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*Julius Charles Hare.*



# GUESSES AT TRUTH:

BY

TWO BROTHERS.

[Julius C: Hare  
and  
A: W: Hare]

Μάντις δ' ἄριστος ὅστις εἰκάζει καλῶς.

The best divine is he who well divines.

FROM THE FIFTH LONDON EDITION.



BOSTON:  
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LXI.



57388

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TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

The favour I have always experienced from you emboldens me to address you publicly by this name. For more than twenty years I have cherished the wish of offering some testimony of my gratitude to him by whom my eyes were opened to see and enjoy the world of poetry in nature and in books. In this feeling, he, who shared all my feelings, fully partook. You knew my brother ; and though he was less fortunate than I have been, in having fewer opportunities of learning from your living discourse, you could not deny him that esteem and affection, with which all delighted to regard him. Your writings were among those he prized the most : and unless this little work had appeared anonymously when it first came out, he would have united with me in dedicating it to you.

Then too would another name have been associated with yours, — the name of one to whom we felt an equal and like obligation, a name which, I trust, will ever be coupled with yours in the admiration and love of Englishmen, — the name of Coleridge. You and he



came forward together in a shallow, hard, worldly age, — an age alien and almost averse from the higher and more strenuous exercises of imagination and thought, — as the purifiers and regenerators of poetry and philosophy. It was a great aim; and greatly have you both wrought for its accomplishment. Many, among those who are now England's best hope and stay, will respond to my thankful acknowledgement of the benefits my heart and mind have received from you both. Many will echo my wish, for the benefit of my country, that your influence and his may be more and more widely diffused. Many will join in my prayer, that health and strength of body and mind may be granted to you, to complete the noble works which you have still in store, so that men may learn more worthily to understand and appreciate what a glorious gift God bestows on a nation when He gives them a poet.

Had this work been dedicated to you then, it might have pleased you more to see your great friend's name beside your own. The proof of my brother's regard too would have endeared the offering. Then, — if you will allow me to quote a poem, which, from its faithful expression of fraternal love, has always sounded to me like the voice of my own heart, — “There were two springs which bubbled side by side, As if they had been made that they might be Companions for each other.” But now for a while that blessed companionship has been interrupted: “One has disappeared: The other, left behind, is flowing still.” Yet, small as the tribute



is, and although it must come before you without these recommendations, may you still accept it in consideration of the reverence which brings it; and may you continue to think with your wonted kindness

Of your affectionate Servant,

JULIUS CHARLES HARE.

HERSTMONCEUX, *January*, 1838.









TO THE READER.

I HERE present you with a few suggestions, the fruits, alas! of much idleness. Such of them as are distinguished by some capital letter, I have borrowed from my acuter friends. My own are little more than glimmerings, I had almost said dreams, of thought: not a word in them is to be taken on trust.

If then I am addressing one of that numerous class, who read to be told what to think, let me advise you to meddle with the book no further. You wish to buy a house ready furnisht: do not come to look for it in a stonequarry. But if you are building up your opinions for yourself, and only want to be provided with materials, you may meet with many things in these pages to suit you. Do not despise them for their want of name and show. Remember what the old author says, that "even to such a one as I am, an idiota or common person, no great things, melancholizing in woods and quiet places by rivers, the Goddess herself Truth has oftentimes appeared."

Reader, if you weigh me at all, weigh me patiently; judge me candidly; and may you find half the satisfaction in examining my Guesses, that I have myself had in making them.

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Authors usually do not think about writing a preface, until they have reacht the conclusion ; and with reason. For few have such steadfastness of purpose, and such definiteness and clear foresight of understanding, as to know, when they take up their pen, how soon they shall lay it down again. The foregoing paragraphs were written some months ago : since that time this little book has increast to more than four times the bulk then contemplated, and withal has acquired two fathers instead of one. The temptations held out by the freedom and pliant aptness of the plan, — the thoughtful excitement of lonely rambles, of gardening, and of other like occupations, in which the mind has leisure to muse during the healthful activity of the body, with the fresh, wakeful breezes blowing round it, — above all, intercourse and converse with those, every hour in whose society is rich in the blossoms of present enjoyment, and in the seeds of future meditation, in whom too the Imagination delightedly recognises living realities goodlier and fairer than the fairest and goodliest visions, so that pleasure kindles a desire in her of portraying what she cannot hope to surpass, — these causes, happening to meet together, have occasioned my becoming a principal in a work, wherein I had only lookt forward to being a subordinate auxiliary. The letter *U*, with which my earlier contributions were markt, has for distinction's sake continued to be affixt to them. As our minds have grown up together, have been nourisht in great measure by the same food, have sympathized in their affections and their aversions, and been shaped reciprocally by the assimilating influences of brotherly communion, a family likeness will, I trust, be perceivable throughout these volumes, although perhaps with such differences as it is not displeasing to behold in the



children of the same parents. And thus I commit this book to the world, with a prayer that He, to whom so much of it, if I may not say the whole, is devoted, will, if He think it worthy to be employed in His service, render it an instrument of good to some of His children. May it awaken some one to the knowledge of himself! May it induce some one to think more kindly of his neighbour! May it enlighten some one to behold the footsteps of God in the Creation! U.

*May 17th, 1827.*

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In this new edition the few remarks found among my brother's papers, suitable to the work, have been, or will be incorporated. Unfortunately for the work they are but few. Soon after the publication of the first edition, he gave up guessing at Truth, for the higher office of preaching Truth. How faithfully he discharged that office, may be seen in the two volumes of his Sermons. And now he has been raised from the earth to the full fruition of that Truth, of which he had first been the earnest seeker, and then the dutiful servant and herald.

My own portion of the work has been a good deal enlarged. On looking it over for the press, I found much that was inaccurate, more that was unsatisfactory. Many thoughts seemed to need being more fully developed. Ten years cannot pass over one's head, least of all in these eventful times, without modifying sundry opinions. A change of position too brings a new horizon, and new points of view. And when old thoughts are awakened, it is with old recollections: a long train of associations start up; nor is it easy to withstand the pleasure of following them out. Various however as





are the matters discust or toucht on in the following pages, I would fain hope that one spirit will be felt to breathe through them. It would be a delightful reward, if they may help the young, in this age of the Confusion of Thoughts, to discern some of those principles which infuse strength and order into men's hearts and minds. Above all would I desire to suggest to my readers, how in all things, small as well as great, profane as well as sacred, it behoves us to keep our eyes fixt on the Star which led the Wise Men of old, and by which alone can any wisdom be guided; from whatsoever part of the intellectual globe, to a place where it will *rejoice with exceeding great joy*.

J. C. H.

*January 6th, 1838.*



## FIRST SERIES.

Χρυσὸν οἱ διζήμενοι, φησὶν Ἡράκλειτος, γῆν πολλὴν ὀρύσσουσι, καὶ εὗρίσκουσιν ὀλίγον. — *Clem. Alex. Strom. IV. 2, p. 565.*

As young men, when they knit and shape perfectly, do seldom grow to a further stature; so knowledge, while it is in aphorisms and observations, it is in growth; but when it once is comprehended in exact methods, it may perchance be further polished and illustrated, and accommodated for use and practice; but it increaseth no more in bulk and substance. — *Bacon, Advancement of Learning, B. I.*



## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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This third edition is little else than a reprint of the second, with the addition of a quotation here and there in support of opinions previously expressed, and with the insertion of some half a dozen passages, partly to vindicate or to correct those opinions, partly to enforce them by reference to later events, partly to prevent their being misconstrued in behalf of certain errors which have recently become current.

*October 6th, 1847.*





## GUESSES AT TRUTH.

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THE virtue of Paganism was strength : the virtue of Christianity is obedience.

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Man without religion is the creature of circumstances : Religion is above all circumstances, and will lift him up above them.

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Moral prejudices are the stopgaps of virtue : and, as is the case with other stopgaps, it is often more difficult to get either out or in through them, than through any other part of the fence.

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A mother should desire to give her children a superabundance of enthusiasm, to the end that, after they have lost all they are sure to lose in mixing with the world, enough may still remain to prompt and support them through great actions. A cloak should be of three-pile, to keep its gloss in wear.

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The heart has often been compared to the needle for its constancy : has it ever been so for its variations ? Yet were any man to keep minutes of his feelings from youth to age, what a table of variations would they present ! how numerous ! how



diverse! and how strange! This is just what we find in the writings of Horace. If we consider his occasional effusions, — and such they almost all are, — as merely expressing the piety, or the passion, the seriousness, or the levity of the moment, we shall have no difficulty in accounting for those discrepancies in their features, which have so much puzzled professional commentators. Their very contradictions prove their truth. Or could the face even of Ninon de l'Enclos at seventy be just what it was at seventeen? Nay, was Cleopatra before Augustus the same as Cleopatra with Antony? or Cleopatra with Antony the same as with the great Julius?

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The teachers of youth in a free country should select those books for their chief study, — so far, I mean, as this world is concerned, — which are best adapted to foster a spirit of manly freedom. The duty of preserving the liberty, which our ancestors, through God's blessing, won, established, and handed down to us, is no less imperative than any commandment in the second table; if it be not the concentration of the whole. And is this duty to be learnt from the investigations of science? Is it to be picked up in the crucible? or extracted from the properties of lines and numbers? I fear there is a moment of broken lights in the intellectual day of civilized countries, when, among the manifold refractions of Knowledge, Wisdom is almost lost sight of. Society in time breeds a number of mouths which will not consent to be entertained without a corresponding variety of dishes, so that unity is left alone as an inhospitable singularity; and many things are got at any way, rather than a few in the right way. But "howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgements and affections," would we imbibe the feelings, the sentiments, and the principles which become the inheritors of England's name and glory, we must abide by the springs of which our ancestors drank. Like them, we must nourish our minds by contemplating the unbending strength of purpose and uncalculating self-devotion which nerved and animated the philosophic and heroic patriots of the Heathen world: and we shall then blush, should Christianity, with all her addi-



tional incentives, have shone on our hearts without kindling a zeal as steady and as pure.

Is not our mistress, fair Religion,  
 As worthy of all our heart's devotion,  
 As Virtue was to that first blinded age?  
 As we do them in means, shall they surpass  
 Us in the end? *Donne, Satires, iii. 5.*

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The threatenings of Christianity are material and tangible. They speak of and to the senses; because they speak of and to the sensual and earthly, in character, intellect, and pursuits. The promises of Christianity, on the other hand, are addressed to a different class of persons,—to those who love, which comes after fear,—to those who have begun to advance in goodness,—to those who are already in some measure delivered from the thralldom of the body. But, being spoken of heaven to the heavenly-minded, how could they be other than heavenly?

The fact then, that there is nothing definite, and little inviting or attractive, except to the eye of Faith, in the Christian representation of future bliss, instead of being a reasonable objection to its truth, is rather a confirmation of it. And so perhaps thought Selden, who remarks in his *Table-Talk*: “The Turks tell their people of a heaven where there is a sensible pleasure, but of a hell where they shall suffer they don't know what. The Christians quite invert this order: they tell us of a hell where we shall feel sensible pain, but of a heaven where we shall enjoy we can't tell what.”

L.

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Why should not distant parishes interchange their apprentices? so that the lads on their return home might bring back such improvements in agriculture and the mechanical arts, as they may have observed or been taught during their absence.

E.

A practice of the sort was usual two centuries ago, and still exists in Germany, and other parts of the Continent.

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The first thing we learn is *Meum*, the last is *Tuum*. None can have lived among children without noticing the former



fact ; few have associated with men and not remarkt the latter.

