence we may suppose he relies. He wisely omits to give the whole examination, which, after the singular procedure of those days, was devoted to the establishment of the fact. It is instructive to summarise one deposition which still exists, and was gravely received. "The widow Massaleng, *née* Jeanne Paignon, said that her daughter told her, that Sieur Pagés told her, that M. Soulié told him, that the demoiselle Guichardet told him, that the demoiselle Journu told her, something from which she concluded that Father Serrant,

Serrant, a Jesuit, might certainly have been the confessor of Calas. Whereupon Father Serrant was called, and the whole of this laborious scaffolding was reduced to nothing in a moment.

But of the fifteen witnesses quoted by the Abbé Salvan, it is by no means easy to see how the majority aid him to prove his case. One, François Challier, advised young Calas to become a Catholic, and gained only so distinct a refusal, that Marc Antoine even spoke of a plan of going to Geneva that he might become a Protestant minister. Four more of the fifteen merely depose that there had been a rumour in the town that Marc Antoine intended to abjure. One witness, who had often spoken to him on the subject, thought him inclined to Catholicism. Eight had seen him in Catholic churches, or present at Catholic processions, "last Lent," "at a sermon at St. Étienne," "kneeling when the host passed in the street," "often at vespers," "once at mass," "often at sermon, never at mass or vespers," and so on, in a vague and inaccurate way. One only, Catherine Daumière, or Dolmier, deposed that Marc Antoine told her that he was unhappy at home, that he was in the hands of a good confessor, that he was going to confess on Wednesday next, and had promised to lend her books. But the whole evidence broke down. She pretended to be newly converted from Protestantism, whereas she had always been a Catholic; the

the confessor was never found; Marc Antoine had never possessed the books which she said he had promised to lend her.

Somewhat idle, by no means inclined to Catholicism, but rather fanatically Protestant, mixing in Catholic services, so far as he did so simply because his intellectual taste for oratory and declamation could be satisfied nowhere so well as at the Catholic sermons, and because the processions and functions were among the sights of the town in which a young man might join from curiosity equally well as from devotion, his disposition was sullen, reserved and gloomy; he chose the poetry which he loved to recite from the more introspective and morbid speeches of the great dramatists, more than one especially dealing with the subject of suicide.

It is true, as M. Coquerel says, that "the time had not yet arrived when suicide had become a literary fashion, and when the sorrows, imaginary or guilty, of a Werther and a René, upset weak minds. But the diseases of the human heart change their name rather than their nature; they are at bottom the same in all times; and we need not be too much surprised that a young man without position and without hope, yet full of ambition, vegetating by his father's counter, should fall from wounded pride into despair. We take it as quite certain that there are in all ages very many men who, finding they have failed in life,

life, deliberately face the question of self-slaughter, and make up their minds, for or against, simply as they believe will be best for those they leave behind them. It is easy to declaim on the impiety of suicide; but even where there is not want of vital religion, as seems to have been the case with Marc Antoine Calas, the mind disposed to suicide will ever find quite sufficient justification, arguments to silence all pleas of conscience. It is by no means always the case that in the end of the contention of the two voices, the "dull and bitter voice is gone," sometimes the heart which has to decide deliberately makes choice rather

> "To commune with that barren voice,
> Than that which said, Rejoice, Rejoice."

That what is told us of young Calas is quite enough to give a clear and definite cause for suicide, if such cause can ever exist, is, we admit, doubtful; but of two possibilities, and they are the only two that have been suggested, it seems more likely that the son should have desired to live no longer, than that the father should determine to kill him because of an intended change of religion —a father who, when his son Pierre had taken the very step, said, "I approve the conversion of my son, if it be sincere. To attempt to restrain the action of conscience never succeeds but in making complete hypocrites, who end in having no religion at all."

The

The Abbé Salvan having adopted the other belief, naturally tries to strengthen it, and devotes a chapter to the proof that there was a plot in the family, and in fact not confined to the family, but shared by the Protestant sect in Toulouse and its neighbourhood, to put the apostate to death. At the time there were those who believed that formal commands to this effect were to be found in the works of Luther and Calvin; there was a certain astonishing rumour that a Sieur Cazals, who had visited the demoiselles Calas without their father's knowledge, had had to hide himself under a bed, and there had overheard the formation of a design against Marc Antoine's life, because he had changed his religion. M. Salvan, with a great show of fairness, dismisses this ridiculous story, and then proceeds to show this fairness still more by the following paragraph:—

"We will grant to the gentlemen of the so-called Reformed religion that there does not exist in the teaching of the chief Reformers, or in any Protestant synod or council, an article which directly permits or prescribes murder or assassination to hinder a change of religion; but they must grant to us that religious fanaticism is capable of producing the most horrible excesses. This was the fanaticism of which the Saviour speaks to His disciples (St. John, chap. xvi.): 'The hour cometh when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.'"[1]

Yes, M. l'Abbé, we grant it fully. Religious fanaticism has produced St. Bartholomew massacres

[1] Salvan, p. 37.

sacres and Smithfield fires, Lord George Gordon riots and Lord John Russell's Durham letter; it has blackened the fair fame of Catholic and Protestant alike; but it has seldom made itself more detestably ridiculous than when it saw a plot against a young man's life in the fact that his sisters were absent at the time of his death; that several people had called at the house of a Protestant friend the day before; that when young Lavaysse said he was detained in Toulouse by the impossibility of hiring a horse, it is not quite certain that he had been to every livery stable in the town; that M. Cazeing, who had been at Auterive on the day of Marc Antoine's death, had said he had business in Toulouse for which he must return, and he feared that he might be too late.

Although no attempt could have been made at the time of the arrest to support the vague assertions of the crowd by what now must do duty for evidence, the rumours were still more terrible against the Calas family. Young Lavaysse was reported to be the executioner brought from Bordeaux by the Protestants of Toulouse to put Marc Antoine to death. "They say he is the sacrificing priest (*sacrificateur*) of his religion;" that is to say, invested with the horrible occupation of strangling those who were apparently about to be converted.[1]

Under the weight of such a terrible imputation against

[1] Coquerel, p. 72.

against them, with one of the Capitouls at least pledged to a belief in their guilt, the Calas were put on their defence. We must condense their own account of the affair, as given partly in the examination of the various parties, and in a letter of Madame Calas.

The house and shop of the Sieur Calas were, as has been said, in the Rue des Filettiers, or Filatiers. The shop gave upon the street, and was divided from a warehouse at the back by a partition, in which were folding doors. This warehouse was lighted from a yard at the back, and both it and the shop opened into a long passage, which led from the street to the staircase and the yard. Upstairs were four rooms, entirely occupied by the family after business hours ; while below the ground-floor was a large vaulted cellar. From the room next the dining-room it was possible to gain the staircase and the entrance to the cellar by an exterior gallery without going through the dining-room and without being seen.

Young Lavaysse, who was, as we said, delayed in Toulouse longer than he had intended to stay, called on Madame Calas on the 13th October. "After the first compliments, he said to me," as she wrote afterwards, "'I shall sup with you ; your husband asked me.' I said I should be glad to see him, and left him for a few moments to go and give some orders to my servant. In consequence

consequence also, I went to find my eldest son—whom I found all alone in the shop, sunk in deep thought—to beg him to go and buy some Roquefort cheese ; he generally used to purchase this for us, because he understood it better than the others." . . . After supper, "this unfortunate child, I mean my eldest son, rose from table, as was usual with him, and went into the kitchen. The servant said to him, 'Are you cold, monsieur l'ainé? Warm yourself.' He answered her, 'Quite the contrary; I am burning;' and went out. We sat on a few minutes at table, after which we went into the next room, M. Lavaysse, my husband, my son (Pierre), and I." Here they remained in conversation till about a quarter to ten, when Lavaysse got up to take leave, and Pierre, with a candle, went down to let him out. As they went downstairs, Lavaysse remarked that the door from the passage into the shop was open. Was this neglect on the part of the servant, or had anyone got into the shop? Pierre went in to satisfy himself, his friend followed him ; and both, seized with horror, cried aloud with alarm at finding Marc Antoine hanging at the inner door, which was the communication between the shop and a back shop, which they called the warehouse. Across the two leaves of this open folding-door Marc Antoine had placed one of those large round sticks, flattened at one end, on

on which bales of stuff are rolled. To this he had hung himself by a cord with a double slip-knot. He was in his shirt-sleeves. It was noticed later that his hair was not disordered, nor his clothes ruffled. The police found his coat of grey cloth and his nankeen waistcoat placed on the counter and carefully folded,—a strange detail, which proves certainly not only a voluntary death, but that cool and deliberate determination with which a man carries out a suicide about which he has long thought. Pierre took the hand of his brother; this movement made the body sway to and fro; and then the two terrified young men ran to call for help.

At their cries the unhappy father hurried down in his dressing-gown; neither of the friends had had time or presence of mind to cut the cord. Calas ran to the body, and seized it in his arms; the corpse thus raised, the roller fell to the ground. Then the father laid his son on the floor, and took off the cord by slackening the running knot, while he cried to Pierre, "For God's sake, run to Camoire's (a neighbouring surgeon); perhaps my poor son is not quite dead."[1]

But when all was over—when the surgeon's assistant had said that life had fled—when the poor mother, chafing her son's temples, and endeavouring to make him swallow a "cordial," had desisted from

[1] Coquerel, pp. 78, 79.

from her tender, useless task—when Pierre, scarce knowing whither he went, was about to rush again from the house, his father called him back, and said to him, "Do not spread the rumour that your brother has made away with himself; preserve, at any rate, the honour of your unhappy family." In the same spirit of dissimulation, the whole party, at the request of Calas, declared, both to those who came in and to the Capitouls, on oath, that they had found the body extended lifeless on the floor; it was only afterwards that they confessed the truth. The untruth had deplorable consequences, but it was most natural. The legislation of that time with regard to suicides was barbarous in the extreme. It started from the Roman law, "*Homicida sui, insepultus abjiciatur*," and added to this atrocity, of which the superstitious denial of burial rites in case of *felo de se* still preserves the memory among ourselves, the confiscation of the goods of the suicide to the use of the king. It was this unfortunate but most natural lie which gave the judges the excuse of not believing the after-version of the facts, when, finding the uselessness of persistence, the inability to account for death in any other way, and their own danger, they told the truth.

The theory for the prosecution which M. Salvan adopts, is, that the death could not have been by suicide because no footstool was found on which Marc Antoine could have stood, because some skeins

skeins of twine were undisturbed on the door, because the roller was too short to go across the door, because his neckcloth was not loosened. On some of these points the evidence is conflicting; but on a complete *résumé* of the circumstances, and with the full recollection that no answer has been attempted to M. Coquerel's second revision of the facts, after his first account had been carefully examined, and in some points assailed by the Abbé Salvan, we are bound to say we find no evidence whatever for the murder, much for the suicide.

Three or four days elapsed, during which it became abundantly evident that, in spite of the grave mistake the Calas family had made in attempting to veil the crime of their dead son, there was scant hope of procuring a conviction unless something more was done. It will be remembered that some at least of the more busy of the Capitouls were convinced of the guilt of the accused; the King's Proctor was instructed for the prosecution; the religious world of Toulouse were interested in believing that Marc Antoine Calas was a martyr for the Catholic faith. There existed at that time in France a most astonishing mode of procuring information in criminal cases. At the request of the civil authority, the ecclesiastical authority was in the habit of issuing an Admonition (*Monitoire*) to be read after sermon and placarded in the streets, to warn all who knew, *by hearsay or otherwise*,

otherwise, the facts in question, that if they did not declare them to the magistrates or their clergy, they would incur the penalty of excommunication. The Admonition, in the present case, was drawn up by the King's Proctor, and ran as follows :—

"ADMONITION.

"1. Against all who shall know, by hearsay or otherwise, that the Sieur Marc Antoine Calas, the elder, had renounced the so-called Reformed religion, in which he was educated ; that he was present at the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church ; that he had received the sacrament of Penance, and was about to make public adjuration after the 13th of the present month of October, and against all to whom Marc Antoine Calas had disclosed his resolution.

"2. Against all who shall know, by hearsay or otherwise, that, on account of this change of creed the Sieur Marc Antoine Calas was menaced, maltreated, and looked on with disfavour in his home ; that the person who threatened him had said to him, that if he made public adjuration he should have no other executioner than the speaker *(il n'aurait d'autre bourreau que lui)*.

"3. Against all those who know, by hearsay or otherwise, that a woman who is considered attached to heresy excited her husband to such threats, and herself threatened Marc Antoine Calas.

"4. Against all who know, by hearsay or otherwise, that on the morning of the 13th of the present month, a debate was held in a house of the parish of La Daurade, when the death of Marc Antoine Calas was determined or advised, and who shall have seen on that same morning a certain number of the said persons enter or leave the said house.

"5. Against all who know, by hearsay or otherwise, that the same 13th day of the month of October, between night-fall and about ten o'clock, this execrable decision was carried out, by making Marc Antoine Calas kneel, who by surprise or by force was strangled or hung by a cord with two

two slip-knots or nooses, one to strangle, and the other to be tied to a roller used to roll bales, by means of which Marc Antoine Calas was strangled and put to death by suspension or by twisting the cord.

"6. Against all who have heard a voice cry 'Murder!' and immediately, 'Ah, my God! what have I done to you? Have pity on me!' the same voice having become piteous and saying, 'Ah! my God! Ah! my God!'

"7. Against all to whom Marc Antoine Calas had communicated the troubles he experienced in his home, which made him sad and melancholy.

"8. Against all who may know that there arrived from Bordeaux, the evening before the 13th, a young man of this town, who, not having found horses to go and join his relations, who were at their country-house, having been delayed to sup at a house, was present, assenting to or participating in the deed.

"9. Against all who know, by hearsay or otherwise, who were the authors, accomplices, abettors or assentients to this crime, which is most detestable.

"Lastly, against all who know and do not reveal the above facts, circumstances, and consequences."

The bias against the accused scarce needs to be pointed out; the opening afforded by the Admonition for more of that old wives' gossip, out of which it had in fact arisen, and no one will be surprised that a mass of hearsay-testimony was at once forthcoming, on which the Capitouls proceeded to pass sentence that Jean Calas, Jean Pierre Calas, and Anne Rose Cabibel (Madame Calas) should be tortured in order that they should confess; that Alexander Gaubert Lavaysse and Jeanne Viguière should be present at the examination for the same reason. From this sentence an appeal was at once made

made to the Parliament of Toulouse both on the part of the Calas, on account of its severity, and by the King's Proctor, who had required a far sterner sentence. But in the meantime the ecclesiastics, who had shown pretty clearly how completely they had made up their mind, were now to give a still stronger proof of it. It was by no means necessary at once to inter the body of Marc Antoine, with regard to which measures had been taken to arrest decomposition; to bury it was a bold step while the matter was still undecided, since those ran a double risk of sacrilege who interred in consecrated ground, with all the pomp of the Church, a Protestant and a suicide, whom all his family and their Catholic servant declared to be such. However, these considerations did not deter the King's Proctor or the two Capitouls, who urged by the clergy, gave an informal sanction to the interment at a packed meeting, when those only of the assessors on whom they could rely were present.

"The funeral took place with all possible ceremony. All was done to produce the conviction that Marc Antoine was a martyr. . . . An immense procession, headed by more than forty priests, went to bear the body from the Hôtel de Ville. The White Penitents were there, with tapers and banner, because it was alleged that Marc Antoine had intended to join them. An enormous crowd was present at the service in the Cathedral. . . . This ostentatious demonstration was but the prelude to other ceremonies still more to be regretted. Some days after the funeral, the White Penitents caused a magnificent service to be celebrated

brated in their chapel for the soul of the martyr. All the religious orders were invited and were present at it by their deputations. The whole church was hung with white, and, for the greater effect on the mind, a magnificent catafalque was erected in the middle of the building, on the top of which stood a skeleton, hired from a surgeon. At the foot of this hideous representation was written the name of the deceased. It held in its right hand a palm, emblem of martyrdom, and in the other this inscription in large letters: 'Abjuration of Heresy.' There was also a service in the Church of the Cordeliers."[1]

"It is possible," admits M. Salvan, "that they went a little too far in the honours rendered to the mortal remains of Marc Antoine." We heartily agree with him.