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To address the prejudices of our hearers is to argue with them in short-hand. But it is also more : it is to invest our opinion with the probability of prescription, and by occupying the understanding to attack the heart.

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The ancients dreaded death : the Christian can only fear dying.

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A person should go out upon the water on a fine day to a short distance from a beautiful coast, if he would see Nature really smile. Never does she look so joyous, as when the sun is brightly reflected by the water, while the waves are rippling gently, and the scene receives life and animation here and there from the glancing transit of a row-boat, and the quieter motion of a few small vessels. But the land must be well in sight ; not only for its own sake, but because the vastness and awfulness of a mere sea-view would ill sort with the other parts of the gay and glittering prospect.

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The second Punic war was a struggle between Hannibal and the Roman people. Its event proved that the good sense and spirit of a nation, when embodied in institutions, and exerted with perseverance, must ultimately exhaust and overpower the resources of a single mind, however excellent in genius and prowess.

The war of Sertorius, the Roman Hannibal, is of the same kind, and teaches the same lesson.

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Nothing short of extreme necessity will induce a sensible man to change all his servants at once. A new set coming together fortuitously are sure to cross and jostle . . like the Epicurean atoms, I was going to say ; but no, unlike the silent atoms, they have the faculty of claiming and complaining ; and they exert it, until the family is distracted with disputes about the limits of their several offices.



But after a household has been set in order, there is little or no evil to apprehend from minor changes. A new servant on arriving finds himself in the middle of a system: his place is marked out and assigned; the course of his business is set before him; and he falls into it as readily as a new wheel-horse to a mail, when his collar is to the pole, and the coach is starting.

It is the same with those great families, which we call nations. To remould a government and frame a constitution anew, are works of the greatest difficulty and hazard. The attempt is likely to fail altogether, and cannot succeed thoroughly under very many years. It is the last desperate resource of a ruined people, a staking double or quits with evil, and almost giving it the first game. But still it is a resource. We make use of cataplasms to restore suspended animation; and Burke himself might have tried Medea's kettle on a carcass.

Be that, however, as it may, from judicious subordinate reforms good, and good only, is to be looked for. Nor are their benefits limited to the removal of the abuse, which their author designed to correct. No perpetual motion, God be praised! has yet been discovered for free governments. For the impulse which keeps them going, they are indebted mainly to subordinate reforms; now, by the exposure of a particular delinquency, spreading salutary vigilance through a whole administration; now, by the origination of some popular improvement from without, leading,—if there be any certainty in party motives, any such things in ambitious men as policy and emulation,—to the counter-adoption of numerous meliorations from within, which would else have been only dreamt of as impossible.

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As a little girl was playing round me one day with her white frock over her head, I laughingly called her *Pishashee*, the name which the Indians give to their white devil. The child was delighted with so fine a name, and ran about the house crying to every one she met, *I am the Pishashee, I am*





*the Pishashee.* Would she have done so, had she been wrapt in black, and called *witch* or *devil* instead? No; for, as usual, the reality was nothing, the sound and colour everything.

But how many grown-up persons are running about the world, quite as anxious as the little girl was to get the name of Pishashee! Only she did not understand it.

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True modesty does not consist in an ignorance of our merits, but in a due estimate of them. Modesty then is only another name for self-knowledge; that is, for the absence of ignorance on the one subject which we ought to understand the best, as well from its vast importance to us, as from our continual opportunities of studying it. And yet it is a virtue.

But what, on second thoughts, are these merits? Jeremy Taylor tells us, in his *Life of Christ*: "Nothing but the innumerable sins which we have added to what we have received. For we can call nothing ours, but such things as we are ashamed to own, and such things as are apt to ruin us. Everything besides is the gift of God; and for a man to exalt himself thereon is just as if a wall on which the sun reflects, should boast itself against another that stands in the shadow." *Considerations upon Christ's Sermon on Humility.*

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After casting a glance at our own weaknesses, how eagerly does our vanity console itself with deploring the infirmities of our friends!

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T.

It is as hard to know when one is in Paris, as when one is out of London.

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R.

The first is the city of a great king; the latter, of a great people.

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M.

When the moon, after covering herself with darkness as in sorrow, at last throws off the garments of her widowhood, she does not expose her beauty at once barefacedly to the eye of man, but veils herself for a time in a transparent cloud, till by



degrees she gains courage to endure the gaze and admiration of beholders.

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To those whose god is honour, disgrace alone is sin.

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Some people carry their hearts in their heads; very many carry their heads in their hearts. The difficulty is to keep them apart, and yet both actively working together. A.

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Life may be defined to be the power of self-augmentation, or of assimilation, not of self-nurture; for then a steam-engine over a coalpit might be made to live.

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Philosophy, like everything else, in a Christian nation should be Christian. We throw away the better half of our means, when we neglect to avail ourselves of the advantages which starting in the right road gives us. It is idle to urge that, unless we do this, antichristians will deride us. Curs bark at gentlemen on horseback; but who, except a hypochondriac, ever gave up riding on that account?

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In man's original state, before his soul had been stupefied by the Fall, his moral sensitiveness was probably as acute as his physical sensitiveness is now; so that an evil action, from its irreconcilableness with his nature, would have inflicted as much pain on the mind, as a blow causes to the body. By the Fall this fineness of moral tact was lost;—Conscience, the voice of God within us, is at once its relic and its evidence;—and we were left to ourselves to discover what is good; though we still retain a desire of good, when we have made out what it consists in.

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They who disbelieve in virtue, because man has never been found perfect, might as reasonably deny the sun, because it is not always noon.

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Two persons can hardly set up their booths in the same



quarter of Vanity Fair, without interfering with, and therefore disliking each other.

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B.

Fickleness in women of the world is the fault most likely to result from their condition in society. The knowing both what weaknesses are the most severely condemned, and what good qualities the most highly prized, in the female character, by our sex as well as their own, must needs render them desirous of pleasing generally, to the exclusion, so far as Nature will permit, of strong and lasting affection for individuals. Well! we deserve no better of them. After all, too, the flame is only smothered by society, not extinguished. Give it free air, and it will blaze.

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The following sentence is translated from D'Alembert by Dugald Stewart: "The truth is, that no relation whatever can be discovered between a sensation in the mind, and the object by which it is occasioned, or at least to which we refer it: *it does not appear possible to trace, by dint of reasoning, any practicable passage from the one to the other.*" If this be so, if there be no necessary connection between the reception of an object into the senses, and its impression on the mind, what ground have we for supposing the organs of sense to be more than machinery for the uses of the body? The body may indeed be said to see through the eye: but how,—if we can trace no nearer connection between the mind and an object painted on the retina, than between the mind and the object itself,—how can it be asserted, that the mind needs the eye to see with?

Most idle, then, are all disquisitions on the intermediate state, founded on the assumption that the soul, when apart from the body, has no perceptions. Waller's couplet,

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
Lies in new lights through chinks that time has made,

may be, perhaps is, no less true in fact, than pretty in fancy. Spirits may acquire new modes of communication on losing



their mouths and ears, just as a bird gets its feathers on bursting from the shell. Our own experience furnishes a similar analogy. As the unborn infant possesses dormant senses, which it puts forth on coming into this world, in like manner our still embryo soul may perhaps have latent senses, — living inlets shall I call them, or capacities of spiritual vision and communion? — to be exercised hereafter for its improvement and delight, when it issues from its present womb, the body.

But here a dreadful supposition crosses me. What if sin, which so enfeebles the understanding, and dulls the conscience, should also clog and ultimately stifle these undeveloped powers and faculties, so as to render spiritual communion after death impossible to the wicked? What if the imbruted soul make its own prison, shut itself up from God, and exclude everything but the memory of its crimes, evil desires “baying body,” and the dread of intolerable, unavoidable, momentarily approaching punishment? At least it is debarred from repentance: this one thought is terrible enough.

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In Bacon’s noble estimate of the dignity of knowledge, in the first book of *the Advancement of Learning*, he observes that, “in the election of those instruments, which it pleased God to use for the plantation of the faith, notwithstanding that at the first He did employ persons altogether unlearned, otherwise than by inspiration, more evidently to declare His immediate working, and to abase all human wisdom or knowledge, yet nevertheless that counsel of His was no sooner performed, but in the next vicissitude and succession He did send His divine truth into the world waited on with other learnings, as with servants or handmaids: for so we see St. Paul, who was the only learned amongst the Apostles, had his pen most used in the Scriptures of the New Testament.”

From this remark let me draw a couple of corollaries: first, that such a man, as well from his station, as from his acuteness, and the natural pride of a powerful and cultivated intellect, was the last person to become the dupe of credulous enthusiasts; especially when they were lowborn and illiterate. And



secondly, that from this appointment we may draw an inference in favour of a learned ministry. If some of the Apostles had no other human instructor than the best Master that ever lived, Jesus Christ; the one most immediately and supernaturally called by Him to preach the Gospel was full of sacred and profane learning.

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It was a practice worthy of our worthy ancestors, to fill their houses at Christmas with their relations and friends; that, when Nature was frozen and dreary out of doors, something might be found within doors "to keep the pulses of their hearts in proper motion." The custom however is only appropriate among people who happen to have hearts. It is bad taste to retain it in these days, when everybody worth hanging

oublie sa mère,  
Et par bon ton se défend d'être père.

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Most people, it is evident, have life granted to them for their own sake: but not a few seem sent into the world chiefly for the sake of others. How many infants every year come and go like apparitions! This remark too, if true in any degree, holds good much further.

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A critic should be a pair of snuffers. He is oftener an extinguisher; and not seldom a *thief*. U.

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The intellect of the wise is like glass: it admits the light of heaven, and reflects it.

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They who have to educate children, should keep in mind that boys are to become men, and that girls are to become women. The neglect of this momentous consideration gives us a race of moral hermaphrodites. A.

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Poetry is to philosophy what the sabbath is to the rest of the week.

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The ideal incentives to virtuous energy are a sort of moon to the moral world. Their borrowed light is but a dimmer substitute for the lifegiving rays of religion; replacing those rays, when hidden or obscured, and evidencing their existence, when they are unseen in the heavens.

To exclaim then, during the blaze of devotional enthusiasm, against the beauty and usefulness of such auxiliary motives, is fond. To shut the eye against their luminous aid, when religion does not enlighten our path, is lunatic. To understand their comparative worthlessness, feel their positive value, and turn them, as occasion arises, to account, is the part of the truly wise.

I have called these incentives a sort of moon. Had the image occurred to one of those old writers, who took such pleasure in tracing out recondite analogies, he would scarcely have omitted to remark, that, in the conjunctions of these two imaginary bodies, the moral moon is never eclipsed, except at the full, nor ever eclipses, but when it is in the wane. "Love," says our greatest living prose-writer,\* in one of his wisest and happiest moods, "is a secondary passion in those who love most, a primary in those who love least. He who is inspired by it in a great degree, is inspired by honour in a greater." So it is with Honour and Religion.

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Before me were the two Monte Cavallo statues, towering gigantically above the pygmies of the present day, and looking like Titans in the act of threatening heaven. Over my head the stars were just beginning to look out, and might have been taken for guardian angels keeping watch over the temples below. Behind, and on my left, were palaces; on my right, gardens, and hills beyond, with the orange tints of sunset over them still glowing in the distance. Within a stone's throw of

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\* Landor, in his beautiful *Conversation between Roger Ascham and Lady Jane Gray*. The passage is all the better for its accidental coincidence with those noble lines by Lovelace:

I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not honour more.



me, in the midst of objects thus glorious in themselves, and thus in harmony with each other, was stuck an unplanned post, on which glimmered a paper lantern. Such is Rome.

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Many men, however ambitious to be great in great things, have been well content to be little in little things. A.

Jupiter-Scapin was a happy name, witty and appropriate: he however for whom it was invented was one of a large family. By the vulgar he is admired, and has been almost worshipt, as the hero of Marengo, of Austerlitz, of Jena, and of how many other fields of carnage: but go and read his will in Doctors' Commons; and you will find that this man-slayer on a huge and grand scale could also relish murder on the meanest scale, and that in his solitude in St. Helena such malignity festered in his heart, as made him leave a legacy of ten thousand franks to a man for having attempted to assassinate the true hero, who conquered him at Waterloo. U.

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So great enormities have been committed by privateers, within the memory of living men,—as may be seen in the *Journal of Alexander Davidson*, in the *Edinburgh Annual Register*, vol. iii. p. 2,—that it seems advisable that, on board every such ship, except perhaps in the four seas, there should be a superintending national officer, to keep a public journal, and to prevent crimes. If the officer die on the cruise, the privateer should be bound to make the nearest friendly port, unless she meet with a national ship-of-war that can spare her a superintendent out of its crew. A privateer not conforming to the regulations on these points should be deemed a pirate.

Unless some such provisions are adopted, the States now springing up in America will one day send forth a swarm of piratical privateers, cruel as the Buccaneers, and more unprincipled.

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A statesman may do much for commerce, most by leaving it alone. A river never flows so smoothly, as when it follows



its own course, without either aid or check. Let it make its own bed : it will do so better than you can. A.

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Anguish is so alien to man's spirit, that nothing is more difficult to will than contrition. Therefore God is good enough to afflict us, that our hearts, being brought low enough to feed on sorrow, may the more easily sorrow for sin unto repentance.

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In most ruins we see what Time has spared. Ancient Rome appears to have defied him ; and its remains are the limbs which he has rent and scattered in the struggle. T.

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How melancholy are all memorials ! T.

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Were we merely the creatures of outward impulses, what would faces of joy be but so many glaciers, on which the seeming smile of happiness at sunrise is only a flinging back of the rays they appear to be greeting, from frozen and impassive heads ?

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It is with flowers, as with moral qualities : the bright are sometimes poisonous ; but, I believe, never the sweet.

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Picturesqueness is that quality in objects which fits them for making a good picture ; and it refers to the appearances of things in form and color, more than to their accidental associations. Rembrandt would have been right in painting turbans and Spanish cloaks, though the Cid had been a scrivener, Cortez had sold sugar, and Mahomet had been notorious for setting up a drug-shop instead of a religion.

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It is a proof of our natural bias to evil, that gain is slower and harder than loss, in all things good : but, in all things bad, getting is quicker and easier than getting rid of.

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Would you cure or kill an evil prejudice ? Manage it as you would a pulling horse, tickle it as you would a trout,



treat it as you would the most-headstrong thing in the world, and the readiest to take alarm, the likeliest to slip through your fingers at the moment you think you have got it safe, and are just about to make an end of it.

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Three reasons occur to me for thinking bodily sins more curable than mental ones.

In the first place, they are more easily ascertained to be sins; since they clothe themselves in outward acts, which admit neither of denial, nor, except in way of excuse, of self-deception. Nobody, the morning after he has been drunk, can be ignorant that he went to bed not sober: his nerves and stomach assure him of the fact. But the same man might be long in finding out that he thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, from having no palpable standard to convince him of it.

Secondly, bodily sins do not so immediately affect the reason, but that we still possess an uncorrupted judge within us, to discover and proclaim their criminality. Whereas mental sins corrupt the faculty appointed to determine on their guilt, and darken the light which should show their darkness.

Moreover, bodily sins must be connected with certain times and places. Consequently, by a new arrangement of hours, and by abstaining, so far as may be, from the places which have ministered opportunities to a bodily vice, a man may in some degree disable himself for committing it. This in most vices of the kind is easy, in sloth not; which is therefore the most dangerous of them, or at least the hardest to be cured. The mind, on the other hand, is its own place, and does not depend on contingencies of season and situation for the power of indulging its follies or its passions.

Still it must be remembered that bodily sins breed mental ones, thus, after they are stifled or extinct, leaving an evil and vivacious brood behind them. "Nothing grows weak with age (says South, vol. ii. p. 47), but that which will at length die with age; which sin never does. The longer the blot continues, the deeper it sinks. Vice, in retreating from the practice of



men, retires into their fancy," . . . and from that stronghold what shall drive it?

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'Twas a night clear and cloudless, and the sight,  
Swifter than heaven-commissioned cherubim,  
Soaring above the moon, glancing beyond  
The stars, was lost in heaven's abysmal blue.

There are things the knowledge of which proves their revelation. The mind can no more penetrate into the secrets of heaven, than the eye can force a way through the clouds. It is only when they are withdrawn by a mightier hand, that the sight can rise beyond the moon, and, ascending to the stars, repose on the unfathomable ether,—that emblem of omnipresent Deity, which, everywhere enfolding and supporting man, yet baffles his senses, and is unperceived, except when he looks upward and contemplates it above him.

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It is well for us that we are born babies in intellect. Could we understand half what most mothers say and do to their infants, we should be filled with a conceit of our own importance, which would render us insupportable through life. Happy the boy whose mother is tired of talking nonsense to him, before he is old enough to know the sense of it!

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A man who strives earnestly and perseveringly to convince others, at least convinces us that he is convinced himself. R.

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It has been objected to the Reformers, that they dwelt too much on the corruption of our nature. But surely, if our strength is to be perfected, it can only be "in weakness." He who feels his fall from Paradise the most sorely, will be the most grateful for the offer of returning thither on the wings of the Redeemer's love.

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*Written on Whitsunday.*

Who has not seen the sun on a fine spring morning pouring his rays through a transparent white cloud, filling all places



with the purity of his presence, and kindling the birds into joy and song? Such, I conceive, would be the constant effects of the Holy Spirit on the soul, were there no evil in the world. As it is, the moral sun, like the natural, though "it always makes a day," is often clouded over. It is only under a combination of peculiarly happy circumstances, that the heart suffers this sweet violence perceptibly, and feels and enjoys the ecstasy of being borne along by overpowering, unresisted influxes of good. To most, I fear, this happens only during the spring of life: but some hearts keep young, even at eighty.

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After listening to very fine music, it appears one of the hardest problems, how the delights of heaven can be so attuned to our perceptions, as to become endurable for their pain.

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A speech, being a matter of adaptation, and having to win opinions, should contain a little for the few, and a great deal for the many. Burke hurt his oratory by neglecting the latter half of this rule, as Sheridan must have spoilt his by his carelessness about the former. But the many always carry it for the moment against the few; and though Burke was allowed to be the greater man, Sheridan drew most hearers.

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"I am convinced that jokes are often accidental. A man, in the course of conversation, throws out a remark at random, and is as much surprised as any of the company, on hearing it, to find it witty."

For the substance of this observation I am indebted to one of the pleasantest men I ever knew, who was doubtless giving the results of his own experience. He might have carried his remark some steps further, with ease and profit. It would have done our pride no harm to be reminded, how few of our best and wisest, and even of our newest thoughts, do really and wholly originate in ourselves, how few of them are voluntary, or at least intentional. Take away all that has been suggested or improved by the hints and remarks of others, all that has fallen from us accidentally, all that has been struck out by col-



lision, all that has been prompted by a sudden impulse, or has occurred to us when least looking for it; and the remainder, which alone can be claimed as the fruit of our thought and study, will in every man form a small portion of his store, and in most men will be little worth preserving. We can no more make thoughts than seeds. How absurd then for a man to call himself a poet, or *maker*! The ablest writer is a gardener first, and then a cook. His tasks are, carefully to select and cultivate his strongest and most nutritive thoughts, and when they are ripe, to dress them, wholesomely, and so that they may have a relish.

To recur to my friend's remark: let me strengthen it with the authority of one of the wittiest men that ever lived; who, if any man, might assuredly have boasted that his wit was not a foundling, "As the repute of wisdom, (says South, *Sermon viii.*), so that of wit also is very casual. Sometimes a lucky saying or a pertinent reply has procured an esteem of wit to persons otherwise very shallow; so that, if such a one should have the ill hap to strike a man dead with a smart saying, it ought in all reason and conscience to be judged but a chance-medley. Nay, even when there is a real stock of wit, yet the wittiest sayings and sentences will be found in a great measure the issues of chance, and nothing else but so many lucky hits of a roving fancy. For consult the acutest poets and speakers; and they will confess that their quickest and most admired conceptions were such as darted into their minds like sudden flashes of lightning, they knew not how nor whence; and not by any certain consequence or dependence of one thought upon another."

Were further confirmation needed, the poet of our age has been heard to declare, that once in his life he fancied he had hit upon an original thought, but that after a while he met with it in so common an author as Boyle.

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Whoever wishes to see an emblem of political unions and enmities, should walk, when the sun shines, in a shrubbery. So long as the air is quite still, the shadows combine to form



a pretty trellice-work, which looks as if it would be lasting. But the wind is perverse enough to blow; and then to pieces goes the trellice-work in an instant; and the shadows, which before were so quiet and distinct, cross and intermingle confusedly. It seems impossible they should ever re-unite: yet, the moment the wind subsides, they dovetail into each other as closely as before.

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Before I traveled, I had no notion that mountain scenery was so unreal. Beside the strangeness of finding common objects on new levels, and hence in new points of view, you have only to get into a retired nook, and you hear water, and catch a glimpse of the tops of trees, but see nothing distinctly except the corner of rock where you are standing. You are surrounded by a number of well-known effects, so completely severed to the eye and imagination from their equally well-known and usually accompanying causes, that you cannot tell what to make of them.

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All things here are strange!

Rocks scarred like rough-hewn wood! Ice brown as sand  
Wet by the tide, and cleft, with depths between,  
And streams outgushing from its frozen feet!  
Snow-bridges arching over headlong torrents!  
And then the sightless sounds, and noiseless motions,  
Which hover round us! I should dream I dreamt,  
But for those looks of kindness still unchanged.

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O these mob torrents! here, with show of fury,  
Rushing submissive to an arch of snow,  
That frailest fancy-work of Nature's idlesse;  
There threatening rocks, and rending ancient firs,  
The sovereigns of the wood, yet overwhelmed,  
And dasht to the earth with hooting violence.

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Many actions, like the Rhone, have two sources, one pure, the other impure.

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It is with great men as with high mountains. They oppress us with awe when we stand under them: they disappoint our



insatiable imaginations when we are nigh, but not quite close to them : and then, the further we recede from them, the more astonishing they appear ; until their bases being concealed by intervening objects, they at one moment seem miraculously lifted above the earth, and the next strike our fancies as let down from heaven.

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The apparent and the real progress of human affairs are both well illustrated in a waterfall ; where the same noisy, bubbling eddies continue for months and years, though the water which froths in them changes every moment. But as every drop in its passage tends to loosen and detach some particle of the channel, the stream is working a change all the time in the appearance of the fall, by altering its bed, and so subjecting the river during its descent to a new set of percussions and reverberations.

And what, when at last effected, is the consequence of this change ? The foam breaks into shapes somewhat different ; but the noise, the bubbling, and the eddies are just as violent as before.

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A little management may often evade resistance, which a vast force might vainly strive to overcome.

A.