Pending the appeal to the Parliament, the Protestants on their side were not idle in clearing themselves from the monstrous charge that it was a part of their religion to murder one who had abandoned it. Not only did the advocate of the Calas family obtain a statement from the pastors and others of the Church at Geneva, the stronghold and centre of Continental Protestantism, that such deeds were absolutely foreign to their creed and principles; but Paul Rabaut, the illustrious and long-tried pastor at Nismes, answered the accusation by his pamphlet entitled "La Calomnie confondu," bearing this motto: "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household." (Matt. x. 25.) It seemed to the other party that the

[1] Coquerel, pp. 105, 106.

the pamphlet was quite sufficiently answered when it was burnt by the hangman.

The result of the appeal to the Parliament was to open up the whole question again, and to add to the hearsay stories which had been almost sanctioned by the Admonition. But the question was really decided as far as Jean Calas was concerned. One only of the thirteen judges voted for an acquittal; two desired that an examination should be made if indeed it were possible that a man should hang himself at the place specified, which had never been done in all the months which now had elapsed from October till March; but three were for torture, and probably death; seven for immediate death. It was hoped that when Jean Calas suffered, enough might be extorted to criminate his fellow-prisoners.

After tortures which lasted many hours, Jean Calas suffered death on the 10th of March, 1762. We need not describe to our readers the agonies he had to bear; it is sufficient to say they must have taxed the ingenuity of even those accustomed to executions, that he bore them with the most exemplary calmness, protesting his innocence to the last. None can read the account of those hours of agony, unless they be singularly blinded by religious hatred, without remarking the contrast of the sufferer's calmness in contradistinction to the fury of those who strove to wring a confession from the dying lips, and the astounding callousness

ness of the Reverend Canon of Toulouse, who seems to think that after all Jean Calas only got his deserts.

All hope was now over that the rest of the prisoners could be implicated in the crime. Even the hearsay evidence, if admitted at all, was too feeble. But another trap was laid for the widowed mother of the suicide, who for four days was kept in ignorance of the death of her husband. A soldier on guard told Lavaysse that all the prisoners were condemned to the same death; but a Dominican monk was introduced into Pierre's cell, to announce to him that this sentence would not be carried out if he recanted his heresy. This moral torture succeeded to a certain extent; the two young men abjured their faith. On this, Pierre was taken to his mother, for the first time since their imprisonment, that he might tell her of his change of religion in the presence of the monk. It was hoped she would break out into reproaches against him which would justify the assertion that she had been irritated with her eldest son. But the poor woman simply turned away her head and spoke no word.

It was no longer possible to keep the other prisoners under arrest. Madame Calas, Lavaysse, and the faithful servant, who had suffered in spite of her creed, were set entirely free. Pierre was sentenced to perpetual banishment, but this was only carried out in form. The executioner led him out

out of the town by one gate, but a priest went with him, and brought him in by another to the Dominican convent. Here the monk who had been with his father on the scaffold met him with the information that if he continued a Catholic his sentence would not be pressed. He abjured his faith formally, and remained in surveillance at the convent for four months. At the end of this time he contrived to escape to his brother Donat, at Geneva, and renounced his enforced creed. His eyesight had suffered severely in the dark and unwholesome dungeon in which he had been kept.[1]

No details are extant of the liberation of Madame Calas and her servant, who found a shelter in the house of a friend. A niece of Lavaysse has left an account of her uncle's release. Some friends, who feared the disposition of the people, proposed to smuggle him out with the greatest secrecy; but another, M. Jouvé, repudiated this counsel, and demanded that the release should take place in open day. MM. Jouvé and Sénovert, brother-in-law of Lavaysse, went to bring him out.

"When the two entered the fatal gaol, in which the prisoner had been kept in the most rigid seclusion, he fainted as he embraced his brother-in-law. Only with the greatest precaution could this last, after having had the irons removed, prepare him for the happiness of seeing his family again. The operation had been painful, since my uncle's legs were greatly inflamed. He got into a sedan-chair,

[1] Salvan, p. 116; Coquerel, pp. 208, 209.

chair, and sat there with his hands on his knees, one window being open, by which was M. Jouvé; M. de Sénovert was at the other door. From the Hôtel de Ville to the Rue St. Remesy an immense crowd was in the way; but their dispositions were changed; whether it was that the shedding of blood had quenched the thirst of fanaticism, or that repentant fanaticism was turned to pity, every one congratulated M. de Sénovert, and said with tears, 'Oh no! this young man, so handsome, so gentle, son of a respectable person, cannot have assassinated his friend.'"[1]

The two demoiselles Calas had remained in Toulouse during the months in which the fate of their father was in suspense. At his death they fled to Montauban, where Madame Calas joined them at the house of a friend. Their reunion lasted but a few days. The President of the Parliament obtained from the Count de St. Florentin, the Secretary of State, two "*lettres de cachet*" to shut up the daughters of "this wretched father." A hope was entertained that one at least would become Catholic, which was destined to be disappointed. Rose Calas was shut up in the Convent of Notre Dame de la Rue de Sac, where it is said she was treated with harshness. Nannette experienced the greatest kindness at the Convent of the Visitation. To her and her tender gaolers we shall have to return.

Jean Calas was dead; a legal sentence, as law was understood in those days, had decided that he was guilty; Madame Calas and her children must beg or starve, as it seemed, for what power had they

[1] Coquerel, pp. 209, 210.

they to resist the Church and its fanaticism, the law and its prejudices? But another person appeared on the scene, whose influence in France at that time can scarcely be overstated, and was all the greater because he took care not to reside there permanently. Voltaire, then at Geneva, heard of the story, and at once resolved to sift it to the bottom. Whether Marc Antoine Calas had been murdered by his father, or Jean Calas under the pretence of a judicial trial, was but small matter to Voltaire. He was no more a Protestant than he was a Catholic, and he did not care for the triumph of either faith. But either way, fanaticism had perpetrated an atrocious crime. And what was true and noble in Voltaire was the burning indignation excited in his breast by all crimes committed in the name and under the semblance of religion. In many respects the complete contrast to our English poet, there was here a remarkable likeness to the feelings and character of Shelley. Voltaire believed in God; but the crimes committed in the most sacred name made him throw aside the religions to which those belonged who committed them, while really oftentimes contending for a truth which lies at their very root. Shelley said that he did not believe in God; he was in reality fighting against false conceptions of the Divine Being, and did much to help men to a truer ideal of Him whom he thought he assailed, when he stripped off all attributes which dishonour holiness

holiness and truth. And together with deplorable irregularities in their lives, there was in both the most ardent love of humanity, a spirit of mercy and charity which should cover a multitude of sins. We make this hasty comparison simply to show more clearly, by means of one more known and read than Voltaire is now, what is our attitude towards him whom people hate on hearsay, or on their judgment of one or two sayings which startle and shock us. But he spoke the truth when he said of himself:

"J'ai fait un peu de bien, c'est mon meilleure ouvrage."

Voltaire wrote in all directions to inquire into the real state of affairs. The very Protestants themselves at a distance from Toulouse were imposed on by the trial, and had thought Calas guilty; and his mind was still in doubt. But finding that Donat Calas was in Geneva, he sent for him; and after a long interview, in which he interrogated him closely on all the relations of Jean Calas with his children, he made up his mind that the father was innocent. From that moment he exerted himself to obtain the reversal of a sentence which was disgraceful to his country and to humanity. He was incessant in his entreaties to powerful persons of all opinions and classes to obtain a re-hearing of the case before the "*conseil du roi;*" and once heard, apart from the strife of religious parties at Toulouse, the sentence was reversed as far as the living were concerned.

concerned. The Parliament of Toulouse, obstinate and stupid to the last, suppressed, as far as they could, the public announcement of their own condemnation. With a wise moderation, no measures of recrimination were taken, though no doubt the Capitouls and the Parliament were open to an action on the part of Madame Calas, as well as of the other prisoners; but Voltaire and Lavaysse were both strongly against it, and Madame Calas acted entirely under the advice of the former. Indeed, so crushed had she been by the blow, that no small pressure had to be exercised to make her take even the necessary steps for the declaration of her husband's entire innocence. A royal gift to the survivors of the family recompensed them in some degree for the material sufferings they had undergone, for the loss of their trade, and their banishment, for such it practically still was, from their home. When the many sins of Voltaire against decency and reverence are remembered, his tolerance and charity should be allowed their weight in the opposite scale. We cannot but feel with M. Coquerel when he exclaims:

"All honour and gratitude to Voltaire for having striven alone against intolerance so frightful, even now so powerful, and for having conquered it. All honour and gratitude to Jean Calas, whose blood, heroically shed in slow tortures, has washed the most abominable calumny from his brothers in faith, and has assured to them anew the respect and the sympathy of the world."[1]

M. Salvan

[1] Coquerel, p. 263.

M. Salvan can see nothing to admire in the conduct of Voltaire. He says:

"When Voltaire is in question, the comic is ever mixed with the serious. He wrote to D'Argental as soon as he heard the news: 'A young Calas was with me when I received your letter, that of Madame Calas, that of Elie, and many others. Young Calas and I shed tears of joy. My old eyes yielded as many as his; *mes chers anges*, we were choked by them.' What a buffoon!"

If theological prejudice thus blinds one who has investigated the whole case, to the noble generosity of an enemy, we need not be surprised that he refuses also to believe there were any grounds for the reversal of a sentence which he could wish a just one. He thinks it proves much against Jean Calas that the popular opinion of Toulousan Catholics still believes him guilty, and that while there are *three* different traditional accounts of the way in which Marc Antoine was put to death, all agree that he *was* murdered. In resuscitating the gossip of a provincial town, he shows the same strange misconception of the nature of evidence as he does when reviewing that brought before the Capitouls.

For ordinary Catholics, who have not investigated the facts with the care M. Salvan gave them, and without M. Coquerel's exhaustive book under their eyes, there is much excuse for misconception. But they widely misconstrue M. Coquerel if they think that he wrote his monograph in order to attack the Catholic religion.

M. Coquerel's

M. Coquerel's aim is not to show that the Church is necessarily fatal to fair dealing, charity, and kindliness; he neither says so, nor, so far as we know his mind, does he think so. His desire is to rescue, once for all, the memory of one of his co-religionists, still vilified, and to place in its true light a passage in the history of his then bitterly persecuted Church. He did not forget the life-devotion of the Catholic servant, Jeanne Viguière; we shall find also in some of his pages which we are now about to notice that the most rigid Catholic orthodoxy is consistent with the most affectionate tenderness towards a heretic.

Nannette Calas was, as we have said, imprisoned for a considerable space of time at the Convent of the Visitation at Toulouse. She was especially given into the charge of Sister Anne Julie Fraisse, with a view to her conversion. The attempt was made in vain; but there grew up between the two women of ages and stations so different the most cordial and affectionate friendship. Sister Anne Julie Fraisse had powerful relations; and from her convent cell she made efforts, while Voltaire was making the same on his side, for the declaration of the innocence of the Calas. Her keen woman's instinct came to the same conclusions as those to which his reason and examination led the philosopher. "Closed within her narrowing nunnery walls," she allowed her interests and affections to range freely beyond them, and eagerly espoused the cause of an heretic. But

"We

"We shall be thoroughly mistaken if we take Sister Anne Julie for a strong-minded woman, if we suppose that she had the smallest sympathy for the 'enlightenment of the age,' which she held in profound abomination. She was seriously and truly a devout Catholic. She had not the least doubt about the eternal damnation of her young friend, not for her sins—she found her full of virtues, and even recognised in her some piety—but because of her religion."[1]

After leaving the convent, Nannette married a Swiss Protestant minister, named Duvoisin, established in Paris, with whom she lived in happy marriage thirteen years, till his death in 1780, and had by him three children, only one of whom grew up to manhood. She died in 1820, having survived her sister Rose, who lived with her, twenty years. Madame Calas had died in 1792; Jeanne Viguière twelve years earlier.

During the years 1762 to 1775, about forty letters passed from Sister Anne Julie to Nannette, the answers to which have unfortunately been lost. They reflect a pleasant sunset glow over the sombre history we have narrated.

"The general character of these letters seems to be that of the truest and warmest sensibility, expressed naturally with much grace and spirit. The language is often incorrect. It is sometimes easy to see the nun has thought in Languedoc *patois* the phrase which she translates carelessly into French. . . . She never looks a moment for the best word, when she has found one energetic

[1] Coquerel, p. 287.

energetic and precise, which says what she wants to say. Sister Fraisse deserves a place in the list of those select women authors without intending it, whose lively and natural letters are one of the ornaments of our literature, and count among the most attractive creations of the French mind."[1]

LETTER VIII.

+ "VIVE JESUS.

"From our Nunnery at Toulouse, this 26th October, 1763.

"It is a long while, my dear Nannette, since you have heard news of me, or I of you. I would flatter myself, as I can assure you on my side, that neither forgetfulness nor indifference has had any share in it. You are always in my heart, and to my last breath I shall never cease to pray God for your salvation with as much ardour as for my own. He only knows my desires and my sighs. But I must break off all that I could say. This is a subject which affects me even to tears. . . . Ah! if I could see you again in my clutches, which are not destructive, I would lose no occasion of proving my tenderness. If you see your brother (Louis) give him the news of the death of the Abbé Durand, whom a malignant fever carried off in a week. He died as holily as he lived.[2]

"I have again some new marriages to announce of the same sort as the last. We have had in the house for a month Mademoiselle Ville, twin-sister of our sister Marie Melanie, who taught you how to knit mittens. She came here to make a retreat, with a view to deciding her future condition in life. She will be married this very month. We have

[1] Coquerel, pp. 378, 379, 380.

[2] "These last words are crossed out, but are legible, as the good nun probably meant them to be." The Abbé Durand had taken a prominent part in the conversion of Louis the good-for-nothing. As appears from other passages, Sister Anne Julie had no good opinion of the Abbé Durand, and by no means considered his life a saintly one.

have had another whom perhaps you know, Mademoiselle Opiats, very devout, the daughter of a merchant at the port. She has gone. I do not know if she will decide as the others have done. See how wrong Nannette was not to say, I will be a nun."[1]

LETTER XII.

+ "VIVE JESUS.

"From our Nunnery at Toulouse, this 30th May, 1764.

". . . . . I am busy about you before the Lord for what would render you really happy. I hope against hope, and shall hope till my last breath. The power of the Most High is greater than our resistance. We must always hope for those precious moments, which are fixed in the eternal decrees.

"I have not yet got over the loss we have suffered this Lent of our sister Marie Henriette Lapeirie, from an attack of colic, such as you saw her in when I was ill. We cannot accuse Lent of it; since that illness she has never been in the habit of fasting. The colic seized her on the Thursday in Passion Week, and she died on the Saturday. We have regretted her much. She was a girl of a good disposition, and was only thirty-two. The ladies Notonnier and De Grave (who had both been inmates of the nunnery as boarders) are about to lie in. The former has taken up her abode at the very top of her house, and weeps freely when she sees any visitors."[2]

On the 4th of June, 1764, the Council had arrested the sentence of the Capitouls and the Parliament, which was the first step towards its complete reversal.

LETTER XIII.

+ "VIVE JĒSUS.

"From our Nunnery at Toulouse, this 13th June, 1764.

"I am so overjoyed, my dear little friend, that I scarce know

[1] Coquerel, p. 394.

[2] Coquerel, p. 394.

know how to express it. Read my heart, and you will find in it all that is in your own. I take a large share in all that it feels. Your interests, your pleasures, your sorrows, are good and evil, which belong to me as much as to you. It will ever be the same up to my last breath. Far or near, you are always with me. When I am before God, I say much to Him for you.

"When the tribunal shall be named to go thoroughly into the matter, let me know as soon as possible. Our nuns are in almost all the towns in the kingdom; we may perhaps find for you acquaintances and help.