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Leaves are light, and useless, and idle, and wavering, and changeable : they even dance : yet God has made them part of the oak. In so doing He has given us a lesson not to deny the stout-heartedness within, because we see the lightsomeness without.

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How disproportionate are men's projects and means ! To raise a single church to a single Apostle, the monuments of antiquity were ransackt, and forgiveness of sins was doled out at a price. Yet its principal gate has been left unfinished ; and its holy of holies is encrusted with stucco.

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On entering St. Peter's, my first impulse was to throw my-



self on my knees ; and, but for the fear of being observed by my companions, I must have bowed my face to the ground, and kist the pavement. I moved slowly up the nave, opprest by my own littleness ; and when at last I reacht the brazen canopy, and my spirit sank within me beneath the sublimity of the dome, I felt that, as the ancient Romans could not condemn Manlius within sight of the Capitol, so it would be impossible for an Italian of the present day to renounce Popery under the dome of St. Peter's.

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The impressions produced by an object which addresses itself to the understanding and the heart by a number of conflicting associations, will probably vary much, even in the same mind, under different aspects of moral light and shade : nor do I believe that there is any real discrepancy between my own feelings and my brother's, when I say that the hollowness and fraud of Popery were never brought before my mind more forcibly, nay, glaringly, than beneath the dome of St. Peter's. One of my first visits to that gorgeous cathedral was on Christmasday 1832. I expected to see a sight agreeing, at least in outward appearance, with the title of Catholic, which the Church of Rome claims as exclusively her own,—to find a multitude of persons thronging in from the city and from the neighboring country to attend the celebration of high mass on that blessed festival by him whom they were taught to revere as Christ's vicegerent upon earth. But instead of this a row of soldiers was drawn up along each side of the nave, and kept everybody at a distance during the whole service, except the few who were privileged by station or favour to enter within the lines. Beside the altar, under the dome, seats had been erected for persons of rank or wealth, who were mainly foreigners, and consequently in great part English or German Protestants. Thus the whole proceeding acquired the character, not of a religious ceremony, in which the congregation was to join, but of a theatrical exhibition before strangers, regarded, for the most part, as heretics, and many of whom came merely out of curiosity to see the show. After a while the Pope was



brought in, borne on a raised seat or palanquin, with splendid robes and plumes and fans and other paraphernalia. He celebrated mass, the persons who ought to have formed the congregation, a very scanty one at the utmost, being prevented from approaching by the barrier of troops: and when the rite was over, the chief performer, or chief victim, in this miserable pageant was carried out again with the same pomp. The thought of the moral debasement thus inflicted on a man, who personally might be honest and pious, and of his utter inability to struggle against such a crushing system, so oppress me as I walkt away, that when, in mounting the steps before the Trinita, my eyes fell on a poor beggar who used to sit there, and who had neither hands nor feet, picking up the alms thrown to him with his mouth, I could not refrain from exclaiming, *How infinitely rather would I be that poor cripple, than Pope!*

Can the effect of the ceremonies in St. Peter's on intelligent Italians in these days be very different? I doubt it; whatever might be their feelings when they merely saw the empty shell of the building. I have known men indeed, whom I esteem and honour, and who have regarded Rome as a solemn and majestic witness of what they have deemed the Truth. But to me, though, from the indescribable beauty and grandeur of many of the views, the intense interest of its Heathen and Christian recollections, and its inexhaustible stores of ancient and modern art, the three months I spent there were daily teeming with fresh sources of delight, and have left a love such as I never felt for any other city, yet when I thought of Rome in connexion with the religion, of which it is the metropolis, it seemed to me of all places the last where a man with his eyes open could be converted to Romanism. In the Tyrol, I could have understood how a person living amongst its noble and devout inhabitants might have been led to embrace their faith, but not at Rome. The vision of the Romish Church, and of its action upon the people, which was there graven on my mind, accords with that implied in the answer of an ingenious English painter, whom I askt, how he could bring himself to leave



Rome, after living so many years there. *It was indeed very painful*, he replied, *to tear myself away from so much exquisite beauty: but, as my children grew up, it became absolutely necessary; for I found it utterly impossible to give them a notion of truth at Rome.* The terrible curse, which is represented in the words of the ancient satirist, — *Quid Romae faciam? mentiri nescio*, — seems still to cleave to the fateful city. U.

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The germ of idolatry is contained in the proneness of man's feelings and imagination to take their impressions from outward objects, rather than from the dictates of reason; under the controul of which they can scarcely be brought without a great impairing of their energies.

It may possibly have been in part from a merciful indulgence to this tendency of our nature, that God vouchsafed to shew Himself in the flesh. At least one may discern traces which seem to favor such a belief, both in the Jewish scheme and in the Christian. In both God revealed Himself palpably to the outward senses of His people: in both He address Himself personally by acts of loving-kindness to their affections. It is not merely for being redeemed, that we are called on to feel thankful; but for being redeemed by the blood of the God-man Jesus Christ, which He poured out for us upon the Cross. So it was not simply as God, that Jehovah was to be worshipt by the Jews; but as the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the house of bondage, whose voice they had heard and lived, who had chosen them to be His people, and had given them His laws, and a land flowing with milk and honey.

The last sentence has suggested a query of some importance. *Out of the house of bondage.* What says the advocate of colonial slavery to this? That the bondage was no evil? that the deliverance of a people from personal slavery was not a work befitting God's right hand? Or will he tell us that the cases differ? that the animal wants of the Israelites were ill attended to? that they were ill fed? This at least will not serve his purpose: for the fleshpots of Egypt are proverbial. What will serve it, I leave him to discover; only recommending him to



beware of relying much on the order to expose the Hebrew children. If he does, it will give way under him. Meanwhile to those religious men who are labouring for the emancipation of the Negroes, amid the various doubts and difficulties with which every great political measure is beset, it must needs be an inspiring thought, that to rescue a race of men from personal slavery, and raise them to the rank and self-respect of independent beings, is, in the strictest sense of the word, a god-like task ; inasmuch as it is a task which, God's Book tells us, God Himself has accomplisht. *But these things*, as Paul says, expressly speaking of the Pentateuch, *happened for examples, and were written for our admonition.*

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Often would the lad

Watch with sad fixedness the summer sun

In bloodred blaze sink hero-like to rest.

Then, *O to set like thee ! but I, alas !*

*Am weak, a poor, unheeded shepherd boy.\**

'Twas that *alas* undid him. His ambition,

Once the vague instinct of his nobleness,

Thus tempered in the glowing furnace-heat

Of lone repinings and aye-present aims,

Brightened to hope and hardened to resolve.

To hope ! What hope is that whose clearest ray

Is drencht with mother's tears ? what that resolve,

Whose strength is crime, whose instrument is death ?

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There is something melancholy and painful in the entire abandonment of any institution designed for good. It is too plain a confession of intellectual weakness, too manifest a receding before the brute power of outward things. Any one can amputate : the difficulty and the object is to restore. To reanimate lifeless forms,—to catch their departed spirit, and embody it in another shape,—in the room of institutions grown obsolete, to substitute such new ones as will mould, sway, and propell the existing mass of thought and character,

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\* Since these lines were written, a fine passage, expressing the feelings with which an ambitious lad sits watching the setting sun, has been pointed out to me in Schiller's *Robbers*.



and thus do for the present age, what the old in their vigour did for the past,—these are things worth living a politician's life for, with all its labours and disgusts. Did that alone suffice, who would live any other? But to accomplish these things, the most dextrous mastery of the art is requisite, guided by the brightest illuminations of the science: and where is the man with both these, when so few have either?

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*Quicquid credam valde credo*, must be the motto of every true poet. His belief is of the heart, not of the head, and springs from himself much more than from the object.

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It is curious that we express personality and unity by the same symbol.

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Is there any country in which polygamy is more frequent than in England?

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In some cases the mistress has been so much a wife, it only remains for the wife to be a mistress.

Yet, strictly speaking, it is just as impossible for any but a wife to be a wife, as for any but a wife to be a mother. And wisdom cries, through the lips of a great French philosopher, "N'en croyez pas les romans: il faut être épouse pour être mère." Bonald, *Pensées*, p. 97.

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Xerxes promist a great reward to the inventor of a new pleasure. What would he not promise in our days to the inventor of a new incident? Fancy and Chance have long since come to an end, the one of its combinations, the other of its legerdemain.

Now the huge book of faery-land lies closed;  
And those strong brazen clasps will yield no more.

But since the fictitious sources of poetry are thus as it were drunk up, is poetry to fail with them? If not, from whence is it to be supplied? From the inexhaustible springs of truth



and feeling, which are ever gurgling and boiling up in the caverns of the human heart.

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It is an uncharitable error to ascribe the delight, with which unpoetical persons often speak of a mountain-tour, to affectation. The delight is as real as mutton and beef, with which it has a closer connexion than the travelers themselves suspect, — arising in great measure from the good effects of mountain air, regular exercise, and wholesome diet, upon the spirits. This is sensual indeed, though not improperly so : but it is no concession to the materialist. I do not deny that my neighbour has a soul, by referring a particular pleasure in him to the body.

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Poetry should be an alterative : modern playwrights have converted it into a sedative ; which they administer in such unseasonable quantities, that, like an overdose of opium, it makes one sick.

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Time is no agent, as some people appear to think, that it should accomplish anything of itself. Looking at a heap of stones for a thousand years will do no more toward building a house of them, than looking at them for a moment. For Time, when applied to works of any kind, being only a succession of relevant acts, each furthering the work, it is clear that even an infinite succession of irrelevant and therefore inefficient acts would no more achieve or forward the completion, than an infinite number of jumps on the same spot would advance a man toward his journey's end. There is a motion without progress in time as well as in space ; where a thing often remains stationary, which appears to us to recede, while we are leaving it behind.

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A sort of ostracism is continually going on against the best, both of men and measures. Hence the good are fain to purchase the acquiescence of the bad, by contenting themselves with the second, third, or even fourth best, according as they can make their bargain.

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Courage, when it is not heroic self-sacrifice, is sometimes a modification, and sometimes a result of faith. How vast a field then is opened to man, by establishing faith and its modifications upon the power and truth of God! Had this great Gospel virtue (which, as the New Testament philosophically affirms, has power to remove mountains) been really and extensively operative, what highth or perfection might we not have reacht? As the apparent impossibilities, which check man's exertions, vanisht, his views would have enlarged in proportion: so that, considering how the removal of a single obstacle will often disclose unimagined paths, and open the way to undreamt of advances, our wishes might perhaps afford a surer measure even than our hopes, for calculating the progress of man under the impulse of this master principle. Who, twenty years ago, notwithstanding the *Vicar of Wakefield*, thought that practicable, which Mrs. Fry has shewn to be almost easy?

From a narrow notion of human duty, men imagine that the devout and social affections are the only qualities stunted by want of faith. Were it so, we should not have to deplore that narrow sphere of knowledge, that dearth of heroic enterprise, that scarcity of landmarks and pinnacles in virtue, for which cowardly man has to thank his distrust of what he can accomplish, God assisting. We could in no wise have had more than one discoverer of America; but we should then have been blest with many Columbuses. So Bacon teaches in his *Essay on Atheism*: "Take an example of a dog, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on, when he finds himself maintained by a man, who to him is instead of a god, or *melior natura*; which courage is manifestly such, as that creature, without that confidence of a better nature than his own, could never attain. So man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith, which human nature in itself could not obtain. Therefore, as atheism is in all respects hateful, so it is especially in this, that it destroys magnanimity, and depriveth human nature of the means to exalt itself above human frailty."