"Tell me, dear Nannette, if the consequences of your suit for the recovery of your property will not necessitate your coming for awhile into this neighbourhood. Do not forget this point when you write to tell me the Parliament is appointed. I am and shall be always yours,

"Sister Anne Julie Fraisse, of the Visitation of
St. Mary. Blessed be God."

LETTER XVIII.

+ "VIVE JESUS.

"From our Nunnery at Toulouse, this 17th April, 1765.

". . . . . Our Parliament has held, it is said, secret meetings, to examine the legality of the reversal of the sentence, but they have found no means by which they can oppose it. They say they will have the proceedings (at the trial) printed, and give them to the public as their justification. I answer, they will take care not to do so. I can, however, assure you that every one who knows you is delighted at your triumph. Our superior, all our nuns, are overjoyed. . . . You have gained all hearts. Often at recreation the only talk has been about my dear Nannette, whom every one praised; and they have ended with this exclamation, 'Mon Dieu, what a pity!' (that she remained Protestant).

". . . . . As to my third question, I do not despair about it. I do not count on your fortune; I know only too well that you have none; but I cannot persuade myself that your

your face, your rare qualities, are not worth more than considerable sums, in case—and in case; without wanting in the respect we owe to St. Paul, if the affair have to do with a Catholic, dare the step, and I will answer for it that God and St. Paul, far from being angry, will be quite pleased. Never forget that you have promised to tell me everything which may happen to you. You see I affect to give you advice before you ask it, but everything is allowable in friendship. With you my heart thinks aloud. I trust so entirely in the goodness and steadiness of your mind, that I believe you guaranteed from participating in the damnable systems with which Paris is infected. You have naturally a pious heart and mind; a little ray of the true light would make you a perfect Christian."[1]

Here is a pleasant little exchange of compliments between the nuns and Dr. Sol, a physician in large practice at Toulouse. He had conformed outwardly to Catholicism, as so many did, for the sake of the certificate which allowed him to follow his profession; but it deceived no one, nor did he allow it to do so.

LETTER XXIII.

+ "VIVE JESUS.

"From our Nunnery at Toulouse, this 30th April, 1766.

". . . . . I gave M. Sol as soon as possible all the kind messages for him in your last. I have only had too much occasion to see him this last week; he has almost lived in our house, for a little child of M. le Marquis de Puilaroque, who, after all his care, has gone to Heaven. M. Sol envied her lot. I said to him that the good God afflicted us by choosing our house to take away from us the poor children entrusted to our care. He answered that our house was the pathway to heaven. 'Why, then, do not you become a Brother

[1] Coquerel, pp. 400, 401.

Brother of the Visitation?' 'I would become,' said he, 'a gardening lay brother, were I as sure of my part in Paradise as that little one who will be there an hour hence.'

"Is not that a charming conversation with a Protestant? Blessed be God! We must adore His plans and submit to them. Yet I am troubled about them, and my dear little friend has certainly her part in this trouble."[1]

Some little disappointment was experienced by Sister Anne Julie, when Nannette Calas married M. Duvoisin, not only a Protestant, but a Protestant minister. But she made the best of it, and her letters grew more tender as advancing years brought her nearer to the land in which she dared not hope to meet her earthly friend if she continued in her heresy. One more extract must suffice us:

LETTER XXXI.

+ "VIVE JESUS.

". . . . . You wish to have news of me. My health is very good. My employment—manageress of our vast estates, and archivist. If you have not forgotten our house, I have a very pretty room, very pleasant in summer; we call it the vaulted closet. If you will come and occupy it with the little monkey, it is quite at your service. The dear husband would be out of place there; my offer cannot go so far as that. I beg you to assure him, in spite of my refusal of a lodging, of all my good wishes always for his happiness. . . .

"I embrace you with all my heart. . . .

"From our Nunnery at Toulouse, this 4th January, 1769. Hay!"

The old lady, born with the century, had just entered her 70th year, which explains the joyous exclamation.

[1] Coquerel, pp. 409.

exclamation. Her tenderness and her happy temper were given her to the end of her devout life.

If Voltaire, the accomplished literary scoffer, and Sister Anne Julie, the illiterate nun of the Visitation, could ever have met, the meeting would not have been without its interest. Each would have had much to learn from the other, and might, possibly, having learned it, joined hand and heart for the conversion of M. David de Beaudrigue. I have endeavoured to bring them together on paper by the death-pangs of Jean Calas and the hardships of his family, and to make more audible, perhaps, to some, the cry, which rises louder and louder from men of all parties and creeds, for toleration and forbearance, greater belief in the virtues of our adversaries, and greater trust in man.

If this cry be heard more clearly now through his death than when his human voice was stilled, Jean Calas' blood was not shed in vain.

WHAT WE KNOW OF SHAKSPERE.

THERE is, I suppose, no question that Shakspere is the best loved poet of the English race. His name rises to our lips as that of the man in whom the literary majesty of our language, and the literary expression of English thought have as yet culminated. When other poets, the spokesmen of our time, have need of a representative man whom to name, they take him. When Wordsworth has to justify the Sonnet form; not yet popular, perhaps never to be so; wherein were so many of his own triumphs, he calls to mind that "with this key Shakspere unlocked his heart." When a Vision of Poets rises before the mental ken of the greatest woman poet of our day, Shakspere seems to her to transcend them all in glory. When Charles Kingsley addresses the woman who seemed to him wisest and fairest of all, he conceives that he can praise her best in saying:

"Oh, thou hadst been a wife for Shakspere's self!
No head save some world-genius ought to rest
Above the treasures of that perfect breast."

There

There can be none who know not Matthew Arnold's Sonnet in which he likens Shakspere to

> "the loftiest hill
> Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty."

Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning, Kingsley, Arnold; you will hardly find four teachers who more fitly express the matured conviction of the best minds of the age, in putting forward Shakspere as the wisest and greatest in the intellectual record of our nation.

If we look to the supreme name of each other country—I confine myself to modern days, the time we understand and whose thought we can in a measure gauge,—there is but one name we can compare with his; Dante alone can be considered for a moment; the grandest German, Goethe, the most brilliant Frenchman, Voltaire—I speak of them only as intellectual giants,—the wisest and wittiest Spaniard, Cervantes, are out of all comparison. But if the definition of the supreme Poet would approximate as nearly as possible to that of the supreme man: "Perfect God and Perfect Man, of a Reasonable Soul, and Human Flesh subsisting": then I think that Dante would be found somewhat lacking on the human side, while Shakspere would not be found below Dante on the divine.

But in claiming for one of our own blood such magnificent, such pontifical rank in the great church whereinto the entrance depends not on repentance

pentance and faith, through the baptism of water, but on intellect alone, and most often through the baptism of fire and blood, it is well to be careful and to pause, lest English prejudice bias us overmuch. We may reassure ourselves, on testimony in no degree suspect.

To put it at its lowest estimate, Positivism is one of the great motive forces of the world at this present moment. It may not do all that Auguste Comte expected from it, but at least he is a man to be reckoned with, in the shaping of the age's thought. Now in framing the Calendar of his new divisions of the year, Comte selected thirteen names of men for those of the months, as typical of the phases through which the human mind has passed, and of various stages of human development. These stages overlap each other, but they are, roughly speaking, chronological, and the name of the person prefixed to each month is of him who exemplified most completely the character of each phase. In the month which bears the name of Shakspere, Auguste Comte summed up the spirit of the Modern Drama. If we study that Calendar, well deserving attention even from those who are not Positivists, we shall I think discover that the wide soul and luminous intelligence of its framer are shown in the fact that his own nationality moved him so little in his choice of names. It is strange that a Frenchman has not selected as his chief name Racine, nor Corneille,

Corneille, but one whom even Voltaire had not known how to appreciate.

If we take the two men who, in Germany, during the last century are best known to us, we shall find Goethe and Heine in full agreement about Shakspere's preëminence. In Wilhelm Meister is to be found the most brilliant criticism which exists of Hamlet, while Heine's boundless admiration for Shakspere is but intensified by the scorn and distaste he felt for almost all else that was English. And cultivated Germans, their countrymen, know as a whole more about our Poet than we do ourselves. It is in no narrow spirit of provincialism that we put him among the greatest of the world.

Now, if we could call the dead to life, clasp their hands and bid them lead us, sit at their feet and pray them teach us, lay our head on their knees as little children do to their parents and tell them our perplexities and struggles, whom would we choose, we who are English men and English women of to-day? We should feel, to adopt Comte's list for a moment in default of another, that Moses and Homer and Charlemagne are too vague, their forms too veiled in mist to come at them; we should be like the disciples of old, who "feared as they entered into the cloud." St. Paul and Dante, tender and compassionate as we know their inmost hearts to have been, are too austere externally, too far withdrawn; who would try to warm himself at a star? The philosophers, the men

men of science, are full of aid for our intellect, but if we love them and seek them, it is not for the qualities which make them great. The one man to whom we should turn, the most human, who had the most varied knowledge of life in all its depths and windings, is he whom we now consider, our English Shakspere.

Yet how different is the look of Shakspere, as we know him, to that of any one else. It helps us much in our understanding of a man that we are aware of how he appeared to his fellows. Run over in your mind the great men who have influenced your lives; of some we can never know how they looked; they lived before painting or sculpture were Arts. But of the undoubted portraits of men whom we do know, all save one have the same characteristic; we see in them some likeness, more or less true, in many cases very true, of the men as they lived. Few, perhaps none, represent the whole man. Only a great painter here and there has ever succeeded in giving what we feel to be the entire character, as after many years the inner life had stamped itself upon the outward form. Bellini's Doge in the National Gallery, David's Pope Pius VII. at Fontainebleau, are such, but the generality of portraits give only a partial view of the spirit manifest in the flesh. But they are living, they can be understood. The face of Shakspere is *not* to be understood. It is the face of a man who was alive

alive and is dead. All special feeling is discharged from it:

> "His face, that two hours since hath died,
> Wilt thou find passion, pain, or pride?"

There is no doubt that the authentic portraits of Shakspere are based on the Stratford Bust, and that is taken, more or less imperfectly, from a death mask. Mr. Woolner has pointed out that the bust is certainly the work of two hands; the whole of the face, and lower part of the forehead by one who knew thoroughly what he was about, but worked from a cast of the dead; the upper part by a less competent person, perhaps the mere village mason, working where the mask failed him. We know therefore of this face only the grand result, summed up by the artist, Death; we see not what went to form it; we know the whole and we do not know the parts; it is the most inscrutable of all portraits, save perhaps that of Dr. Donne, born nine years later than Shakspere, as he stands shrouded, in marble effigy, in the south ambulatory of St. Paul's Cathedral.

It is not, I think, fanciful to say that the teaching we gain from Shakspere as a whole is of the same kind as that which is symbolized by his face; it is based on broad human principles from which we may derive guidance for ourselves in particular instances; but he has not a cut and dried maxim for every problem which presents itself to us, nor a rule for every hour, nor a code by which we are to think,

think, feel, believe. He has no system of casuistry, not even ten commands, nor eight beatitudes; he tells us little of his own life, lest we call him master over much; he will only say: "thus and thus life looked to me; I show you as in a mirror all that has seemed to me most notable for example, or for avoidance." We will seek some of these broad lessons.

Shakspere is revealed to us in three ways, and it is often said that the revelations in each kind are scanty; but before giving our assent to this it will be well to see what they are. The first is of course given through the facts in his outward life. It is not superfluous to recapitulate these, for here in fact our positive knowledge is larger than we always recognize.

He was born in 1564, six years after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and he died in 1616, thirteen years after the accession of James I. Thus his life is coincident with the morning hours of the new time on which our English nation was then entering. We may fairly hold that the Middle Ages expired with Mary, though their feeble breath was nearly quenched with that of Henry VIII. His life ended before the stormy days came under James's son, days which caused the minds of men to run in narrower channels, great as were the writers, Milton and Clarendon and Jeremy Taylor. But while Elizabeth reigned, breadth and freedom, as well as depth of intellect, marked the high tide of the English Renascence. John

John Shakspere, the father of William, was a well-to-do townsman at Stratford-on-Avon, and there is no real difficulty, although one has been raised, in the fact that those who have made researches into his calling have found him variously occupied. For it is very common indeed in provincial districts to find one man engaged in most different trades. John Shakspere farmed his own land, and was designated as "yeoman," a respectable term which, as well as the thing it signified, has almost died out. He went through the various town offices, becoming alderman and high bailiff. Of a family which could trace its descent through at least four generations, he married Mary Arden, who was a substantial heiress, and of a stock which dated back to the Conqueror. Two years before his death he received a grant of Arms from the College of Arms, then much more important than now it is. The Coat of Arms comes under what is called "canting heraldry," that is, it contains an allusion to the name. A spear is the charge on the shield, and the crest is a Griffin holding or shaking a spear. This has probably tended to fix the spelling of the name down to the present day. The spelling of names was most wild and wayward three centuries ago; that in question varies between Shaxper, Shakspere, probably the most genuine form, and Shakespear in various ways.

I mention all these things because I am intimately persuaded that there is no such thing as gathering grapes

grapes from thorns or figs from thistles. And to find that Shakspere was sprung on both sides from men who had the education, the culture and the gentle training of their time, goes far to explain what he was. One of the most powerful motives, as it seems to me, for self-cultivation, ought not to be even our own enjoyment, but to help the generations yet unborn, our children, who so largely depend on what we are.

William Shakspere was the eldest son of his parents, and was sent at the age of seven to the Grammar School of Stratford, where he remained till he was about fourteen. It is said that John Shakspere fell into some business difficulties, and that William had to leave school early to aid his father. There is a tradition that he was bound apprentice to a butcher, but this may, I think, be dismissed as nonsense, there being a confusion between his father and a Thomas Shakspere at Warwick, who was actually in that trade. Another tradition says that he taught in the school at which he had been educated; and it is by no means unlikely, and quite in accordance with custom, that, as he rose in the school, he should have taught the younger boys. It is certain that in the years during which he was at school, and afterwards in his father's business, he read not many books but much; and he learned that which ought to be the aim of all boyish education, not to cram the memory with facts and figures, but how to use all

all that comes to us in life. It may be that Shakspere knew "small Latin and less Greek," it is still more true that he retained what he had learned better than most men, and the result shows, that in nearly every branch of the knowledge of those days, Shakspere was better educated than the great majority of men, then or now.

We know little of how his time was occupied when he was not teaching, or with his father in business, but he thoroughly steeped himself in the country which was round him. When in after years he laid the scene of one of his plays in the forest of the Ardennes in France he described it as he saw the forest of Arden, which lay at his door; the little town of Henley in Arden still keeps the memory of the name. There is a story of his having gone out with poachers, and shot a deer belonging to Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, whom he afterwards caricatured as Justice Shallow, and there is no reason to reject it. For in fact there is scarce any country place, in which many respectable young fellows might not have, or indeed have not, entered into such mere boyish frolics in pursuit of sport, so dear to the heart of every English lad, at some time in his life. That the scrape was not serious is evident from his frequent returns to Stratford, after he left it for London, and his settlement there again as a substantial land-owner, townsman, and burgess. It seems unlikely that any such youthful escapade drove him to leave Stratford

Stratford for London, especially as we know of a more persuasive reason.

Shakspere was wise enough, or fool enough, to marry when he was only eighteen, a woman of twenty-six, and before he himself was two and twenty he had three children. His wife, Anne Hathaway, was the daughter of a yeoman, and there seems no reason to doubt that it was a true love match, happy, if somewhat imprudent. I take it that the first love of most honest young men is for women somewhat older than themselves; it is seldom that circumstances allow them to marry their first loves, or the kind of alliance would be more frequent than is the case. Nor was the marriage so rash as it may now seem. In the many businesses carried on by the Shakspere family, a fair living was to be anticipated for the son and successor, even if some of those trades were not as profitable as heretofore; life was not so complicated as now it is; while it was much more versatile, and men began their careers earlier.

When three years were over, however, things did not look bright, and Shakspere went to London to see if fortune had aught in store for him. There is not one single fact to prove that he left home because he was unhappy in his marriage, as has been suggested; nothing to substantiate the assertion that his first connection with the theatre was that of holding horses at the door. It is probable that he came to seek a patron for a poem he had already

already composed, the "Venus and Adonis." It was common in those days to court a wealthy and titled patron, literature not having as yet attained strength to run alone.

It is impossible to say how he became connected with the stage, but he became a player, and in the first instance an adapter and rewriter of plays written by others, with a keen eye for what the stage needed. He made friends among the great, his first Poems being dedicated to Lord Southampton; and Lord Pembroke, one of the brightest figures in Elizabeth's court, was to him more than a brother. These were persons whom a young man from the provinces, less great by nature, would as a rule scarce have known, and though he had the passionate love of many, he had no less the passionate hate of others. Men of strong character have friends and enemies of equal fervour, if not in equal numbers.

The literary skill which was in Shakspere grew by using, and when he wrote his greater works he must have known his power; yet he was careless of his gift, prizing it not for itself, but as a means to an end—the acquisition of property which he could call his own, in his birthplace. Thither he retired when he could, and, finally, as soon as he could; there he died, while yet in the flower of his age. He had sorrows, for he lost his only son; he had joys, for he realized his ambition; and he fell asleep while the wife of his youth and his daughters could lay

lay him in the quiet church, where he hoped to rest undisturbed. We may let some foolish traditions, some trivial verses ascribed to him, slumber, and suppose them to be harmless burs such as stick to every man who passes through the fields of life, but are no part of himself, nor even of his true environment. But in regard to the life as a whole, we may wonder why some people assert that his wish to attain a competence, and settle down in the abode of his forefathers, was other than noble. There are few more interesting and touching passages in Macaulay's Essay on Warren Hastings, than that in which he tells us of the great Proconsul's desire to purchase Daylesford, and build up a home once more, where his ancestors had lived and died. What was noble at Daylesford in the eighteenth century was not less so in Stratford in the sixteenth. There is something most pathetic in the thought that he, whose spirit searched the hidden deeps of humanity, and soared to its summits, lived an outward life on its level plain, and was concerned with those everyday things which are the staple of an ordinary man's occupation. If we think at times that our lives are monotonous and prosaic, lacking in the stir and romance which would, we dream, quicken our pulses, and ennoble our souls, it may be well to remember that Shakspere's feet rested on solid commonplace earth. And if to live for others be the highest calling of man, to do so unconsciously, and by a noble human instinct, is greater

greater than to follow, however carefully, a conscious and deliberate plan.

Between these lines of outward fact which are known to all, much may be read by those who have eyes to see. Meres, Chettle, Ben Jonson, who loved him, all have pregnant sentences about him, and in his favour; Greene and Nash sneered at him; Davies too has disparaging allusions, but he also speaks of his "honesty," that is, honour and good character. I would refer those who wish to gather up all indications of Shakspere's life and character, to a chapter in Mr. Gerald Massey's recent work on Shakspere's Sonnets called "The Man Shakspere and his private friends," and to a valuable collection of Essays, "Noctes Shakspereianæ," written by members of the Winchester Shakspere Society. We should however always read Mr. Massey with great caution, and we ought wholly to disagree with his theory of the Sonnets. There will dawn to the patient investigator a vision of the man very much clearer than that of any other Elizabethan writer save Ben Jonson, far more distinct, for instance, than that of Beaumont or Fletcher, of Marlowe or Greene. If we regret the fact that we know the purely literary men of those days so far less than the statesmen, some of whom, though literary men, are remembered chiefly because they are statesmen, as Sidney and Raleigh, we should recognize that this is in the nature of things. We are acquainted with every detail of the lives of our greatest

greatest statesmen now, but how little men in general know of our greatest poets, of Tennyson and Browning; of our greatest novelists, Meredith and Hardy; and if this be true in these days of Biography and Autobiography, of Interviews and Celebrities at Home, how much more was it the case when a man was on the whole allowed to live his life unto himself alone, not forced against his will to "wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at." Besides, what Heine says is most true:

> "The want of definite information about Shakspere's life is easily to be explained when we think of those storms, both religious and political, which broke out shortly after his death, which for some time put the Puritans in absolute power, and afterwards had such withering influence, so that not only was the golden age of Elizabethan literature brought to nought, but totally forgotten."

The second revelation is of course through the Plays. But to this statement a limitation must be made, inasmuch as we may not suppose for a moment that Shakspere has drawn a portrait of himself in any character of his dramas. To say that he was Romeo in his youth, or Hamlet when the problems of existence pressed on him, is manifestly absurd; if aught of himself were depicted in either, it can be but a small portion. He would seem to have guarded against any such superficial interpretation by placing characteristic touches of self in the mouths of baser persons, as when

when the wonderful description of a good name is given by Iago. He would not have been a true artist, if it were possible to accept such a suggestion. The self-revelation consists in the manner that he views life as a whole. He is the greatest writer of a time in which humanity was object enough in itself, was in its own foreground, and middle distance, and background; was not seen as projected against the clear sky of heaven, or the lurid smoke of hell; in which man was not considered with reference to some other life, and the world was not contemplated only as a mere passing atom in time, in contrast with the abidingness of the Eternal. Let me explain what I mean by a rapid survey of some earlier presentments of man.

The Greek Tragedians exhibit all their scenes and figures against a great background of Destiny, only another name for that which was afterwards known as the Calvinistic conception of God. "In God we live and move and have our being," said St. Paul, and in that sentence he summed up the essence of the Old Testament Scriptures. The New Testament gathered up Humanity into Christ, who, *ex hypothesi*, was Very God. The one great Epic of the Middle Ages leaves earth altogether, and shows us men moving in the after world, which was mapped out with a precision greater than that employed on terrestrial charts. The master book of devotion in the Middle Ages, the Imitation of Christ,

Christ, is absolutely scornful of things that are, except in reference to those which are to be. And if our English Chaucer be the one exception among earlier poets in his human and mundane conception of the life which transacted itself before him, Tennyson has chosen the right phrase in considering him a harbinger of Shakspere. In Shakspere was summed up the English Renascence on its purely and simply secular side. Of course he brings in the unseen world here and there, and equally of course when he does so, he speaks the theological language of his time, but his motives are of this world, his virtues of this world; here are his punishments, here are his rewards. The great scene between Claudio and Isabella in "Measure for Measure," is typical of this, in which the sister is exhorting her brother to play the man, and die if need be to expiate his fault. She, the nun, the votaress of St. Clare, looks on death simply from the human side:

> "The sense of death is most in apprehension,
> And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,
> In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
> As when a giant dies."

Claudio says "Death is a fearful thing," to which Isabel retorts, "And shamed life a hateful." Claudio pictures to himself a purgatory and a hell, while Isabel says no word of the future life. And so is it throughout. Shakspere never projects life against the supernatural. But all the splendid

splendid pageant of his age moves before him, and the past is coloured by the life of his present. He painted men as they were, nothing extenuating, nor setting down aught in malice. He had the gift of a large sympathy, which did not disdain the mirth of clowns, nor the ignorance of the unlearned, nor to smile while he pitied Falstaff. He saw the pathos of life, its unrealized ideals, its hopeless failures, as well as its triumph and its crown. There is in him none of the careless spirit personified in the Epicurean Gods, nor does he venture to stand in the place of a great and final judge; but he is as one who knows that all is working to one far off divine event, and that the fantastic tricks of the units which compose the whole neither make much, nor mar much.

At the same time that he had these broad and general sympathies, he was a specialist if ever one there were. It would be wearisome to recapitulate the many speculations on his training, his education, his opinions, his callings in life before he became a player, founded on the exact knowledge of details on so many subjects to be found in the Plays. He must, it is said, have been a lawyer's clerk, because of the legal knowledge displayed by him, he had studied medicine, witness his acquaintance with mad folk, he was a protestant, he was a catholic, he was this or that. On most of these matters we may speculate as we please, but in the stormy Renascence time when

so

so much was destroyed, he was conservative in the best sense, and he was above all the mirror of his time. The England of Elizabeth will stand out vivid before men for ever; whatever else becomes mythical and unreal, of that we can say: it was thus and thus.

The third great Revelation of Shakspere is through the Sonnets. Mr. Massey is the most recent among those who believe that these are not personal: I hold on the contrary that they are a very important factor in our understanding his character, that they are, just so far as we can interpret them, that unlocking of his heart by Shakspere to all whom it might concern.

His confessions therein are as truthful as man ever made to his friends or his fellows, but they have not in them the perfect clearness and passionate self-abasement of St. Augustine, nor the unabashed complacency of Rousseau. Shakspere never mixed his soul with clay, he had that truest repentance which consists in the wish to amend; he never lost his nobleness of aspiration, he told his faults with a dignified reserve of words. I think that if the details of the story sketched in the Sonnets are here and there obscure, the main facts are clear enough. The one great love of Shakspere's life was that for a friend. It was such as David had felt for Jonathan. It was such as in its intensity, purity, and absolute unselfishness only the rarest souls can experience, or even fully

fully understand. Alongside of this devoted friendship ran a love, which was not so innocent, for some unknown woman. Anne Hathaway, now Anne Shakspere, left, of stern necessity, behind at Stratford, was for awhile forgotten, or at least she ceased to hold her due place in her husband's heart; his friend was aware of this passion, and yet supplanted him. There was a time of bitter anger and sorrow; a time in which he felt his faith in human nature giving way, a time in which he mourned his wrong-doing, striving after righteousness and peace once more, and these at last he attained. He put from him his illicit love, and he forgave his friend, so reaching a counsel of perfection to which but few attain, forgiving not only till "seven times, but until seventy times seven." The whole of this revelation is manly, dignified, sublime. That great crisis of soul which is called conversion can be best understood by the man who has read St. Augustine's Confessions, how base and immoral can be the man of fine intellect and keen sensibility can best be imagined by the student of Rousseau, and in the Sonnets, the other of the three great Confessions of the world, may be read the history of a soul which keeps its balance, its true respect for manhood and for self, even in the stress of penitence.

It will thus be obvious to any who have followed the argument that we need not agree with critics who like Delius consider the Sonnets as "the free outcome

outcome of a poetic imagination," nor with such as Dyce, who considers that only a few sonnets refer to circumstances of the poet's life, while the main body of them may be regarded as mere exercises of the fancy. The *reductio ad absurdum* of this theory is to be found in the elaborate work by Mr. Gerald Massey already mentioned; a ponderous monument of misplaced ingenuity.

Nor can I assent to those who consider there is anything unworthy, ignoble, or unmanly in the unusual love and admiration Shakspere exhibits for the younger friend who wronged him. It was a mode of the time to give the reins to the fancy in speaking of friendship as in speaking of love. It must be remembered that, though there were exceptions, women of intellect were fewer than now, and that although in theory a wife is now, more often than perhaps in fact, the mate of a man's spirit as well as of his body, the intellectual *camaraderie* which all men need was, at least in those days, more often to be found in a friend than in a lover. Hence in writers of the Elizabethan age those outpourings of affection towards the same, which are now usually restricted to the other, sex. As Professor Dowden well says: "The writer of amatory sonnets was expected, as a matter of course, to express an extravagance of sentiment. But friendship, a marriage of soul with soul, was looked upon as even a more ardent, and more transcendent power than love. In Allot's

Allot's Wits' Commonwealth (1598) we read: The love of men to women is a thing common and of course, but the friendship of man to man infinite and immortal."

So writes the sanest critic I have met with on the Sonnets. But if any are yet inclined to think that Shakspere's words to his friend exceed the bounds of honest and honourable praise, if any think them effeminate, I would say only this further: There is but one coarse word or phrase in the whole range of the Sonnets, and that one, as it so happens, absolutely negatives any suspicion dishonouring to Shakspere.

There are who do not think themselves bound to fashion any theory about the persons in the drama unfolded by the Sonnets. They would seem to hold that if they cannot fill in all the details there is not use in making a sketch. I cannot feel with them. As in scientific, so in literary matters of this kind, it is good to have a working hypothesis round which the facts may crystallize, even at the risk of having again to dissolve them if a new discovery be made. Any provisional order is better than disorder. Such a working hypothesis may be found, with many it is also conviction, in supposing that the youth of the Sonnets is Pembroke. He was nineteen when Shakspere was thirty-five. There is no figure who moves with more stately beauty through the pageant of the Elizabethan Age; there is none whom all the allusions in the Sonnets seem

to

to suit so completely. I am unable to admit with Dowden that the patron of these poems is "a dim figure." The rival poet who for a while supplanted Shakspere in Pembroke's affection is more dim, Daniel or Chapman seem the most probable guesses. The woman who was the cause of all the woe, the woman for whom Shakspere and his friend almost sacrificed their passionate and happy friendship can perhaps never be identified. To quote once more from Dowden :—

"We shall never discover the name of that woman who for a season could sound, as no one else, the instrument in Shakspere's heart from the lowest note to the top of the compass. To the eyes of no diver among th· wrecks of time will that curious talisman gleam. Already when Thorpe dedicated these poems to their only begetter, she perhaps was lost in the quick-moving life of London, to all but a few in whose memory were stirred as by a forlorn small wind the grey ashes of a fire gone out."

But the name of Pembroke is enough—let the Sonnets cluster round him, and the story, I think, becomes comparatively clear; in reading it, you lay your hand, as it were, on Shakspere, and feel the beatings of that stormy and mighty heart, before he attained to the calm in which we think of him now among the Immortals.

But it is of course to be admitted that the Sonnets show one phase only of Shakspere's life, the *Sturm und Drang Periode*, not the finally serene and prosperous man who died at Stratford while yet in the flower of his age.

Thus

Thus have I endeavoured to give in outline what we know of Shakspere. Each separate portrait must have details filled in by patient study. The scholar should avoid, as the Plague, the framing in his own mind a Life such as Dean Plumptre has written of Bishop Ken, in which on every page you find what might have been rather than what was. But as we search contemporary literature, and mark one by one the allusions to Shakspere, read Marlowe, and recognize the actual quotations, find out the few books then in print, native or translated, which he must have handled, the edition of Montaigne above all, which we know that he possessed; the dry bones will clothe themselves and the mist of three centuries clear away.

Then take the Plays, and consider whether there we do not find those among whom the Poet moved, so that we may see what were his relations to other men; whether it does not pass from an hypothesis into a certainty that Nash, who jeered at Shakspere, was answered in "Love's Labour's Lost;" and that Davies, the writing master of Hereford, sat for Malvolio; whether greater men and dear friends, Pembroke, and Southampton, and Essex are not shadowed out. And here I would again name to be read, but to be used with singular caution, Mr. Massey's Essay on "The Man Shakspere, and his private friends."

For the Sonnets, the true way of study is to translate them, to write them into prose, to analyze them,

them, and leave no passage till it has cleared itself to your mind, and after these three revelations are examined, it will be a surprise to the student how near he has got to the very man whom at a distance he has already loved.

We all know how theologians delight to dwell on the faint indications of certain Scripture characters, and to show how in slight words and touches are subtle hints from which a whole life can be evolved, of Abraham, of David, of the Apostles, of the Blessed Virgin. The devout soul knows that these indications are true; can live with the saints; can trust itself to their guidance, not at all as abstractions, but as friends, as patrons. The dead are alive, recreated not only by faith, but also by a spiritual comparative anatomy, which learns to reconstruct a whole from a part, as famous osteologists have restored long-forgotten animals from fragments of bone. What science has done for the prehistoric world, and religion for the saints, love can do for Shakspere, and the reverent student can attain to know him, through whom, more than any writer, we may know Man, the proper study of mankind.

We are led by him through the throngs of life, as a child who clings to a father's hand through the streets of this great city. Some vile faces the child must see, debased by passion, some rough words will strike the ear, but the firm grasp and the encouraging tones of the guide are with it all the way,

way, and the shifting mob proves a useful education under this firm, wise, and omniscient conduct.