But I may be told perhaps that, although this is spoken most truly against atheism, no such thing as atheism is to be found now; and I may be askt, *Who are atheists?* I answer, with sorrow and awe, *Practically every man is an atheist, who lives without God in the world.*

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Friendship is Love, without either flowers or veil.

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Juliet's flow of feeling is a proof of her purity.

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As oftentimes, when walking in a wood near sunset, though the sun himself be hid by the highth and bushiness of the trees around, yet we know that he is still above the horizon, from seeing his beams in the open glades before us, illumining a thousand leaves, the several brightnesses of which are so many evidences of his presence; thus it is with the Holy Spirit. He works in secret; but his work is manifest in the lives of all true Christians. Lamps so heavenly must have been lit from on high.

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As the Epicureans had a Deism without a God, so the Unitarians have a Christianity without a Christ, and a Jesus but no Saviour.

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Christian prudence passes for a want of worldly courage; just as Christian courage is taken for a want of worldly prudence. But the two qualities are easily reconciled. When we have outward circumstances to contend with, what need we fear, God being with us? When we have sin and temptation to contend with, what should we not fear? God leaving our defense to our own hearts, which at the first attack surrender to the enemy, and go over at the first solicitation.

Of Christian courage I have just spoken. On Christian prudence it is well said, that *he who loves danger shall perish by it.* "He who will fight the devil at his own weapon, must not wonder if he finds him an overmatch." South, *Sermon lxxv.*

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Mark how the moon athwart yon snowy waste  
 An instant glares on us, then hides her head,  
 Curtained in thickest clouds, while half her orb  
 Hangs on the horizon like an urn of fire.  
 That too diminishes, drawn up toward heaven  
 By some invisible hand: and now 'tis gone:  
 And nought remains to man, but anxious thoughts,  
 Why one so beautiful should frown on him,  
 With painful longings for a gift resumed,  
 And the aching sense that something has been lost.

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Light will blind a man, sooner than darkness. Are we then to pray that we may be left in darkness? O no! but beware, ye who walk in light, lest ye turn your light into a curse. A.

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*Plan for the Alleviation of the Poor-rates, written in 1826.*

I entreat every one who does not see the grievous evil of the Poorlaws, as now administered, or who doubts the necessity of applying some strong remedy, to read the article on those laws in the 66th number of the Quarterly Review. It is written professedly in their defense: yet, unless with Malachi Malagrowther I called them *a cancer*, I could say nothing severer than is there said against their present administration, and its effects and tendencies; which the writer refers to the act passed in 1795, “enabling overseers to relieve poor persons at their own homes.” For nearly a century before, the Poor-rates had fluctuated little. In the thirty-one years since, they have risen from two to six millions; and if no measures are taken to stop the evil, they must still go on increasing. “Yet (as the Reviewer says) the direct savings which would accrue from a better system of supporting the poor, are not worth consideration, when contrasted with the indirect advantages, from the melioration of the character and habits of the agricultural labourer.”

Almost every man in England is affected by this evil system; almost every man, except the farmers, who are the loudest in their complaints, is directly injured by it; the poor most. Let them then, to use their own phrase, know the rights of the matter. Shew them how great, how important a part of the system, as it now exists, is quite new. Appeal to their own ex-



perience, whether it is not most pernicious. Half the difficulty which impedes an alteration of the Poorlaws, will be at an end.

The repeal of the Act of 1795 may do a good deal, especially for the payers of Poor-rates. But I am disposed to go much further; not from hard-heartedness, or a disregard for the happiness and welfare of the honest and industrious poor of this land; but from a belief that, after a few years, when the evil effects of the present system are worn out of the character and habits of the English labourer, his condition would be improved by a complete change in our system of legal charity.

Old age is the only period of a poor man's life, when, if honest and industrious, he would not be sorry to owe his regular support to any hands except his own. Now in old age his comforts would be augmented, and, what is of still more consequence to him, his respectability would be increast, — he would be a richer man, a more independent man, a man of greater weight in the village, — from the adoption of some regulations of this sort.

Let a fund be establisht for the benefit of the poor, to be called the National Poor-fund. Out of this fund, every labourer (paying the sum of.....weekly, from the time he is sixteen till he is.....) shall at the age of sixty-five be entitled to receive the third of a hale labourer's average wages. That third at the end of four years is to be doubled; and at the end of eight years tripled. Thus at seventy-three the labourer, if he live so long, will be entitled of right to receive the full amount of a healthy labourer's wages.

The poor of large towns and manufacturers, I conceive, are shorter-lived than peasants. If so, they should be entitled to the benefits of the National Poor-fund earlier. The trifle to be paid weekly both by them and by the agricultural labourers should be less, perhaps considerably less, than what would be demanded by an Insurance-office guaranteeing the same prospective advantages.

Occasional distress may safely be left to private charity. Consequently there need not be any temporary relief; nor



should there, as that would reopen a door to all the present evils. There should also be few poor-houses. Orphans, and occasionally the aged, in country parishes might be boarded out, (as is, or was, the custom at Lyons with the foundlings, who, instead of being reared in the hospital, were put out to nurse,) due care being taken to place the orphans with cottagers of good repute. But a subscriber to the fund, if disabled by an accident, might at any age claim relief from it apportioned to his maimedness.

Persons who had not contributed to the fund in their youth, would receive no relief from it in old age. Contributions for less than ..... years should be forfeited ; but every man, paying his dues for that number of years, and then discontinuing his contribution, should be entitled to relief proportionate. Whether he should begin to receive at sixty-five, only receiving less weekly, or should begin to receive aid later, is a question I am not prepared to answer. Perhaps the latter would be the better plan in most cases.

Of women I say nothing : but it would be easy to form a liberal scale,—and liberal it should be,—for them. Only I would allow contributors, who die without benefiting by the fund, to bequeathe to women who are, or to female infants provided they become, contributors, the amount of one year's contribution for every ..... during which the testator may have contributed ; such amount being carried to the account of the legatee, exactly as if she had paid it herself.

To increase this Poor-fund, either a parliamentary grant should be voted yearly, or,—what would be far better, and should therefore be tried in the first instance,—the rich should come forward as honorary subscribers. Nay, every one without exception should belong to it, either as subscriber or contributor. It is the littles of the little that make the mickle.

Of the contributors I have spoken already. For subscribers the following yearly proportion, or something like it, would suffice : *one* pound for all who in any way have sixty pounds a year ; *two* for all who have a hundred ; and so on. Only there should be a maximum, and that not a large one ; so that in rich



families the wife might subscribe as well as the husband. All persons now liable to be rated should put in a trifle for every child above six or seven years old: this in the case of the wealthy should be as much, or nearly so, as they put in for themselves. Moreover all masters should take care that their servants are subscribers, making them an allowance on purpose. In return for this they should be admitted to relief in old age, as they would now be, on making out a case of necessity. But only *bonâ fide* working persons should be entitled to receive of right, as contributors to the fund; who are carefully to be distinguished from the subscribers in aid of it.

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The Jacobins, in realizing their systems of fraternization, always contrived to be the elder brothers. L.

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I rise

From a perturbed sleep, broken by dreams  
 Of long and desperate conflict hand to hand,  
 Of wounds, and rage, and hard-earned victory,  
 And charging over falling enemies  
 With shouts of joy . . . How quiet is the night!  
 The trees are motionless; the cloudless blue  
 Sleeps in the firmament; the thoughtful moon,  
 With her attendant train of circling stars,  
 Seems to forget her journey through the heavens,  
 To gaze upon the beauties of the scene.  
 That scene how still! no truant breeze abroad  
 To mar its quietness. The very brook,  
 So wont to prattle like a merry child,  
 Now creeps with caution o'er its pebbled way,  
 As if afraid to violate the silence.

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Handsomeness is the more animal excellence, beauty the more imaginative. A handsome Madonna I cannot conceive, and never saw a handsome Venus: but I have seen many a handsome country girl, and a few very handsome ladies.

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There would not be half the difficulty in doing right, but for the frequent occurrence of cases where the lesser virtues are on the side of wrong.

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Curiosity is little more than another name for Hope.

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Since the generality of persons act from impulse, much more than from principle, men are neither so good nor so bad as we are apt to think them.

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There is an honest unwillingness to pass off another's observations for our own, which makes a man appear pedantic.

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*Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerint! . . . Immo vivant!* provided they are worthy to live. So may we have the satisfaction of knowing, — what literary incentive can be greater? — that we too have been permitted to utter sacred words, and to think the thoughts of great minds.

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The commentator guides and lights us to the altar erected by the author; but he himself must already have kindled his torch at the flame which burns upon it. And what are Art and Science, if not a running commentary on Nature? what are poets and philosophers, but torchbearers leading us through the mazes and recesses of God's two majestic temples, the sensible and the spiritual world? Books, as Dryden has aptly termed them, are spectacles to read Nature. Eschylus and Aristotle, Shakspeare and Bacon, are priests who preach and expound the mysteries of man and the universe. They teach us to understand and feel what we see, to decipher and syllable the hieroglyphics of the senses. Do you not, since you have read Wordsworth, feel a fresh and more thoughtful delight, whenever you hear a cuckoo, whenever you see a daisy, whenever you play with a child? Have not Thucydides and Machiavel aided you in discovering the tides of feeling and the currents of passion by which events are borne along the ocean of Time? Can you not discern something more in man, now that you look at him with eyes purged and unscaled by gazing upon Shakspeare and Dante? From these terrestrial and celestial globes we learn the configuration of the earth and the heavens.



But wheresoever good is done, good is received in return. The law of reciprocation is not confined to the physical system of things: in the career of benevolence and beneficence also every action is followed by a corresponding reaction. Intellectual light is not poured from a lantern, leaving the bearer in the shade: it supplies us with the power of beholding and contemplating the luminary it flows from. The more familiar we become with Nature, with the greater veneration and love do we return to the masters by whom we were initiated; and as they have taught us to understand Nature, Nature in turn teaches us to understand them.

“When I have been traveling in Italy (says a lively modern writer), how often have I exclaimed, *How like a picture!* I remember once, while watching a glorious sunset from the banks of the Arno, I caught myself saying, *This is truly one of Claude’s sunsets.* Now when I again see one of my favorite Grosvenor Claudes, I shall probably exclaim, *How natural! how like what I have seen so often on the Arno, or from the Monte Pincio!*” *Journal of an Ennuyée*, p. 335.

The same thing must have happened to most lovers of landscape-painting. How often in the Netherlands does one see Cuyp’s solid, oppressive sunshine! and Rubenses boundless, objectless plains, which no other painter would have deemed either worldly or susceptible of being transferred from Nature’s Gallery to Art’s! More than once, in mounting the hill of Fiesole to Landor’s beautiful villa, have I stopt with my companion to gaze on that pure, living ether, in which Perugino is wont to enshrine his Virgins and Saints, and which till then I had imagined to be a heavenly vision specially vouchsafed to him, such as this world of cloud and mist could not parallel. Many a time too among the Sussex downs have I felt grateful to Copley Fielding for opening my eyes to see beauties and harmonies, which else might have been unheeded, and for breathing ideas into the prospect, whereby “the repose Of earth, sky, sea, and air was vivified.”