It is the condition of our modern life that we can rarely be alone; the hermit life is over, and we can at best have a few hermit hours now and then. For those periods of retreat and solitude, the Psalmist, the Evangelists, Thomas à Kempis, and men like these are our best companions; but for our struggling ordinary life, "this workaday world," so "full of briars," there is no nobler, no more beloved teacher, than the man to whom I have bowed all my heart in these words, to whose feet I have tried to lead you.

THE PRODUCTION AND LIFE OF BOOKS.

IT is intended to trace in the following pages the life of a book, from its first conception in the womb of an author's mind to its grave, that long home, unknown, often long deferred, yet which surely awaits all which is wrought by man, as well as the toiling hand and busy brain which made it. There are few subjects of which the outside world is so profoundly ignorant as of the processes connected with the production of books; who can or who cannot write them; the mechanical act of writing them; how they are printed, on what paper, and how bound; how they are sold and distributed; how they are treated by buyers and readers; how and on what principle authors are paid or not paid; finally, what books live for longer or shorter periods; how they die, are buried, and are forgotten, and sometimes reappear, like ghosts, from the realm of the dead.

It may seem an obvious matter that no one has any business to write if he have not something definite

definite to say, which is, or at least appears, worth saying. But this is not so. If a person have fallen into poverty, say a lady left, by the death of father or husband, with limited means, or a gentleman who has failed in business, the lady is recommended to keep a school, the gentleman to take pupils, and both to write a book. The whole outfit is supposed to consist in a few quires of foolscap, a steel pen, and a bottle of ink. Round everybody is almost sure to be a certain circle, who, totally ignoring all mental qualifications, or those derived from education and experience, think their friend has only to put pen to paper in order to win fame and money. MSS. are sent to publishers in heaps, ill written, ill spelt, with no knowledge of their subject, displaying ignorance which would discredit a Board-school boy or girl; and these their writers and their writers' friends conceive to be worth, not only the expense of publication, but a considerable sum of money to boot.

It may be taken as an axiom, that no first books and few others are worth giving to the world which do not spring naturally from the author's feeling that he has something to say which will benefit others to hear. That quality, called inspiration, existing in very different degrees, is always needed for the making of a true book. There are, of course, some limitations to this statement. A practised writer, long warmed by the sacred flame, may retain an after-glow, may have learned a trick of pen, which

which may carry him on for some time when the impulse has ceased; but even then some lighting of the brands by fire as from heaven, some kindling from a wind from without, is needful again and again, were the writer as copious as Scott, as versatile as Goethe. That quality, called inspiration, existing in very different degrees, is always needed for the making of a true book. Whether he appeal, as Heber, to

> "Ye guardian saints, ye warrior sons of heaven,"

or as Pope,—

> "O thou my voice inspire,
> Who touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire;"

or in the frigid and, as it were, stereotyped invocation to "the Muse," or is silent about his feelings, but feels all the same, the genuine author knows that there is beyond the range of his ordinary thoughts and experiences a power which overmasters and constrains him, or else his utterances, on whatever subject, will be worthless. To those who declare that they have something to say, and ask how best they shall say it, should be given all encouragement; what though the message be never so slight and trivial, there springs in it a spark from mind to mind; but utter extinction should be swiftly accorded to him or her who says practically, "I want to talk, and now let me consider what I shall talk about."

But, granted this inspiration, this something which is not self, more still is needed—a liberal education.

education. Of course here, too, are exceptions, such as the "Ettrick Shepherd," or Bloomfield the farmer's boy, and Chatterton. But without asking too carefully whether the great majority of such exceptions have contributed aught really worth having to literature, and without insisting on the fact that the great majority are lyrical poets, whose "cry" is more spontaneous and less dependent on the treasures of the past than is the work of epic and dramatic poets, or prose authors, the exceptions may be admitted; yet it may be maintained that the more a man has of learning and general culture the more likely he is to write well, even on his own special subject. It is not here meant that he is to drag in illustrative quotations, than which perhaps nothing is more tiresome, but the turn of a phrase, the allusion to a character, and other indications which show an intellectual reader that he and the author are denizens of the same spiritual land, and have wandered through the same scenes, often make the whole difference between the sensations of delight and weariness. It might seem absurd to insist on an elementary knowledge of the English tongue as a qualification, were it not constantly absent even in printed books; so that we can gather what abuses of the long-suffering grammar must be perpetrated, which never see the light; and it would be superfluous to maintain that legible writing and a neat MS. are advantages, did not painful experience teach how often they

they are neglected. A knowledge of logic and of the rules of metaphor are also much to be desired, and of foreign languages, if an author undertake to translate, as so many do, considering it an easy task, whereas it is one of the very hardest to execute well. Perhaps the most singular bundle of metaphors ever produced in writing came from a gentleman who was thoroughly acquainted with the matter he treated, but was not equally familiar with the rules of English composition. He wrote thus: —Eclecticism is like the mule in creation, essentially barren. Without foundations it soon totters to its fall, and dies as it has lived, childless and intestate." That writer was a man, and the work was original; but the chief sinners in false metaphor and bad translation are women.

Not long since, a lady undertook a very simple version of a German book, in which Count von Moltke gave an account of the coronation of the late Emperor of Russia. She wrote, "The archbishop poured the oil on his head, and two bishops fastened on his spurs." The word in German is "Spur," and means a trace, and what the bishops had really done was to wipe the oil away. Another lady called the father of Cardinal Cusanus, "a mussel-fisherman at Trèves," from simple ignorance that the river there is called the Mosel, and that mussels are sea-fish.

But we will suppose that a book is written and that its author has surmounted the preliminary difficulties

difficulties of want of inspiration and want of learning. We will assume it has been written on one side of the paper only, and in quarto, not in folio size; that the pages are numbered, and that they are not all fastened together, a most irritating and vexatious proceeding. It is, perhaps, too much to assume that the MS. has been carefully revised, because many people put this off till, as they say, they can see it in print. Things look so different in type, they are tired of MS.; the alterations can be, at worst, but slight, and are far more easily made in proof. Now herein are several fallacies. Correcting proof, except the mere errors of the printer, is an expensive business. The estimate made for printing a book, whether given to the author or the publisher, assumes that only such corrections and a few more will be made in proof, and all else is charged extra. There never yet lived an author who was not quite sure he had corrected very little, and those who are most guilty are the most confident that they have made next to no changes. Nor is it true that all things can be best corrected in proof. When the MS. leaves the writer he has taken leave of his book as a whole. He afterwards gets it only piecemeal—he is unable to compare the beginning with the middle and the end. When we read a story and find that Mr. Brown in Chapter I. is called Mr. White in Chapter X., that Edward becomes Thomas, and so on, we may feel sure, not so much that the writer is a careless

less proof-corrector, though that is true, as that the original MS. has been untidy, careless, and ill revised.

However, suppose the book to exist in MS., and that it has to take its chance, first of finding favour with a publisher, next with the public. Let it be carefully remembered that not every book which has a literary has also a commercial value; and that the one is not necessarily in any degree the measure of the other. If a book is transcendently good on any subject, it will, no doubt, sooner or later, succeed; if it is bad, it will sometimes succeed because of its very badness; it may appeal to the vulgar, or the base, or the trivial. But if the writer be not a Robertson as a preacher, or a Macaulay as historian, a George Eliot as a novelist, or a Browning as poet; if he be one of the average public who has written a fairly good book, success will depend on whether the book at the moment hits the fancy of the public or supplies a want just then felt: it rarely creates the demand. Whatever it be, it will probably be carefully and kindly considered if sent to a publisher. No author need ever seek an introduction to a publisher, nor fear that a MS. will not be examined. Good authors are too rare for publishers to run the risk of passing them over, and it is quite certain that there is no respectable firm who does not give just so much attention as is its due to every MS. offered to them. There are stories, mostly fabulous, though

though some may have a grain of truth, of MSS. which have wandered from house to house, rejected and despised, at last accepted to the fortune of the clever publisher who discovered the author's merits, and to the shame and confusion of face of those who refused the offered boon. But what of that? The legends, however true, would only show that publishers are not infallible, not that the MSS. were unconsidered. And the book got into print at last! The fact is, that books worth having are rarely, if ever, lost to the world; in the literary market, as well as all other markets, good wares are willingly taken and fetch their full price.

What that full price is depends on a number of causes; but it may be said that it is rarely indeed the value the author puts upon it. Suppose, for instance, that a book will cost £100 to produce, and is to sell at 6s. Says the author, glibly, "A thousand copies, which are sure to sell, will realise £300, so that after the book is produced and paid for, there will remain two-thirds of that sum to divide." "Stay," says the publisher; "how are you to get it distributed? What is to become of the booksellers, who must make their profit? What of the review copies, without which it will not be noticed at all? What of the chances that it does not sell, and is a loss instead of a gain?" This may serve to show the marvellous kind of mistakes into which authors fall when they estimate the value of their wares. There comes a happy time

time to some when they can in a degree fix the value aright. A successful novelist, like George Eliot, a successful poet, like Lord Tennyson, does attain to know the trade value of a story or a ballad; but the experience must first be a wide and a long one, and even then the author does not always understand that his name in a magazine at a given time may be worth more than the story or the poem, which in itself, and in another magazine or at another time, might not be worth half the money.

Again, much will depend on the number of copies likely to be needed. There is a vast crowd of books good and useful, of which a small edition, likely to satisfy the whole demand, just pays its expenses, leaving little for division. And there are certain technical books appealing to only a few which can never, under any circumstances, pay their cost. It would be well if, on proper examination by competent persons, these were now and then subsidised by Government, as they are in other countries; but these must always be too few to need any special mention.

Of ordinary ways of publishing there are several. 1. The sale of copyright. In this case the publisher takes all the risk, the author receives a lump sum down, and, as far as he is concerned, there is an end of the transaction. In the case of a work of but ephemeral value, such as the ordinary novel, the arrangement is good for the author, and the publisher knows, or ought to know,

know, his business. 2. The payment by royalty. That is, that the author assigns the book to the publisher, taking, by agreement, so much on each copy sold, either from the first or after a certain reserved number of copies, or on each edition; but these modifications do not affect the principle of the arrangement, by which the publisher takes the risk, and the profits are divided in a definite specified manner. If the book have any permanent value, and is likely to run to edition after edition, this is by far the fairest way. For take a book, say like a scientific treatise, or a school-book requiring revision from time to time, of which the author sells the copyright, and after a couple of years, on a new edition being required, a complete revision is needed. Without a further payment the author does not care to revise that in which he now has no pecuniary interest; if the book sells, the publisher's temptation is great not to bring it up to the highest standard; therefore the ideally excellent arrangement is one by which both are interested in making the book always complete by fresh revisions. The system of "half profits" is misleading and unsatisfactory; it should never be employed; a definite royalty on definite copies is one on which there can be no mistake and no dispute. Or, 3, a book may be published on commission; that is, the writer bears the whole expense, the book belongs to him, the publisher taking a certain commission on the sales. If the publisher

publisher consider a book will prove a success, he would of course willingly make it his own speculation; and the fact of taking it on commission usually shows that in his judgment the work has but a slender commercial value. But there may be many reasons why it should yet be brought out. And if it be the mere whim of the writer, the £100 or £200 spent upon it, some of which is sure to be returned, is of more good to the world, and of more pleasure to the writer, than would be the case did he buy a picture or a gem of the same cost, to be seen by fewer than those whom his book may instruct or amuse. Some books are also published on commission because the author is so confident of his work that he prefers to take for himself the risk and the profit.

"Why should I not get my own estimate and print for myself?" is a common question, and the answer is manifold. A book arranged by an amateur is almost always disagreeable to the eye. The reader will often not know why a given page is so much pleasanter to read than another, when an experienced person will see at a glance that the print of one is too wide on the paper, and the breadth of a single letter would make all the difference; there are a dozen little details of this sort which need personal attention at every turn. Nor can an amateur successfully advertise or distribute his book. Even an author of the celebrity of Mr. Ruskin has crippled his usefulness and injured

injured his sale by attempting amateur publishing.

When all these matters are decided, a specimen page fixed, the different kinds of type decided, and so on, the printers begin their work. The MS. is given to a number of men who are arranged in a group, which is called a "companionship," and these are, or ought to be, occupied continuously on the book till it is done. But authors give the printers trouble, if, on the other hand, it is sometimes amply repaid in kind. They will not always send all the "copy," as it is termed, at once, when it is most important that the printers should have their whole work before them; they will not return proofs promptly, nor make their corrections at the same time, but send them in by driblets as second thoughts; all of which are exceeding interruptions to business. Those who have had proofs to correct have noticed on the MS. returned with them names written on the margin. This shows what portion has been allotted to each man of the group, and explains why it is important that only one side of the paper be written on, or the same sheet might have to be divided amongst two men, and paper is not yet made so thick as to enable them to split it in its thickness.

As soon as the printing is begun, usually on long strips of paper containing from two and a half to three pages of the book, begins also too often the strife as to spelling between author and printer. It has

has probably occurred but little to many readers what variations there can be, and how different are the customs of different printers. If a writer have any wish that his own punctuation and spelling be followed, let him be quite clear that he knows his own mind, and give, in writing, the strictest orders that no alteration whatever be made. If there be any one thing a really good writer knows, it is that punctuation is simply meant to aid the reader, and there is no hard-and-fast rule for commas and semicolons. But a printer has his hard-and-fast rule, only that the rules are not uniform in different houses. So with spelling. If we left it to the printers we should, unhappily, soon cease to write English, we should write American. We should have "favor" and "honor" for "favour" and honour"; we should "commence" instead of "begin"; we should have the vulgarity of "Did you have?" instead of "Had you?" Not long since a new edition of a volume of sermons by Dr. Pusey was sent back from the printer with the author's spelling in an already *printed volume* altered on almost every page—"judgement" with an "e" to "*judgment*" without one; "Oh," into "O!" and the like—simply because the pedantry of that particular office decided that its rule was better than that of one of the greatest scholars of England.

But now to come to misprints proper. The late Provost

Provost of Eton, Dr. Goodford, when a tutor, had a formula which he never tired of repeating, "Never think till you are in the Sixth Form"; till then his pupils were to look out and verify each word in a dictionary. Yet he would have been the first to admit that the boy who never thought was even more hopeless; the truth lay between the two contradictions, "never think" and "ever think." So a printer has to steer with difficulty between them, and it is hard to say which is the most trying, the man who blunders because he thinks, or the one who does so for an opposite reason. Misprints are wonderful, and are often such as seem invented by the evil one himself, so perverse is their ingenuity.

Some recur after all alterations, when the printer is quite certain that he is and must be right. Victor Hugo once used the English word "*varlet*" in one of his plays. It came back again and again printed "*valet.*" M. Louis Blanc, when living in England, wrote an article in English, in which he correctly gave the French phrase, "*à outrance.*" But since one of the commonest mistakes made by Englishmen is to use that phrase as "*à l'outrance,*" M. Louis Blanc, in spite of all his corrections, got it finally printed wrong. How could a Frenchman possibly know better than a British workman? If this were so, where were the uses of Waterloo?

The cost of such corrections as are necessitated by blunders of the printer is charged to the printer, but

but all else falls on the author or publisher, as may have been arranged. Few matters connected with books are a more frequent source of disagreement than corrections; for, as the printers work by time, it is difficult to decide what minutes, or fractions of minutes, are occupied in any given change. This further may be said to those who write, that all corrections made when the book is divided into pages are more costly than when the matter is in slip.

When the book has advanced a certain stage, varying with the size of the volume, the resources of the printer, and in great measure with the type adopted, the printer will often ask for a "release" of type, that is, he will print from his forms already set up as many copies as are wanted of those sheets, and distribute the type, or take the letters apart. Then it is that the number of the book likely to sell has to be calculated, 500, 750, 1,000, or more, and whether it shall be moulded, or stereotyped. Few persons have the smallest notion of the great weight or cost of the type used in printing, say, a crown octavo book of 500 pages. In such a book, there will be nearly 25 cwt. of type, and the cost will be over £160, exclusive of what is called furniture, chases, &c., all that is used in holding the type. When distributed the type must, of course, be set up again if a new edition be wanted, and the cost incurred *de novo;* and to avoid this expense, and the still vaster cost and warehouse-room

warehouse-room of keeping any large number of books standing, stereotyping, or electrotyping, which is a sort of glorified form of the first, is adopted in regard to such books as are likely to have any large sale without being changed to any great extent. The first process of this is called moulding, and in case of uncertainty this alone may be at first undertaken. The types as they stand for each page have a cast taken of them in soft yielding material, papier-mâché or plaster-of-Paris, which becomes hard as it dries, just as the impression of a seal is taken in bread-crumb or wax; the stereo-plate is made by running metal into the mould, which, in the case of electrotype, is coated with a harder metal, so that there is an exact and immoveable copy or duplicate of the page of shifting type. It is, of course, just infinitesimally less sharp and clear, but it gains in stability; there is no chance of a dropped letter, such as is found now and then in the very best printed books; but with perfectly careful workmen the artistic effect of a first-rate book printed from moveable type is better than that taken from a plate. In any case the first edition is usually taken from the moveable type, the worked sheets are laid aside till joined by others, and the cast is then taken from the type before distribution.

It is, then, on these worked sheets, printed on the paper supplied for the book, instead of the rough waste on which proofs are pulled, that the quality

quality and appearance of the type and work can be for the first time judged. It must be confessed that while a modern press can turn out a vast number of volumes with great credit, scarce any book nowadays can vie in beauty with the old Aldine books, with many printed in Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or with those printed by our English Baskerville in the last century, between the years 1756 and 1775. One reason of this is that our types are not so beautiful.

In old days each type-founder was desirous of getting designs for his letters from men of real artistic feeling; nor did these disdain to design a comma any more than they would scorn to make a beautiful leaf or flower in a picture devoted to saints or historical personages. There is a tradition that Hogarth designed Baskerville's types, which is likely enough; at any rate, they were the last English types of originality or beauty. The best now existing are copies of copies, reproduced mechanically, which have long ceased to have the human brain infused, as it were, into the molten metal. The best existing types at this moment are French, and they, not ours, are the true descendants of Baskerville's; for at his death in 1775 his types were sold to France, and used to print an edition of Voltaire, still well known, and most excellent in its workmanship. The modern French types of the best founts are reproduced, as it would seem, from these, but with less of exact mechanical copying

copying and more of human variation and fancy. There could scarcely be a better thing for the artistic future of books than that which might be done by some master of decorative art, like Mr. William Morris, and some great firm of type-founders in conjunction, would they design and produce some new types for our choicer printed books.

That the great bulk of the paper now made is not so good as it used to be is, I suppose, universally admitted. One reason is obvious. Far greater quantities are used every year, the best paper is made from linen rag, and there is less linen rag available since the larger wear of calico and woollen goods. Ultimately, of course, paper is now what it always was since first it was made from the fibres of the rush or papyrus. It was at first manipulated in no degree ; the outer peel was stripped off the rush, and the strips were fastened together. Gradually it was discovered that the vegetable fibre, beaten and disintegrated into pulp, then allowed under certain conditions to settle into a film and dried, was better. But the more the fibres can be disintegrated the better the paper; and no process is so complete as the making it in the first place into another material, and allowing it to be worn and broken, as the completest mode of destroying its stringiness. Every kind of material has been tried, especially those on which St. Paul said it would not do to lay a foundation—"wood,

"wood, hay, stubble," the most common being the coarse form of vegetable fibre known as Esparto grass, a species of broom. It is not wholly fanciful that human wear and use has something to do with the excellence of paper, as with all other things of art. Mechanism is fatal to the higher and more spiritual qualities which make art. It has its great uses in cheapening and rendering plenteous much which is valuable and in a limited degree beautiful. But just as a chromo-lithograph is vile compared with an oil-painting, just as a photograph of a picture compared with a beautiful print of it, so in exact proportion as you bring human work and human wear to bear on paper and printing you will have it, of its kind, supremely good, or only tolerable. This brings us to another reason why old paper was better than all but the best to be now procured. It was all hand-made; there was no machinery. The best paper now made, such as Whatman's in England, or the best Dutch, which is all still made by hand, is better than, or at least as good as, was ever made since the world was; but the greater part of cheap paper is bad.

Take a novel of ten years ago, and fold down the pages, they will often crack sharply off, showing as the paper gets old little trace of fibre; or burn a sheet of the same paper on a shovel, and, instead of shrivelling into a small roll of almost powdery ash, as is the case with good paper, the sheet retains

tains its form, on which the writing will sometimes remain visible. This seeming indestructibility is the very evidence of its worthlessness. It arises from the clay with which it has been loaded ; and the paper is scarcely more than a very thin and fragile china plate which soon goes to pieces, and returns to its natural dust.

So again, if we will have first-rate work in the printing of a book, it must be done by hand. Nowadays there are few printers who will or can do this well, and therefore again the Aldines and the Baskervilles are no more ; the average printing is better, but the highest, except in a few cases, is not so high. This is because the exact pressure given to ensure beautiful printing can only be given by the skilled human hand. In all things where tenderness of feeling is required, machinery breaks down. In Italy and other wine countries grapes have been and are crushed by machinery, but be it never so carefully adjusted, this bruises the skins and breaks the stones, giving a rough and tart flavour to the produce; so that in all the finer qualities they have to go back to the old fashion of the days of Isaiah, when the garments of him that trod in the wine-vat were red; and of the early days of the Italian people when the must foamed round the white feet of laughing girls. It cannot too often be said that machinery crushes and destroys that highest art which demands the human touch.

The first patent for making paper by machinery was

was taken out by one Robert, a workman attached to a paper-mill at Essone, in 1798 ; the machine was set up in the following year, but proved quite unworkable from its great imperfections. M. Didot, the proprietor of the mill in which Robert was a workman, bought the patent in the following year, introduced some improvements in the original model, and came over to England to have the plans executed. The machine was first used successfully at Mr. Hall's mill, in Hertfordshire, in 1803. Printing by machine-press instead of hand has been introduced very gradually, but it has at last almost driven out the old art. I am not here denying the convenience and the general accuracy of machinery, nor its exclusive adaptability for the generality of books, I am simply asserting that it is not the highest nor the most artistic work for those that are truly beautiful.

The area of type upon the page will have usually determined the size of the finished book, but this is only absolutely regarded as fixed when the paper is delivered to the printer, who folds his sheet of paper so many times according to the size needed. When paper was made by hand all sheets were, as a rule, the same size ; the sheet once folded, making two leaves and four pages, was called in-folio, or, shortly, folio, each leaf being a folio. These were once very common, the reason being in great measure that the size of the type required it. It is now rare, as is also the quarto, the sheet folded into

into four, or eight pages. These two sizes are now seldom used, except for dictionaries, encyclopaedias, church bibles, books of reference, or those which will usually be read at a desk standing. The sheet folded in eight was called an octavo, and in twelve a duodecimo. Now, however, that sheets may be of various sizes, the demy octavo, roughly speaking the size known as library books, is the only one that almost precisely keeps the old form and name; and the books in most common use are known as demy octavo; large crown, or post; crown octavo, and foolscap. Smaller books, approaching to the size once called duodecimo, so vary in shape that no special name is, or can be, attached to them.

The old notion of a book was, that if it were good enough to print, it was good enough to bind, so as to preserve it permanently, to be read over and over again. But since no book is sufficiently dry when issued, nor is the type *set* on the paper for this purpose, it was necessary to place it in some kind of wrapper to serve a temporary end. The most elementary covering is that paper wrap, known and cursed by all purchasers of German and French books; the lightest sewing, the flimsiest cover, so that the book is in rags before it is read through. But the miraculous thing is, that Continental students not only seem willing to endure this, but, whether it is that they read their books laid flat on a table and less at the fireside than

than we do, they certainly tear their books less apart, and actually keep them on their shelves for years, referring to them now and again in that condition.

The old boarding of the last century, as practised amongst ourselves, was pleasant, pretty, and useful. It was simply two sheets of stiff cardboard united by a back, the sides covered with blue or grey paper, and the name of the book on a pasted label. It served its purpose till the book could be bound; it was neat and cheap, and there was no pretence that it imitated anything beyond itself. Yet it had its disadvantages; it caught the dirt easily and soon became shabby; while, unquestionably, there are many books not good enough to deserve a leather binding, which yet are worth preserving as long as we are likely to need them. Hence have sprung up what are called cloth bindings, more or less ornate, fairly inoffensive in the hands of a person of taste, but also frequent vehicles for pretension and vulgarity. There is little to be said in reference to this matter, except that in the case of really good books, "boards" should always be regarded as temporary, inadequate coverings. And in reference to future bindings all faces should be set, like flints, against a detestable habit lately introduced of using wire instead of thread to fasten the sheets together. When a book stitched in this fashion is sent to be really bound, the difficulty of removing the wire is

so great that the book is almost sure to be torn; and moreover this again introduces into books what we should so eagerly strive to eliminate, the merely mechanical non-human labour.

Readers are much divided on the question whether books should or should not be cut. Some people are angry with the publishers that books to be read are not issued like Bradshaw's Guides, Bibles, Prayer Books, and the like, with cut edges. The reason is that when a volume is bound, the edges, being thrown out of the level smoothness they have acquired from the first cutting, will need a second trimming, and the margin will be sensibly reduced, so that the broad type will have a miserably inadequate setting, as though you should put a picture in a frame too narrow for it. Those who care for the future of our well-bound books, will see that there is reason on the publisher's side for refusing to give in to the hasty and unreasonable cry for books with cut edges. But when the paper-knife is used it should be done thoroughly. Some people never cut a book humanely, they treat it, or maltreat it, as though they had a special enmity towards it. An intelligent literary man used to say, in an altogether sweeping and ungallant manner, that he would never, if he could help it, trust a woman with a book. First, he said, that if she left it on a table she invariably put it open face downwards and broke the back, and next that she never cut it well into

into the corners, so that as soon as it was really opened the leaves were torn. Would that these iniquities were confined to the weaker sex!

When a book worth preserving is to be really bound, the binding should be suitable, and done by a good workman. The early bindings were most costly. In the British Museum, and other great collections, are to be seen covers in gold or silver, or carven wood, with bosses of precious stones, or of the metal itself wrought into special ornament on velvet or leather. But of bindings which were to be used and handled daily, the earliest fine specimens, which even now cannot be outdone, date from the first half of the sixteenth century. Many of the bindings executed for Jean Grolier are still extant, and fetch very high prices when they come into the market; they are remarkable in another way than their beauty, in showing the large and liberal spirit of the man, for they are inscribed, "Of the books of Jean Grolier and his friends." His notion of a book was that it should be used, and indeed if books are to be valued men must be trusted with them, and allowed access even to those which are the most precious. The French school of binding still stands very high, but our best Englishmen are as good, save that they want a little looking after in the way of head-bands and small details. But whoever will have his books really cared for must learn to take in them an intelligent interest, must consult with, instruct

instruct as well as defer to, the artist, and spend at least as much pains about the clothing of his books as about that of his own person, or that of his wife and daughters.

The books, however, of which we are speaking are for the most part boarded only, and have next to be distributed to the public. This is done in three ways: by advertising, by sending them to reviews, by subscribing them to the booksellers.

As soon as the volume is ready it is shown round by a traveller to all the leading booksellers in London and the provinces, and each of these speculates in as many copies as he thinks fit, getting them at that time and in that manner on special terms. As everyone knows, we can, by paying cash, get a large reduction on the price of a book, amounting in many cases to 25 per cent., and since the bookseller must also make his profit, the difference between the nominal and the actual sum received for a book is very considerable. The system employed by modern booksellers, while it has no doubt cheapened books to the public, has materially changed the character of the bookselling trade. We now meet more rarely than of old the man of intelligence who knew all about the books published, and was able to advise and help his customer. He is succeeded by the man who tries especially to sell the class of book out of which he can, under the changed circumstances of the trade, get the most money; who speculates

speculates in as few books as possible, leaving it to his customer to find out what books are in demand, and order them through him. The customer must discover the books by means of advertisements and reviews.

As a rule, if a book is good, the public, review or no review, finds it out and buys it; if it be bad no amount of praise from injudicious or foolish admirers will make it go. There is no such thing as "pushing a book," except to put it fairly before the public, to give it its opportunity, and let it take its chance. It is often said that the system of monster circulating libraries is a good thing for literature; but this may be doubted or even emphatically denied. Some thirty years ago, before the rise of these establishments, there were in every part of the country book clubs, containing from a dozen to fifty members, who chose and circulated the books from house to house. If, then, a good book of travel, or historical research, or biography were written, the publisher might feel sure that among these clubs an edition would sell, and on that security could offer good terms to the author. The book clubs have vanished, and the half-dozen monster libraries, if indeed there be so many, make less than half the number of books do, among their far larger number of readers. The present system has fostered the growth and development of the second-rate novel, but it has in no degree aided literature properly so called.

So

So our supposed book is launched on its life voyage. It may perish as so many do, almost at its birth, "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung," save perhaps by its begetter, and he sometimes, if it fail thus miserably, has the grace to be ashamed of his own abortion. But if it live in any true sense, its life may be as varied as any human existence, and, like that, it depends much on intrinsic character. Say it is a volume of poetry. In that case it is a miracle indeed if it attain success in life. For poetry, refined, subtle, romantic, unconcerned with the most obvious things of life, is ill-suited to make its way in a material world. When a man of such a character comes to the front he exercises a great and abiding influence, which lasts long after he is cold in death; but few there are who do so. And it is the same with poetry, except the very highest. It may be again repeated, that the absolutely first-rate book of any kind on any subject is sure to make its way, the poetry which takes most with the public is not the fairly good but the bad. Horace said long since—

"Mediocribus esse poetis
Non di non homines non concessere columnae."

Nor gods, nor men, nor booksellers' shops will have anything to do with middling poets. It is a melancholy thought that almost in our own days Tupper had an enormous sale, while Browning only slowly attained recognition. In this more than in any other class of literature popularity is no test

test of vitality. Probably Greene, who jeered at Shakspere, and parodied one of his fairest lines into "O tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide," was best known among his coevals—and who reads Greene now? "The Poet-Priest, Milman," is forgotten, for who reads Fazio? while Keats, who was thought, however erroneously, to have died of Milman's article in the *Quarterly*, reigns and will reign one of the Kings of Song.

Or, the book may be a novel. How soon these die, all but a few! Some indeed are very long lived. To speak only of English books, we shall not willingly let die *Tom Jones* or *Tristram Shandy*, the great masterpieces of humour, which if now and then coarse, were so after the fashion of the time, and less harmfully than certain modern novelists are indecent behind a veil; but how are others vanished! In a later day Scott remains one of the giants of all time; but where is Galt? Miss Austen lives; but where is Mrs. Brunton? And of the novels which we read when we were young, Miss Porter's, Mrs. Gore's, "*Où sont les neiges d'antan?*" as Villon sings: "Where are the snows of a year agone?"

Or in history, Grote's *Greece* is alive, but where is Mitford's? Another history of the same country, learned and painstaking, was never fully born. And Mr. Wordy's *History of the Peninsular War*, to prove that Providence was on the side of the Tories? dead, dead; and with no hope of a joyful or indeed of any resurrection. To

To go into a library is like wandering into some great cathedral church and looking at the monuments on the walls. Everyone there was in his or her day the pattern of all the virtues, the best father, the tenderest wife, the most devoted child. Never were such soldiers and sailors as those whose crossed swords or gallant ships are graven in marble above their tombs; every dead sovereign was virtuous as Marcus Aurelius, every bishop as blameless as Berkeley. The inscriptions are all of the kind which George IV. put on the statue of George III. at the end of the "Long Walk" at Windsor. Having embittered his father's life while that father had mind enough to know the baseness of his son, he called him "pater optimus," best of fathers! This same George, it may be said in a parenthesis, gave to the library of Eton School, not such a tomb of dead books as is the library of Eton College, the dead Delphin Classics, which have been well described as "the useless present of a royal rake."