Hence we may perceive, why what is called a taste for the picturesque never arises in a country, until it has reacht an



advanced stage of intellectual culture : because an eye for the picturesque can only be formed by looking at pictures ; that is, primarily. In this, as in other cases, by Art are we first led to fix our attention and reflexion more observantly on the beauties of Nature : although, when such attention and reflexion have once become general, they may be excited in such as have never seen a picture. When we are told therefore that the earliest passages to be found in any ancient author, which savour of what we should now call poetical description, are in the Epistles of Pliny, we must not infer from this that Pliny had a livelier and intenser love of Nature than any of the ancient poets. Supposing the remark to be correct, — and I will not stop to enquire how far it is so, — all it would prove is, that Pliny was, as we know him to have been, what we used to call a *virtuoso*, a picture-fancier, and that people in his day were beginning to look at Nature in the mirror of Art. It is a mistake however to conclude that men are insensible to those beauties, which they are not continually talking about and analysing, — that the love of Nature is a new feeling, because the taste for the Picturesque is a modern taste. When the mountaineer descends into the plain, he soon begins to pine with love for his native hills ; and many have been known to fall sick, nay, even to die, of that love. Yet, had he never left them, you would never have heard him prate about them. When I was on the Lake of Zug, which lies bosomed among such grand mountains, the boatman, after telling some stories about Suwarrow's march through the neighbourhood, askt me, *Is it true, that he came from a country where there is not a mountain to be seen ?* — Yes, I replied : *you may go hundreds of miles without coming to one. — That must be beautiful !* he exclaimed : *das muss schön seyn !* His exclamation was prompted no doubt by the thought of the difficulties which the mountains about him opposed to traffic and agriculture ; though even on his own score he erred, as Mammom is ever wont to do grossly. For those mountains gave him the lake, and attracted the strangers, whereby he earned his livelihood. But it is a perverse habit of the Imagination, when there is no call



for action, to dwell on "the ills we have," without thinking of "the others which we know not of." This very man however, had he been transported to the plains he sighed for,—even though they had been as flat as Burnet's Paradise, or the *tabula rasa* which Locke supposed to be the paradisiacal state of the human mind,—would probably have been seized with the homesickness which is so common among his countrymen, as it is also among the Swedes and Norwegians, but which, I believe, is hardly found, except in the natives of a mountainous and beautiful country.

The noisiest streams are the shallowest. It is an old saying, but never out of season; least of all in an age, the fit symbol of which would not be, like the Ephesian personification of Nature, *multimamma*,—for it neither brings forth nor nourishes,—but *multilingua*. Your *amateur* will talk by the ell, or, if you wish it, by the mile, about the inexpressible charms of Nature: but I never heard that his love had caused him the slightest uneasiness.

It is only by the perception of some contrast, that we become conscious of our feelings. The feelings however may exist for centuries, without the consciousness; and still, when they are mighty, they will overpower Consciousness; when they are deep, it will be unable to fathom them. Love has indeed been called "loquacious as a vernal bird;" and with truth; but his loquacity comes on him mostly in the absence of his beloved. Here too the same illustration holds: the deep stream is not heard, until some obstacle opposes it. But can anybody, when floating down the Rhine, believe that the builders and dwellers in those castles, with which every rock is crested, were blind to all the beauties around them? Is it quite impossible that they should have felt almost as much as the sentimental tourist, who returns to his parlour in some metropolis, and puffs out the fumes of his admiration through his quill? Has the moon no existence independent of the halo about her? Or does the halo even flow from her? Is it not produced by the dimness and density of the atmosphere through which she has to shine? Give me the love of the bird that broods over her own nest,





rather than of one that lays her eggs in the nest of another, albeit she warble about parental affection as loudly as Rousseau or Lord Byron.

Convents too . . how many of them are situate amid the sublimest and most beautiful scenery! I will only mention two, the great Chartreuse, and the monastery of the Camaldulans near Naples. The hacknied remark at such places is, *O yes! the monks always knew how to pick out the eyes of the land, and to pounce upon its fatness.* It is forgotten that, when the convents were built, the country round was mostly either a barren wilderness, or a vast, impenetrable forest, and that, if things are otherwise now, the change is owing to the patient industry of the monks and their dependents, not liable to alternations and interruptions, as is the case with other proprietors, but continued without intermission through centuries. Though one is bound however to protest against this stale and vulgar scoff, I know not how we can imagine that the men, who, when half "the world lay before them, were to choose their place of rest," pitchd their homes in spots surrounded by such surpassing grandeur and beauty, can have been without all sense for what they saw. Rather, in retiring from the world to worship God in solitude, did they seek out the most glorious and awful chambers in that earthly temple, which also is "not made with hands."

Add to this, that in every country, where there are national legends, they are always deeply and vividly imprest with a feeling of the magnificence or the loveliness in the midst of which they have arisen. Indeed, they are often little else than the expression and outpouring of those feelings: and such primitive poetical legends will hardly be found, except in the bosom of a beautiful country, growing up in it, and pendent from it, almost like fruit from a tree. The powerful influence exercised by natural objects in giving shape and life to those forms in which the Imagination embodies the ideas of superhuman power, is finely illustrated by Wordsworth in one of the noblest passages of *the Excursion*: where he casts a glance over the workings of this principle in the mythologies of the



Persians, the Babylonians, the Chaldeans, and the Greeks; shewing with what plastic power the imaginative love of Nature wedded and harmonized the dim conceptions of the mysteries which lie behind the curtain of the senses, with the objects by which it happened to be surrounded, incarnating the invisible in the visible, and impregnating the visible with the invisible. The same principle is of universal application. You may perceive how it has operated in the traditions of the Highlands, of the Rhine, of Bohemia, of Sweden and Norway, in short of every country where poetry has been indigenous. As the poetry of the Asiatic nations may be termed the poetry of the sun, so the Edda is the poetry of ice. U.

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I have been trying to shew, that, though a taste for the picturesque, as the very form of the word *picturesque*, which betrays its recent origin, implies, is a late growth, a kind of aftermath, in the mind of a people, which cannot arise until a nation has gone through a long process of intellectual culture, nor indeed until after the first crop has been gathered in, still a feeling and love for the beauties of Nature may exist altogether independently of that self-conscious, self-analysing taste, and that such a feeling is sure to spring up, wherever there is nourishment for it, in a nation's vernal prime: although there may be a period, between the first crop and the aftermath, when the field looks parcht and yellow and bristly, and as if the dew of heaven could not moisten it. When the mind of a people first awakes, it is full of its morning dreams, and holds those dreams to be, as the proverb accounts them, true. A long time passes, — it must encounter and struggle with opposition, — before it acquires anything like a clear, definite self-consciousness. For a long time it scarcely regards itself as separate from Nature. It lies in her arms, and feeds at her breast, and looks up into her face, and smiles at her smiles. When it speaks, you rather hear the voice of Nature speaking through it, than any distinct voice of its own. It is like a child, in all whose words and thoughts you may perceive the promptings of its mother. Very probably indeed it may not talk much about



its love for its mother ; but it will give the strongest proofs of that love, by thinking in all things as its mother thinks, and speaking as its mother speaks, and doing as its mother does.

This is the character of poetry in early times. It may be objected that you find no picturesque descriptions in it. That is to say, the poets have not learnt to look at Nature with the eye of a painter, nor to seek for secondary, reflex beauties in natural objects, arising whether from symbolical, or from accidental associations. Nor do you see their love of Nature from their talking about nature : for they are not conversant with abstractions ; they deal only with persons and things. You may discern that love however by the way in which it is mixt up with the whole substance of their minds, as the glow of health mixes itself up with the whole substance of our bodies, unthought of, it may be, until we are reminded of it by its opposite, but still felt and enjoyed.

Of Asiatic poetry it is needless to speak : for that even now has hardly emerged from its nonage, or risen beyond a child's fondness for flowers. But even in Homer, — although in Greek poetry afterward the human element, that which treats of man as being and doing and suffering, predominated more than in the poetry of any other country over the natural, which dwells on the contemplation of the outward world, its forms, its changes, and its influences, — and though the germs of this are to be found in the living energy and definiteness and bodiliness of all Homer's characters, — still what a love of Nature is there in him ! What a fresh morning air breathes through those twin firstbirths of Poetry ! what a clear bright sky hangs above those two lofty peaks of Parnassus ! In his own words we may say, that over them *ὑπερῖρά γη ἄσπετος αἰθήρ*. Indeed this *ἄσπετος αἰθήρ* may be regarded as the peculiar atmosphere of Greek literature and art, an atmosphere which then first opened and broke upon it. Of all poems the Homeric have the most thoroughly out-of-door character. We stand on the Ionian coast, looking out upon the sea, and beholding it under every variety of hue and form and aspect. And there he too was wont to stand ; there, as Coleridge so melodiously expresses it, he



Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee  
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

Every epithet he gives to a natural object, every image taken from one, has the liveliest truth: and truth is ever the best proof that any one can give of love. Of the poetical descriptions of morning composed since the days of Homer, the chief part are little else than expansions and amplifications of his three sweet epithets, *ἡριγένεια*, *κροκόπεπλος*, and *ρόδοδάκτυλος*. Nor can anything be more aptly chosen than his adjuncts and accompaniments: which shews that he was not destitute of what we call the sentimental love of Nature, that love of Nature which discerns a correspondence, and as it were a sympathy, between its appearances and changes, and the vicissitudes of human feeling and passion. Chryses, after his entreaties have been denied, walks *ἀκέων παρὰ θίνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης*, where the murmur of its waves responds to his feelings, and stirs him to pour them forth in a prayer to Apollo. In like manner Achilles, when Briseis is taken from him, sits apart by himself, *θιν' ἔφ' ἀλδς πολίης ὀρώων ἐπὶ οἶνοπα πόντον*. The epithet *οἶνοπα*, denoting the dark gloom, perhaps the purple grape-color of the distant sea, while it was dashing and foaming at his feet, brings it into harmony and sympathy with Achilles. A bright, blue sea would have been out of keeping. Or take a couple of similies. When Apollo comes down from Olympus to avenge his insulted priest, he comes *νυκτὶ ἐοικώς*. When Thetis rises from the sea to listen to her son's complaint, she rises *ἥντ' ὁμίχλῃ*. Parallels to these two similies may be found in two of our own greatest poets. Milton says that Pandemonium "Rose like an exhalation from the earth." Coleridge's Ancient Mariner tells us that he passes "like Night from land to land." Milton's image is a fine one. Coleridge's appears to me, to adopt an expression which he uses in speaking of Wordsworth's faults, "too great for the subject," a piece of "mental bombast." Be this however as it may, how inferior are they both, in grandeur, in simplicity, in beauty, in grace, to the Homeric! which moreover have better caught the spirit and sentiment of the natural appearances. For Apollo does



come with the power and majesty, and with the terrors of Night; and the soft waviness of an exhalation is a much fitter image for the rising of the goddess, than for the massiness and hard, stiff outline of a building. In Homer's landscapes, it is true, there is a want, or rather an absence, of those ornamental, picturesque epithets, with which Pope has bedizened his translation. This however only shews that the objects he speaks of "had no need of a remoter charm, By thought supplied, or any interest Unborrowed from the eye." Such as they are, he loves them for their own sake. In his vivid, transparent verse, ἐξέφανεν πᾶσαι σκοπιαί καὶ πρόωες ἄκροι, Καὶ νάπαι, — Παντὰ δέ τ' εἶδεται ἄστρα. We feel too that he, as he says of his shepherd, γέγηθε φρένα at the sight; though no "conscious swain," as Pope styles him, nor thinking of "blessing the *useful* light," as by a kind of second sight of utilitarianism the bard of Twickenham is pleased to make him.

This distinctness of the Homeric descriptions leads Cicero, in a fine passage of the *Tusculan Questions*, to contend that he who, though blind, could so represent every object as to enable us to see what he himself could not see, must have derived great pleasure and enjoyment from his inward sight. There is more reason, however, in the witticism of Velleius, that, if any one supposes Homer to have been born blind, he must himself be destitute of every sense. For never was a fable more repugnant to truth, than that of Homer's blindness. It originated, probably, in the identification of the author of the *Iliad* with the author of the Hymn to Apollo, and was then fostered by the notion that Homer designed to represent himself under the character of Demodocus in the *Odyssey*. Milton has indeed made a fine use of Homer's blindness: but, looking at it as a fact, one might as reasonably believe that the sun is blind, as that Homer was.

In the Greek poets of the great age, I have already admitted, there is little love of Nature. Man was then become very nearly all-in-all, to whose level the gods themselves were brought down, — not the skeleton man of philosophy, nor the puppet of empirical observation, — but the ideal man of imagi-



native thought, an idea as perfect as it can be, when drawn from no higher source than what lies in man himself. The manifold, dazzling glories of Athens and of Greece filled their minds with the notion of the greatness of human nature: and that greatness they tried to exhibit in its struggles with fate and with the gods. Their characters are mostly statuesque even in this respect, that they have no background. In the *Prometheus* itself, the wilderness and the other natural horrors are mainly employed, like the chains and wedge, as instruments by which Jupiter tries to intimidate the benefactor of mankind. This, however, is not so much the case with Sophocles; in whose *Edipus at Colonus*, *Ajax*, and *Philoctetes*, the scenery forms an important element, not merely in the imaginative, but even in the dramatic beauty. In after times, when the glory of Greece had faded and sunk, when its political grandeur had decayed, and man was no longer the one engrossing object of admiration, we find a revival of the love of Nature in the pastoral poetry of the Sicilians.

With regard to modern poetry, when we are looking at any question connected with its history, we ought to bear in mind that we did not begin from the beginning, and that, with very few exceptions, we had not to hew our materials out of the quarry, or to devise the groundplan of our edifices, but made use, at least in great measure, of the ruins and substructions of antiquity. Hence, Greece alone affords a type of the natural development of the human mind through its various ages and stages. Owing to this, and perhaps still more to the influence, direct and indirect, of Christianity, we from the first find a far greater body of reflective thought in modern poetry than in ancient. Dante is not, what Homer was, the father of poetry springing in the freshness and simplicity of childhood out of the arms of mother earth: he is rather, like Noah, the father of a second poetical world, to whom he pours out his prophetic song, fraught with the wisdom and the experience of the old world. Indeed he himself expresses this by representing himself as wandering on his awful pilgrimage under the guidance of Virgil.



It would require a long dissertation, illsuited to these pages, to pursue this train of thought through the literature of modern Europe. Let me hasten home, and take a glance at our own poets. The early ones, especially the greatest among them, were intense and devoted lovers of Nature. Chaucer sparkles with the dew of morning. Spenser lies bathed in the sylvan shade. Milton glows with orient light. One might almost fancy that he had gazed himself blind, and had then been raised to the sky, and there stood and waited, like "blind Orion hungering for the morn." So abundantly had he stored his mind with visions of natural beauty, that, when all without became dark, he was still most rich in his inward treasure, and "Ceast not to wander where the Muses haunt Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill." Shakspeare "glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven." All nature ministers to him, as gladly as a mother to her child. Whether he wishes her to tune her myriad-voiced organ to Romeo's love, or to Miranda's innocence, or to Perdita's simplicity, or to Rosalind's playfulness, or to the sports of the Fairies, or to Timon's misanthropy, or to Macbeth's desolating ambition, or to Lear's heart-broken frenzy,—he has only to ask, and she puts on every feeling and every passion with which he desires to invest her.

But, when Milton lost his eyes, Poetry lost hers. A time followed, when our poets ceast to commune with Nature, and ceast to love her, and, as there can be no true knowledge without love, ceast therefore to know anything about her. Man again became all-in-all,—but not the ideal human nature of Greek poetry, in its altitudes of action and passion. The human nature of our poets in those days was the human nature of what was called *the town*, with all its pettinesses and hollownesses and crookednesses and rottennesses. The great business and struggle of men seemed to be, to outlie, outcheat, outwhore, and outhector each other. Our poets then dwelt in Grubstreet, and, to judge from their works, seldom left their garrets, save for the coffeehouse, the playhouse, or the stews. Dryden wrote a bombastical description of night, from which one



might suppose that he had never seen night, except by candle-light. He talkt of "Nature's self seeming to lie dead," — of "the mountains seeming to nod their drowsy head," — much as Charles the Second used to do at a sermon, — and of "sleeping flowers sweating beneath the nightdews," — which I can only parallel by a translation I once saw of Virgil's *Scilicet is superis labor est*, "Ay sure, for this the gods laborious sweat." Yet this was extolled by Rymer, a countryman of Shakspeare's, as the finest description of night ever composed: an opinion which Johnson quotes, without expressing any dissent; telling us, moreover, that these lines were repeated oftener in his days than almost any others of Dryden's.

It is true that, as I have been reminded, Shakspeare also has said of night, "Now o'er the one half world Nature seems dead;" and doubtless it was from hence that Dryden took what he thought a very grand idea. But as thieves never know or dare to make the right use of their stolen goods, so is it mostly with plagiaries. The verbal likeness only exposes the empty turgidity of Dryden: nor can there be a more striking illustration of Quintilian's saying, *Multa fiunt eadem, sed aliter*. For observe where Shakspeare uses this expression, and how it exemplifies that unrivaled power of imagination, wherewith, under the impulses of a mighty passion, he fuses every object by its intense radiation, and brings them into harmony with that passion by bathing them in a flood of bright, or sombre, or mellow, or bloodred light. Macbeth, just as he is going to commit the murder, standing on the very brink of hell, and about to plunge into it, sees the reflexion of his own chaotic feelings in all things. Order is turned into disorder; law is suspended; every natural, every social tie is cracking: he is hurling an innocent man, his guest, his king, into the jaws of death: death is in all his thoughts. To him therefore, with the deepest truth, "o'er the one half world Nature seems dead;" even as he had just seen the instrument with which the crime was to be perpetrated, "in palpable form" before him, though only "a dagger of the mind, a false creation, Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain." All the other visions too which haunt him are of the same kind.



Wicked dreams abuse  
 The curtained sleep. Witchcraft celebrates  
 Pale Hecate's offerings; and withered Murder,  
 Alarmed by his sentinel, the wolf,  
 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,  
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, toward his design  
 Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,  
 Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
 The very stones prate of my whereabouts,  
 And take the present horror from the time,  
 Which now suits with it.

With what wonderful fitness do all the images, all the thoughts, all the words here "suit" with each other, and with Macbeth's terrific purpose! whereas in Dryden's description there is no congruity, but only a string of poor and incongruous conceits, cold and extravagant; and the occasion is merely that Cortez, who with like incongruity has fallen in love at sight with the daughter of Montezuma, cannot sleep, because "Love denies Rest to his soul, and slumber to his eyes." What then must have been the knowledge of Nature, and what the feeling for it, in an age when the poetical imagery, which the readers and repeaters of poetry were accustomed to associate with night, was Nature's lying dead, mountains nodding their drowsy heads, little birds repeating their songs in sleep, and sleeping flowers sweating beneath the nightdews? People even learnt to fancy, and to tell one another, that all this was indeed so. As it is the wont of hollow things to echo, whenever a poet hit on a striking image, or a startling expression, it was bandied from mouth to mouth. Thus *nodding mountains* became a stock phrase. Pope makes Eloisa talk of "lowbrowed rocks that hang *nodding* o'er the deep:" where however we may suppose the poet to transfer the motion of the image in the water to the rocks themselves. In his Iliad, "Pelion *nods* his shaggy brows," and "*nodding* Ilion waits the impending fall:" in his Odyssey, "On Ossa Pelion nods with all his woods." The same piece of falsetto is doubtless to be found scores of times in the verse-writers of the same school.

Yet description, and moral satire or declamation, were the richest veins, poor and shallow as they are at best, which were



opened in our serious verse between the death of Milton and the regeneration of English poetry at the close of the last century. Nor was our description of the highest kind, being deficient both in imaginativeness and in reality. It seldom betokened anything like that intimate, personal, thoughtful, dutiful, and loving communion with Nature, which we perceive in every page of Wordsworth: and owing to this very want of familiarity with the realities, our poets could not deal with them as he does, shaping and moulding and combining and animating them, according to the impulses of his imagination, and calling forth new melodies and harmonies, to fill earth, sea, and sky. They did look at Nature through the spectacles of books. It was as though a number of eyes had been set in a row, like boys playing at leap-frog, each hinder one having to look through all that stood before it, and hence seeing Nature, not as it is in itself, but refracted and distorted by a number of more or less turbid media. Ever and anon too some one would be seized with the ambition of surpassing his predecessors, and would try by a feat at leap eye to get before them: in so doing however, from ignorance of the ground, he mostly stumbled and fell. Making an impotent effort after originality, he would attempt to vary the combinations of words in which former writers had spoken of the same objects: but, as one is ever liable to trip, and to violate idiom at least, if not grammar, when speaking a forein language, so by these aliens to Nature, and sojourners in the land of Poetry, images and expressions, which belonged to particular circumstances, or to particular phases of feeling, were often misapplied to circumstances and feelings with which they were wholly incongruous. When the jay spread out his peacock's tail, many of the quills were sticking up in the air.

But though our descriptive poetry was mostly wanting both in imaginativeness and in reality, this did not disqualify it for being what is called picturesque. For picturesqueness, as it is commonly understood, consists not in looking at things as they really are, and as the sun or Homer look at them, nor in seeing them, as Shakspeare, Milton, Wordsworth see them, transfig-



ured by the plastic power of the Imagination, but rather in seeing them arrayed in the associations of various kinds with which the course of ages has surrounded them. Painting, even historical painting, being mute, and poorly supplied with means for expressing new or remote combinations of thought, has ever succeeded best in representing that which is familiar and easy to be understood. It has so scanty a vocabulary to tell its story with, that its story must needs be a short one, and ought to be such that its outline and main features should be discernible at a glance. For it has to speak to the eye, which does not proceed cumulatively and step by step, and the impressions of which are rather coinstantaneous than successive. Its business is to give the utmost accuracy, completeness, and delicacy, to the details it makes use of in expressing such ideas as have already got possession of the popular mind, and form a portion of the popular belief. If it can do this, it can well refrain from seeking to utter new ideas, or going on a voyage of discovery into unknown regions of thought. Its stock in trade may be said to consist chiefly in commonplaces: and it no more tires of or by repeating them, than a rosebush tires of or by pouring forth roses, or than the sun tires of or by shining daily upon the same landscape. In poetry on the other hand commonplaces are worthless. Only so far as a work is original, only so far as a thought is original, either in its form and conception, or at least in its position and combination, can it be said to be truly poetical. Poetry and Painting are indeed sister arts, as they have often been termed. But the sphere of each is totally distinct from that of the other: though they can be made to touch at any point, they cannot be made to coincide; nor can they be brought to touch in more points than one at the same moment, without some bruise and injury to one or the other. Painting by the outward is to express the inward; Poetry by the inward is to express the outward: but the main and immediate business of Painting is with the outward, that of Poetry with the inward. That which Painting represents, Poetry describes: that which Poetry represents, Painting can only symbolize. Whenever this is for-



gotten, it is hurtful to both. Fuseli, for instance, was always forgetting the painter, in striving to be a poet. Perhaps the same was sometimes too much the case with Hogarth. Assuredly it is so with Martin, and frequently with Turner, who would have been a still greater painter, had he not been perpetually striving to be more than a painter can be. On the other hand, when Poetry becomes picturesque, it is like Prospero casting away his wand, to take up a common sceptre: and it will mostly have to learn that ordinary men are more unmanageable, not only than Ariels, but even than Calibans.