Yet those names so forgotten which meet us in the Church were not without their influence. If there be one statement more than another to be disputed among those made by Shakspere's *Mark Antony*, it is —

> "The evil that men do lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones."

It has a truth, but a less truth than that the good more

more often lives, and passes into other lives to be renewed and carried forward with fresh vigour in the coming age. Were it not so the human race would steadily deteriorate, weltering down into a black and brutal corruption, ever quickening, if at all, into lower forms. As it is we know that the race, with all its imperfections, "moves upward, working out the beast, and lets the ape and tiger die." The great men stand like stars at distant intervals, individuals grander, perhaps, than ever will be again, each in his own way; but still the average level of every succeeding age is higher than that which went before it. We may never again have a Homer, Aristotle, Archimedes, St. Paul, Caesar, or Charlemagne; but in all things those great ones who forecast philosophy, or science, or mediaeval civilization bear sway over us still,—"the living are under the dominion of the dead." Those lesser forgotten ones of whom we have spoken have carried on the torch of life in his or her own home circle, were influential even if not widely known, and have helped to make us what we are.

It is the same with literature. The shelves of a library are catacombs. There stand out among the dead who are yet alive such names, to speak only of more modern days, as Dante, Milton, Shakspere, "on whose forehead climb The crowns o' the world. O! eyes sublime, With tears and laughter for all time"; there too are "the ingenious" Mr. This,

This, or "the celebrated" Mr. That, now forgotten. But they too have formed the literature which is ours. Does a modern strive after originality, ten chances to one his best things have been said before him; the only true originality is to reconstruct, recast, and transmit, with just the additions enforced by the special circumstances of the time Again: "the living are under the dominion of the dead."

And as perhaps no human life was ever wholly worthless, and the worst use to which you can put a man, as has been said, is to hang him, so no book is wholly worthless, and none should ever be destroyed. We have probably all had the same experience, that we have never parted with a book, however little we fancied it would be wanted again, without regretting it soon afterwards. There is a spark of good remaining in the most unvirtuous person or book.

But it is the peculiarity of books as apart from men, that while the man is enshrined once for all in one body only, a book has many duplicates; and in regard to some it may be perhaps admitted that the copies stored up in libraries are indeed enough. In the British Museum, or in the Bodleian, or in the Bibliothèque Nationale, persons may read two thousand years hence how we in the dawn of science and civilization lived, more legibly than we can read in the relics of the lacustrine dwellings how lived our forefathers before

before the dawn began. They will marvel at our manners if they take some ladies' fictions for gospel truth about us.

The remaining copies—preserve them while you can, unless indeed they be what Charles Lamb called *biblia abiblia*, railway novels, birthday books, and the like—will fade away, will light the fire, and wrap the parcels of generations to come. The best use for them is that to which many unsaleable books are put at once, they are "wasted," that is, are sent to the mill, ground up, pulped down, and made again into paper for fresh books and newer readers.

We have not been unmindful of the spiritual nature of books while we have dwelt especially on their material fabric, nor forgotten that, by books alone, we come to know intimately the mind of the mighty dead or of the living writer. Did Mr. Bethell, who was his Eton tutor, know Shelley as we may know him, or Provost Hawtrey, who was in his form, and thought him a very commonplace boy; did Byron, or Medway, or Trelawny? The muddy vesture of decay was about him, and veiled his pure spirit; we see him in his books, as he was. Did Anne Hathaway, the wife who lay in Shakspere's bosom, know how divine was the intellect which informed that tenement of clay; did even the friend of the sonnets? We, not Hamnet who died young, not Susanna and Judith, who survived their father, are Shakspere's true children.

It

It is by books that mind speaks to mind, by books the world's intelligence grows, books are the tree of knowledge, which has grown into and twined its branches with those of the tree of life, and of their common fruit men eat and become as gods knowing good and evil. Of books, dear Charles Lamb said that he trusted, when he died, to go to some world where he might still learn what he wished to know by the slow and pleasing habit of reading, and not as he phrased it, by some troublesome method of intuition. To that every book-lover will say heartily "Amen."

ON ENGLISH PROSE STYLE.

NO one should write himself down in his dotage by becoming a mere praiser of past time: nor is it well to repeat the cant, prevalent some years since, that who would write good English must study the "Spectator"; the first enunciation of the modern fashionable notion, only half believed, that Art and Literature reached the point for all after-imitation in the reign of Queen Anne.

While Cardinal Newman and Walter Pater, Thomas Hardy and Hesba Stretton, live among us, each in his or her own way showing the perfection to which, in this age, our language can be wrought, he would be a bold man who would assert that even in the adaptation of sound to sense the art of style has in any degree decayed. There has been change; faint and gradual differences separate the prose of one epoch from that of another; Milton, Gibbon, Macaulay write unlike

unlike each other, not only because they were different in character and in temperament, but because they lived in different ages.

It may be doubted whether the greater diffusion of education, while it has certainly brought more writers into the field, and more bad writers, since in a matter of style the number of careless persons always preponderates; has not also confused the minds of readers, robbed them in a degree of their clearer judgment, interfered with their sense of proportion, spoiled their quick apprehension of what is fine art in writing. When the dread of examination was not upon the mind of every boy and girl in the land, it was more easy to consider style in what was read. Profusion brings confusion. But as the body is not the better simply for being fed, apart from the graces of the table, so the mind is harmed of that student who takes facts, or even fiction, without care for the manner in which they are presented. This indiscriminate variety of reading makes it unquestionably difficult to distinguish good style among the writers of our own day. We are the children of the century, we think the thoughts of the men and women around us, and we have a tendency to admire those writers who put our own ideas into form, without always considering whether the form be good. We have to place ourselves in an attitude of criticism, and this sometimes appears to be irreverent towards those whose opinions have influenced us. But this

this must be done by all who would hand on unsullied English to future generations.

Let us see if there be any principles which may guide us in our study. It is an obvious remark, that the spoken word precedes the written, and that writing only exists because each man cannot speak directly to all others. The written word differs from the spoken in that it is more measured, dignified, thoughtful: it were pedantic if men always spoke as they would write. But at the same time, all good writers have spoken well; they have not been necessarily great talkers, or orators, they may have been naturally silent, but what they said was clearly said, and with fitting words. A careless speaker will be slovenly and inaccurate in writing. If a young man says, in answer to a question, "It will suit me down to the ground;" or a young woman says, "Oh, thank you ever so much, it will be awfully jolly;" we know that the elementary meanings of words are still sealed to them, and it is quite impossible that any book worth reading can proceed from them.

The first characteristic of a good style is an accurate and cautious estimate of the values of words; and I would add this to some excellent remarks of Mr. Arthur Galton, in a preface to his recent work, "English Prose from Maundeville to Thackeray." He says:

"It is more profitable to study prose in concrete examples, than to hold vague and general theories about style.

style. . . . In all ages the really great writers have differed very little from one another; all good prose has the same qualities of directness, plainness, and simplicity. And good prose can still be written whenever a writer condescends to think clearly, to stick to the point, and to express his ideas in the plainest, the simplest, the most direct and unpretentious way." (*Preface to "English Prose," Camelot Series.*)

And long ago, Steele said precisely the same thing about the art of conversation.

"If I were to choose the people with whom I would spend my hours of conversation, they should be certainly such as laboured no farther than to make themselves readily and clearly apprehended. . . . To have good sense, and ability to express it, are the most essential and necessary qualities in companions. When thoughts rise in us fit to utter . . . there needs but very little care in clothing them." ("*Tatler*," *On Eloquence.*)

It follows from this, that a writer should have somewhat to say. The great corrupters of English style are the newspapers. Of course, here and there you get an article vigorous and terse, so good in style that our first regret is that it should not live, but be forgotten before the close of day; but the greater part of our daily newspaper reading comes from the people who ask what they shall write about, not from those who write because they must. Still, as when the Psalmist sang, there is but one true reason for utterance: "I believe, therefore will I speak."

Now for some examples of "simplicity, plainness, directness,

directness, and their contraries. Take first a very ordinary subject, the description of some place or fact known to the writer by his own experience or reading, which he wishes the reader to see vividly in the same light as that in which he sees it":—

"Demerara yields to no country in the world in her birds. The mud is flaming with the scarlet curlew. At sunset the pelicans return from the sea to the courada trees. Among the flowers are the humming birds. The columbine, gallinaceous, and passerine tribes people the fruit trees. At the close of the day, the vampires, or winged bats, suck the blood of the traveller, and cool him by the flap of their wings. Nor has Nature forgotten to amuse herself here in the composition of snakes,—the camondi has been killed from thirty to forty feet long; he does not act by venom, but by size and convolution. The Spaniards affirm that he grows to the length of eighty feet, and that he will swallow a bull; but Spaniards love the superlative. There is a *whipsnake* of a beautiful green. The labarri snake of a dirty brown, who kills you in a few minutes. Every lovely colour under heaven is lavished upon the counacouchi, the most venomous of reptiles, and known by the name of the *bush-master*. Man and beast fly before him, and allow him to pursue an undisputed path." (Sydney Smith, Review of "Waterton's Wanderings.")

In this there is no single word superfluous, no epithet which does not tell; it is simple, plain, direct, admirable prose, yet not what we call prosaic; there are touches of humour, and of dread, while the colour is brilliant as a painting. No one who has ever heard or read that passage can fail to have some conception of the bird and snake

snake life of Demerara, as Sydney Smith conceived it; and therefore in its way it is a triumph of style.

Now take the well-known sentence from Russell's "Modern Europe" about the behaviour of the Goths in Italy:—

"They hunted the bear on the voluptuous parterre, the trim garden and the expensive pleasure ground, where effeminacy was wont to saunter or indolence to loll."

It is scarcely possible to have more faults; the riming syllables at the outset, the idiotic epithets, the personification of qualities, the ignoble word which concludes it without just cause.

The passage from Sydney Smith is an excellent example of plainness; I can best show by its opposite what is that other quality of style, directness. All bad writers are indirect; yet to be so is a peculiar attribute of women who write ill. Here are two specimens, from an author I will not name, because on the whole she writes well, and is not in this respect worse than many others.

"Watching her sitting at his window, at work on nice things for his comfort, to be worn as she fondly hoped in the coming winter, which he knew he should never see, he remarked the beauty of her face and form. . . . In her pale blue linen dress, and bunch of field daisies, he thought her charming."

Again, a single sentence a few pages later:—

"What was the reason of her writing at all I could never make out."

And,

And, that I may be impartial, I will take a very flagrant example from a male writer:—

"A handsome manly fellow appeared Mark Elliot to the hundreds of eyes that were bent on him."

The author means to say that Mark Elliot was handsome; what he does say is, that some one appeared to be Mark Elliot. This sort of thing comes, as a rule, from simple slovenliness. Yet of course so soon as a writer is master of the words he uses, he may invert his sentences with good effect: he must do so at times in order to give due emphasis. The opening sentences of "Adam Bede" are a case in point:—

"With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past. This is what I undertake to do for you, reader. With this drop of ink at the end of my pen I will show you the roomy workshop of Mr. Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder, in the village of Hayslope, as it appeared on the eighteenth of June, in the year of our Lord 1799."

That is a very pregnant sentence. One less sure of her powers would have written, and ought to have written: "The Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal far-reaching visions of the past with a single drop of ink for a mirror;" and the same with the next clause. Yet you feel at once that so the life and spirit would have gone out of it. The inversion is legitimate because the vivid point to be brought before your mind is the swarthy boy with the ink in the palm of his hand, as described in a passage

passage in "Eothen," which George Eliot had in her mind; because, too, she determines to let you into the secret of her own deliberate habit of composition; the poised pen with the drop of ink at the end, waiting till she had ordered and balanced her whole sentence, before she wrote down a word. But although inversion may be used with great force, you will find, as a rule, that the goodness of a style is generally in proportion to the rarity with which the privilege is taken.

It is the same with the simplicity of sentences.

That style is best, as a rule, which is freest from parentheses. In letter-writing it may be otherwise, for a letter aims at showing the thoughts as they arise, orderly in a well-ordered mind, but not so classified as to be pedantic. And again, the parenthesis may be used to excess with a certain comic effect, to give the impression of a discursiveness which does not really exist; as in Charles Lamb's Essays, in "Tristram Shandy," and in Cowper's Letters: but the student must avoid parentheses, making each sentence convey one thought and no more. Yet not every author who is free from parentheses is therefore simple. Macaulay, for instance, is often laboured and confused, though the unwary may sometimes mistake brilliancy for transparency. Lest this should seem a perverse judgment of my own, I will quote what Lord Cockburn wrote of Macaulay's style:—

"To my feeling, Macaulay is always ponderous. In the two

two one-things needful, thought and knowledge, he never fails to be admirable. But his mere style I cannot approve of. I know no great writer whose style is so dangerous to youth. It is more so than even Gibbon's, because his other qualities are more attractive than Gibbon's. His elaborate brilliancy, constant antithesis, and studied quaintness of manner are all wearisome. But these faults, though still gross, and even paraded as his peculiar excellencies, are diminishing, and if the progress shall end in simplicity he will then be a good writer. Simplicity should be his aim; all that is bad of him may be traced to the want of it." (*Cockburn's "Circuit Journeys," p.* 273.)

But, after all, you may be thinking that these are but different ways of putting the same thing; they are excellent qualities for a piece of straightforward narrative like an account of Ceylon, or the record of facts, such as you have in a newspaper. How when the *subject* is complicated, when the writer is not only giving you, in the best way he can, a sort of superior auctioneer's catalogue, but feels himself, and wishes to arouse in you, wonder, admiration, love, hate, scorn, pity, and all the various passions which to clothe in words is the part of the master? What are we to say of those storms of melodious sound which we hear in the great authors whose succession has never failed from the beginning of the fourteenth century till now; from Maundeville and Malory and Latimer to those men and women of our own day, who, in spite of many evil examples, still write English, free, dignified, and pure? What of such passages as Ruskin's description of the Campanile

Campanile of Giotto at Florence, and the peroration of Newman's Sermon on the Parting of Friends; the two instances selected by Charles Kingsley as the finest examples known to him of modern prose? The answer is not simple, but I trust to make you see what it is.

First, no writer of a fine passage is at the time aware he is writing finely. A bit of deliberate fine writing is quite sure to be turgid, bombastic, unreal. But if the thought be lofty, then, language being the vehicle by which thought is communicated to others, the language must of necessity rise also, and the beauty of words will correspond to the ideal beauty in the mind. This will be easier understood if we consider the place in the chapter in which such celebrated passages occur.

Cardinal Newman's words on music are a portion of a sermon preached before the University of Oxford in 1843, on "The Theory of Developments in Religious Doctrine." The history of the formation of religious dogmas demanded and received from him the most precise and guarded language. But as you read, you feel he is burning with great thoughts, which he must give in the simplest words. We are conscious of underlying passion, satire, scorn, even humour, but all held down as by an iron hand. At last he has to speak of music, not as an integral or necessary part of his subject, but only as an illustration. And therefore, music being his darling art, he may let himself go, give way

way to the storm of excited feeling which has surged within him. Yet unconsciously, as the orator when moved by true feeling is unaware of the vibrant tones of his voice. This is the passage:—

"Let us take another instance, of an outward and earthly form, or economy, under which great wonders unknown seem to be typified; I mean musical sounds, as they are exhibited most perfectly in instrumental harmony. There are seven notes in the scale; make them fourteen; yet what a slender outfit for so vast an enterprise! What science brings so much out of so little? Out of what poor element does some great master in it create his new world! Shall we say that all this exuberant inventiveness is a mere ingenuity or trick of art, like some game or fashion of the day, without reality, without meaning? We may do so; and then perhaps we shall also account the science of theology to be a matter of words; yet, as there is a divinity in the theology of the Church, which those who feel cannot communicate, so there is also in the wonderful creation of sublimity and beauty of which I am speaking. To many men the very names which the science employs are utterly incomprehensible. To speak of an idea or a subject seems fanciful or trifling, to speak of the views which it opens upon us to be childish extravagance; yet is it possible that that inexhaustible evolution and disposition of notes, so rich yet so simple, so intricate yet so regulated, so various yet so majestic, should be a mere sound which is gone and perishes? Can it be that those mysterious stirrings of heart, and keen emotions, and strange yearnings after we know not what, and awful impressions from we know not whence, should be wrought in us by what is unsubstantial, and comes and goes, and begins and ends in itself? It is not so; it cannot be. No; they have escaped from some higher sphere; they are the outpourings of eternal harmony in the medium of created sound; they are echoes from our Home; they are

are the voice of Angels or the Magnificat of Saints, or the living laws of Divine Governance, or the Divine Attributes; something are they besides themselves, which we cannot compass, which we cannot utter—though mortal man, and he perhaps not otherwise distinguished above his fellows, has the gift of eliciting them."

Just in the same way, the thought rises, and the eloquence rises with it, in the chapter called the "Lamp of Beauty," in the "Seven Lamps of Architecture." The whole chapter is masterly. The earlier part is written with a certain stateliness. Ruskin passes through a long catalogue of ornament and design, which according to him make for ugliness, to justify his position. In all this the writing is lucid, but there is nothing remarkable; all is good, and deserves study, but it could not be quoted for any distinctive features. But now he comes to speak of the perfect beauty with which Salisbury Cathedral rises out of its surrounding greensward, and the Campanile of Giotto at Florence stands out against the sky. He contrasts the two in a passage, of which the whole were too long to quote; and then is carried out of himself, is swayed by a certain inspiration, in speaking of the artist who conceived the latter work:—

"I said that the power of human mind had its growth in the wilderness, much more must the love and conception of that beauty whose every line and hue we have seen to be at the best a faded image of God's daily work, and an arrested ray of some star of creation, be given chiefly in the places which He has gladdened by planting there the fir tree and the pine. Not within the walls of Florence, but

but among the far-away fields of her lilies, was the child trained who was to raise that headstone of Beauty above her towers of watch and war. Remember all that he became, count the sacred thoughts with which he filled the heart of Italy, ask those who followed him what they learned at his feet; and when you have numbered his labours, and received their testimony, if it seem to you that God had verily poured out on this His servant no common nor restrained portion of His Spirit, and that he was indeed a King among the children of men; remember also that the legend upon his crown was that of David, 'I took thee from the sheep-cotes and from following the sheep.'"

The last line is an example, as I imagine, of an unconscious alteration of one sound for another which is more pleasing to the ear. No one better understands the value of "apt alliteration's artful aid" than Mr. Ruskin, but he also knows that alliteration may be overdone. Now we have in the last sentence three f's; "from the sheep-cotes and from following." The word in the Psalms is "sheepfolds":—

"He chose David also his servant, and took him away from the sheepfolds. As he was following the ewes great with young ones he took him, that he might feed Jacob his people and Israel his inheritance."

The preponderance of the "f" sound is not unduly felt among the many words; but the moment the sentence was condensed, it was evident that "sheep-cotes" would be better than "sheep-folds."

I would however beg you to notice that unconsciousness in writing, which is largely the secret of all

all good work, is quite another thing from unconsciousness in revision. With all his splendid qualities, Ruskin is a less excellent artist than Newman, mainly because he is more self-conscious. But the passage once written, and on the whole accepted by the judgment, then comes the time when no care and finish can be too great, when "cotes" would be accepted and "folds" rejected, when jingle and the too frequent recurrence of the same word would be carefully avoided. Mr. Pater lately wrote an Essay on "Flaubert," in which he quoted what that master of style says about revision:—

"Neglect nothing. Labour! Do the thing over again, and don't leave your work till you feel convinced you have brought it to the last point of perfection possible for you. In these days genius is not rare. But what no one has now, what we should try to have, is the conscience of one's work."

And further in the same essay Mr. Pater tells us that Flaubert

"sat month after month, seeking sometimes with so much pain, the expression, 'the phrase,' weighing the retention or rejection of an epithet—his one fixed belief the belief in beauty, literary beauty, with liberal delight at beauty in other men's work, remembering after many years the precise place on the page of some approved form of sentence."

Whoever would write well must care about the work for its own sake. There are those who will tel

tell you they cannot write unless they are in the humour, who work spasmodically, and therefore idly; there are others who find no difficulty at all, who can force out as many lines on one day as another, whatever be the weather or their own moods.

Of such was Anthony Trollope. No doubt he was pleased with the men and women he created, and you can read his stories, it might be truer to say you could read his stories; but I doubt if he had real interest in the work, or cared in what words he clothed the story he had to tell; he went to his work as the journeyman grocer takes down the shutters, and weighs his moist sugar, as the mercer's assistant handles his yard wand; the interest of his life lay elsewhere. And therefore his style is detestable, his chapters end wearisomely; you feel he laid down his pen with relief, his pulse beating as calmly as when he began; no thrill, no sense of melody, no cadence in his words.

Charles Kingsley, who wrote a good style, when he took time to prune it, would grow so excited as he wrote, that he had to leave his standing desk, and rush into the open air to pace his garden and to smoke, before he could calm himself down again to the mere act of writing, so much did his words interest and move him. But because Trollope did not *feel*, however he might like to tell a story well, and make his puppets dance, he comes to the end of a chapter where, as an architect puts his ornament on coign and frieze, or a woman lace on the

the edges of her garments, graceful and eloquent words find natural and appropriate place; and we find him ending his chapters thus:

"'She is not my style at all,' said he. 'But of course a man is obliged to be civil to girls in his own house.' And then they all went to bed."

Of course they did, but what need to say it, and leave such a ragged edge! We turn a few pages:

"And so it was that Christmas day was passed at Noningsby."

A few more:

"Mr. Mason was not a contented man when he sat down to his solitary beefsteak in Soho Square."

This is sugar weighed out in pounds, ribbon cut in lengths. I do not say that this is always wrong; but whether the chapter is mere narrative, or is meant to be passionate, full of incidents which thrill, so far as Trollope can thrill, he is always at that same level; there is no quiet striking of some gentle chord to let the music die away.

Now take Scott. Perhaps the most striking single scene in the whole range of his works is the interview at Richmond between Jeanie Deans and Queen Caroline:

"'Our business is, I think, ended for the present, my Lord Duke,' said the Queen, 'and, I trust, to your satisfaction. Hereafter I hope to see your Grace more frequently, both at Richmond and St. James's.—Come, Lady Suffolk, we must wish his Grace good morning.'"

The

The business of the chapter is over, how shall he end it? Not

"And so they went up the avenue,"

but

"They exchanged their parting reverences, and the Duke, so soon as the ladies had turned their backs, assisted Jeanie to rise from the ground, and conducted her back through the avenue, which she trode with the feeling of one who walks in her sleep."

The way to end a chapter or a book is perhaps as good a lesson in style as you can get. I will quote three examples to explain what I mean when I say that there is the place for eloquence; because there the thought and the interest culminate, and the silence comes at once with double impressiveness; or else a few chords bridge the gulf between the music and the stillness. Here is a passage which all must know. Sir Walter Raleigh did not set himself to write finely, but he put into words what such a soul felt, when "with no cold gradations of decay" he was to pass into the great unknown life.

"O eloquent, just and mighty death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the farstretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet.*"

And here is a simpler passage, the end of Miss Stretton's "Michel Lorio's Cross." A man scouted by

by the Breton peasants of his village, because he was a Protestant, has at the cost of his own life saved that of a little child:

"Michel Lorio was dead and all that could be done for him was to carry his dead body home to his paralytic mother, and lay it upon his bed in the little loft, where he had spent so many hours of sorrowful loneliness. It was a perplexing problem to the simple people. Some said that Michel had been permitted to save the child by diabolic agency, which had failed him when he sought to save himself. Others maintained that it was no other than the great archangel St. Michel who had securely fastened the net upon the stake and so preserved Delphine, while the heretic was left to perish. A few thought secretly, and whispered it in fear, that Michel had done a noble deed, and won heaven thereby. The Curé, who came to look upon the calm dead face, opened his lips after long and profound thought—'If this man had been a Christian,' he said, 'he would have been a saint and a martyr.'"

Our third example shall be one which does not travel beyond the simplest words at the command of any villager. It is the conclusion of Mr. Hardy's "The Woodlanders," which he puts into the mouth of a girl, the poorest of the poor, at her lover's grave:

"'Now, my own love,' she whispered, 'you are mine and only mine, for she has forgot 'ee at last, although for her you died. But I, whenever I get up, I'll think of 'ee. Whenever I plant the young larches I'll think that none can plant as you planted, and whenever I split a gad, and whenever I turn the cider wring, I'll say none could do it like you. If ever I forget your name, let me forget home and heaven. . . But no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee, for you was a good man and did good things.'"

Yet

Yet another paragraph may be quoted as an example of how sentences of direct, simple, plain narrative, not without a touch of humour, can glide at once into words of extraordinary beauty, under the stress of passionate feeling. Cardinal Newman vindicates the Church for showing honour to images; and part of the defence is a very characteristic argument, that dishonour to images implies the contrary:

"What is meant," he says, "by burning Bishops, or Cardinals, or Popes *in effigy?* has it no meaning? is it not plainly intended for an insult? Would any one who was burned in effigy feel it no insult? Well, then, how is it *not* absurd to feel pain at being dishonoured in effigy, *yet* absurd to feel pleasure at being honoured in effigy?"

Then, after working out this idea in somewhat more detail, he has this paragraph, worthy of the most careful study from the point of view here selected:

"But this is not all; Protestants actually set up images to represent their heroes, and they show them honour without any misgiving. The very flower and cream of Protestantism used to glory in the statue of King William on College Green, Dublin; and though I cannot make any reference in print, I recollect well what a shriek they raised some years ago when the figure was unhorsed. Some profane person one night applied gunpowder, and blew the King right out of his saddle; and he was found by those who took interest in him, like Dagon, on the ground. You might have thought the poor senseless block had life, to see the way people took on about it, and how they spoke of his face, and his

his arms, and his legs; yet those same Protestants, I say, would at the same time be horrified had I used 'he' and 'him' of a crucifix, and would call me one of the monsters of the Apocalypse did I but honour my Living Lord as they their dead king." ("Present Position of Catholics," p. 181.)

The collocation of strong monosyllables at the end of this example is to be noted, and though we should not imitate it, or indeed any point of style, servilely, yet should we find our thoughts naturally clothe themselves in such a sentence, we shall not reject the phrase because it has a rise rather than a cadence, and we may remember we have admirable authority. The close, for instance, of a famous passage in Latimer's "Sermon of the Plough" is wholly monosyllabic. He says of the Devil:

"And when he had once brought Christ to the Cross he thought all cock sure."

In the quotation from Sir Walter Raleigh the whole is but one long sentence; Miss Stretton's sentences are shorter, the whole divided much more frequently by periods. Cardinal Newman's are more flowing; Lord Macaulay chops up his sentences at times into mincemeat. Neither plan is wrong. There is no rule for the length of sentences, but that of clearness and emphasis. One of the most full and pathetic sentences in the whole range of literature consists of two words only: "Jesus wept."

wept." Some of Milton's are like a musical fugue in their long and stately march. But it will be obvious that in a narrative, sentences will be shorter, because the thoughts are more various and broken, than in a philosophical treatise, where the thought is progressive. For instance, the concluding sentence of the Rev. H. B. Wilson's Bampton Lectures, next to Newman's the finest pulpit oratory known to me in our days, consists of no less than one hundred and seventy words. The passage is this:

"Finally, if in the course of these lectures questions new to some have been opened, if in the minds of some, in young and vigorous soils, there shall have been sown seeds of thoughts concerning God and man, and divine law, and human history, thoughts worthy to be matured anxiously, and when matured, it may be, submitted hereafter to the judgment of their own generation, let me request such to carry also with them this caution, which I trust has been sufficiently present to myself: that no member of a communion or society is bound, either by public or private duty, to unsettle received opinions where they may seem to be erroneous, unless he have a reasonable hope, as it appears to him, that he shall be able to substitute something better in their place: we should not rob weak wayfarers in this worldly scene of the reeds on which they lean, unless we can strengthen their feeble knees or supply into their right hands stronger staves to lean on."

That quotation for one purpose serves also for another. A pedantic rule tells us never to end a sentence with a preposition. But the whole force and rhythm of the sentence is destroyed if we substitute

stitute for the last phrase "stronger staves on which to lean." Nor is it trivial to accentuate the effect of a change in only a few words. A whole chapter or section of a book is like a musical work, it is built up of paragraphs, as that is of movements; the word corresponds to the note, the sentences to the phrases, the parts of sentences to the chords. In that art we are conscious of a correct or incorrect chord, a beautiful phrasing, a false modulation. So, unless we are able to recognise absolute perfection in that sentence from the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"Turned to flight the armies of the aliens";

in Shakspere:

"Nay, this my hand will rather The multitudinous seas encarnadine, Making the green one red";

in Milton:

"A noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks";

those who insist on beauty of style speak to those who cannot understand, and are as those who to such as know not one note of music from another should play some elaborate symphony, and expect them to unravel its "linked sweetness."

We noticed how Flaubert could recollect after many years the exact place on the page of some favourite sentence. We all have to remember, that a good sentence, musical, balanced, harmoniously

harmoniously proportioned in itself, is the foundation of the paragraph, as is the chapter of the book.

In the "Contemporary Review" for April, 1885, you will find a very clever paper on style by Mr. Louis Stevenson, in which he has a few weighty words on the sentence:

> "Each phrase," he says, "is to be comely in itself, and between the implication and the evolution of the sentence there should be a satisfying equipoise of sound, for nothing more often disappoints the ear than a sentence solemnly and sonorously prepared, and hastily and weakly finished."

Now having said as much as is needful on principles, we turn to details. These must be mainly negative; though the first is positive. We must be careful about punctuation, and stop our work as we mean it to be read. Modern writers are incredibly careless, and take little note of the value of stops, which they reduce as far as possible to the comma and the period. The colon is almost neglected; but it is extremely valuable, as marking a limb of a sentence, where the period is not needed. A comma always should be used, if possible, rather than a parenthetic sign, and dashes as rarely as may be. And this, not only because a page so written looks ugly, but because our reading, and the sense of our writing, is affected by the marks we use.

We must, of course, be careful about grammar, though not all popular writers are so. There are

two

two faults against which a caution is needed. If a verb has its own inflexion, we must use it; and not supply its place by an auxiliary verb. In poetry constantly, for the sake of the metre, in prose often from mere carelessness, we find people say "he did enjoy," for "he enjoyed," "he did love," for "he loved." The one phrase in which this is absolutely offensive is "did have": as "did you have a pleasant walk?" "did you have your dinner?" instead of "had you a pleasant walk?" And with these may be classed such disgraceful vulgarisms as "to have a look" instead of "to look"; "to have a smoke" instead of "to smoke"; and, worst of all, "to put in an appearance" instead of "to appear," or simply "to come."

The next slovenliness, which is common, increasing, and always to be avoided, is the thrusting of the adverb between the infinitive sign and the verb: "they seemed to greatly enjoy the proceedings"; instead of either "they seemed greatly to enjoy"; or, "to enjoy greatly."

Again, from sheer carelessness, we often find such a sentence as "It was Jones who devised and carried out the plan"; instead of "Jones devised and carried out the plan."

Victor Hugo has one inestimable rule, which deserves to be graven on the memory of all who essay to write: "Quand la chose est, dites le mot." We may not use paraphrases such as Macaulay loves; but apply the dictum in its fullest measure and

and in all its meanings; and of whatever we have to speak we must do so in the most direct and unequivocal manner.

And so we return once more to principles. We have the tongue of Raleigh and Walton and Milton, in which Bunyan and South and Defoe wrote so plainly, directly and vigorously: wherein Shakspere out-tops, as yet, all English writers; and it has come down to us unstained and almost unchanged. A great responsibility is laid on those who write, and also on those who read. If we leave the circulating library on one side, and study the acknowledged great writers, in them devoutly read by day, on them meditate by night; so shall the great treasure of speech committed to our charge suffer no diminishing nor loss.