In truth this has been one of the misfortunes of our poetry for the last hundred and fifty years, that it has been much more picturesque than poetical. To many of the excellences of painting indeed it has made little pretension. It has no foreground; it has no background: it wants light; it wants shade: it wants an atmosphere: it wants the unity resulting from having all the parts placed at once before the eye. All these things are missing in descriptive poetry; though in epic and dramatic there are qualities that correspond to them. This is enough to shew how idle it is for Poetry to abandon its own domain, and try to set up its throne in the territory of its neighbour. Everything that our poets had to mention, was described and reflected upon. First one thing was described and reflected upon; and then something else was described and reflected upon; and then . . . some third thing was treated in the same way. The power of infusing life and exhibiting action is wanting. No word was supposed to be capable of standing alone; all must have a crutch to lean on: every object must be attended by an epithet or two, or by a phrase, pickt out much as schoolboys pick theirs out of the *Gradus*, with little regard to any point except its fitting the verse, and not disturbing its monotonous smoothness. If it had ever been applied to the object by any poet, if it ever could be applied to it under any circumstances, this was enough: no matter whether it suited the particular occasion or no. The grand repository for all such phraseology was that translation of Homer, which has perhaps done more harm than any other work ever did to the



literature of its country; thus exactly reversing the fate of its original. For assuredly no human work ever exercised so powerful and beneficial an influence on the literature and arts of the people out of whom it sprang, as the Homeric poems. Nor can I think that there was much ground in point of fact for Plato's charge, of their having been injurious to religion and morality. The mischief had other sources, inherent in Polytheism, and such as Natural Religion cannot quench. But as for Pope's translation, it has been a sort of poetic stage-wardrobe, to which anybody might resort for as much tinsel and tawdry lace, and as many Bristol diamonds, as he wanted, and where everybody might learn the welcome lesson, that the last thing to be thought of in writing verses is the meaning.

Ever since the dawn of a better day on our poetry, description and reflexion have still absorbed too large a portion of its energy. Few writers have kept it before their eyes so distinctly as the authors of *Count Julian* and of *Philip Van Artevelde*, that the great business and office of poetry is not to describe, but to create, not to pour forth an everlasting singsong about mountains and fountains, and hills and rills, and flowers and bowers, and woods and floods, and roses and posies, and vallies and allies, but to represent human character and feeling, action and passion, the ceaseless warfare, and the alternate victories of Life and of Death.

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The line of Milton quoted above, in which Pandemonium is described as rising out of the earth, "like an exhalation," is supposed by Mr. Peck to be "a hint taken from some of the moving scenes and machines invented for the stage by Inigo Jones." This conjecture is termed very probable by Bishop Newton, in a note repeated by Dr. Hawkins, and by Mr. Todd; and the latter tries to confirm it by an extract from an account of a Mask acted at Whitehall in 1637. Alas for poets, when the critics set about unraveling their thoughts! when they even pretend to make out by what old bones their minds have been manured! On seeing a poet overlaid by a copious *variorum* commentary, one is often reminded of Gulliver lying help-



less and stirless under the net that the Lilliputians had spun around him. Thus Malone suggests that, when Shakspeare made Lady Macbeth, in the trance of her bloody ambition, pray that heaven might not "peep through the blanket of the dark," he was probably thinking of "the coarse *woolen* curtain of his own theatre, through which probably, while the house was yet but half lighted, he had himself often *peeped*."

But to be serious: even if the Mask referred to had been acted in 1657, instead of 1637, and if Milton in that year had had eyes to see it with, I should still have been slow to believe that a thought so trivial could have crost his mind, when he was hovering on the outspread wings of his imagination over the abyss of hell. An eagle does not stoop after a grub. Sheridan indeed, who never scrupled to borrow, whether money or thoughts, and to pass them off for his own, might have caught such a hint from the stage. For, having no light in himself, he tried to patch up a mimic sun, by sticking together as many candles as he could lay hands on, — wax, mould, or rushlights, no matter which. Hence, brilliant as his comedies are, they want unity and life: they rather sparkle, than shine; and are like a box of trinkets, not a beautiful head radiant with jewelry. Of Milton's mind, on the other hand, the leading characteristic is its unity. He has the thoughts of all ages at his command; but he has made them his own. He sits "high on a throne of royal state, adorned With all the wealth of Ormus and of Ind, And where the gorgeous East with richest hand Has showered barbaric pearl and gold." There are no false gems in him, no tinsel. It seems as if nothing could dwell in his mind, but what was grand and sterling.

Besides, if we look at the passage, the "fabric huge" does not rise at once, as the commentators appear to have supposed, ready-made by a charm out of the earth, like a scene from the floor of a theatre; which is thus strangely brought in to serve for a go-between in this simily; as though Milton, without such a hint, could not have thought of comparing the erection of Pandemonium to the rising of a mist. Such was the dignified severity of Milton's mind, that he has carefully abstained



throughout *Paradise Lost* from everything like common magic. His spirits are superhuman; and their actions are supernatural, but not unnatural or contranatural. That is, the processes by which they accomplish their purposes are analogous to those by which men do so: they are subject to the same universal laws; only their strength and speed are immeasurably greater. But he has nothing arbitrary, no capricious, fantastical transformations. When anything appears to be such, there is always a moral purpose to justify it; as in the sublime passage where the applause which Satan expects, is turned into "a dismal universal hiss," exemplifying how the most triumphant success in evil is in fact a sinking deeper and deeper in misery and shame. To a higher moral law the laws of Nature may bend, but not to a mere act of wilfulness. That Pandemonium was built aboveground, and not drawn up from underground, is clear from the previous account of the materials prepared for it. Milton wanted a council-chamber for his infernal conclave. Of course it was to surpass everything on earth in magnificence; and it was to be completed almost instantaneously. Hence, instead of exhibiting the gradual process of a laborious accumulation, it seemed to spring up suddenly, to rise "like an exhalation."

This comparison may possibly have been suggested by the Homeric ἤϊτ' ἐμίχλη. At least a recollection of Homer's image may have been floating in Milton's mind; as it is clear that just after, when he says, the fabric rose "with the sound Of dulcet symphonies, and voices sweet," he must have been thinking of the legend of Amphion building the walls of Thebes. For his mind was such a treasury of learning,—he had so fed on the thoughts of former ages, transubstantiating them, to use his own expression, by "concoctive heat,"—and the knowledge of his earlier years seems to have become so much more vivid and ebullient, when fresh influxes were stopt,—that one may allowably attribute all manner of learned allusions to him, provided they are in harmony with his subject, and lie within the range of his reading. Many of these have been detected by his commentators: but the investigation is by no means exhausted.



Not a few of his allusions they have mist: others they have mistaken.

For instance, in the note on the passage where Milton compares one of the regions of hell to "that great Serbonian bog Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old, Where armies whole have sunk," the modern editors, in a note taken from Patrick Hume, refer only to Herodotus and Lucan; neither of whom says a word about armies being lost in the bog. I conclude therefore that no commentator has traced this passage to its real source in Diodorus Siculus (i. 30); where we are told, that "persons ignorant of the country, who approach the lake Serbonis, have to encounter unlookt-for perils. For the firth being narrow and like a fillet, and vast sandbanks lying round it on all sides, when the south wind blows for a continuance, a quantity of sand is driven over it. This covers the water, and renders the surface of the lake so like that of the land, as to be quite undistinguishable. Hence many who did not know the nature of the spot, missing the road, have been swallowed up, *along with whole armies.*" In a subsequent part of his History (xvi. 46), he says that Artaxerxes, in his expedition into Egypt, lost a part of his army there. The substance of the preceding passage is indeed given by George Sandys in his Travels, and thence extracted by Purchas, p. 913; but Milton's source was probably the Greek. For his historical allusions are often taken from Diodorus, with whom he seems to have been better acquainted than with the earlier historians,—the immense superiority of the latter not being generally recognised in those days;—and who, as Wakefield has shewn, was his authority for the beautiful passage about the mariners off at sea, senting "Sabean odours from the spicy shore Of Araby the blest."

Other blind men, it is true, seldom quote books: but it is not so with Milton. The prodigious power, readiness, and accuracy of his memory, as well as the confidence he felt in it, are proved by his setting himself, several years after he had become totally blind, to compose his Treatise on Christian Doctrine; which, made up as it is of Scriptural texts, would seem



to require perpetual reference to the Sacred Volume. A still more extraordinary enterprise was that of the Latin Dictionary, — a work which, one would imagine, might easily wear out a sound pair of eyes, but in which hardly any man could stir a couple of steps without eyes. Well might he, who, after five years of blindness, had the courage to undertake these two vast works, along with *Paradise Lost*, declare that he did “not bate a jot Of heart or hope, but still bore up and steered *Uphillward*.” For this is the word which Milton at first used in his noble sonnet; though for the sake of correctness, *steering uphillward* being a kind of pilotage which he alone practised, or which at all events is only practicable where the clogs of this material world are not dragging us down, he altered it into *right onward*.

To return to the passage which led to this discussion: not only is Mr. Peck’s conjecture at variance with Milton’s conception of the manner in which Pandemonium is constructed, and with the processes by which thoughts arise in the mind of a true poet, as incongruous as it would be for the sun to shoot his rays through a popgun: there is also a third objection, to which some may perhaps attach more weight; namely, the long interval which must have elapsed since Milton saw the machinery referred to, if indeed he had ever seen it at all. Sheridan, as I have said, had he been at the play overnight, and been writing verses about Pandemonium the next morning, might have bethought himself that it would be a happy hit to make Pandemonium rise up like a palace in a pantomime. But even Sheridan would hardly have done this, unless the impression had been so recent and vivid, as to force itself upon the mind in despite of the more orderly laws of association. Now Milton can have seen nothing of the sort since the closing of the theatres in 1642. Nor is it likely that he was ever present at a Court-mask. But Inigo Jones’s improvements in machinery were probably confined to the Court. For new inventions did not travel so fast in those days as now; and the change of scene in *Comus* from the wood to the palace seems to have been effected in a different manner. At all events one should have



to suppose that this spectacle, which Milton, if he ever saw it, would have forgotten forthwith, lay dormant in his mind for above fifteen years, until on a sudden, it started up unbidden, when he was describing the building of Pandemonium.

That an antiquarian critic, like Mr. Peck, should have brought forward such a conjecture, may not be very wonderful. For it requires no little self-denial to resist the temptation of believing that we have hit on an ingenious thought: the more strange and out of the way the thought, the likelier is it to delude us. But that he should have found companions in his visionary ramble, — that a person like Bishop Newton, who was not without poetical taste, and who had not the same temptation to mislead him, should deem his conjecture very probable, — that critic after critic should approve of it, — is indeed surprising. With regard to Mr. Todd however, we see from other places that he too has an itching for explaining poetry by the help of personal anecdotes. Thus he suggests that the two lines in the description of the castle in the *Allegro*, — “Where perhaps some beauty lies, The Cynosure of neighbouring eyes,” — were designed as a compliment to the Countess of Derby, who had a house near Milton’s father’s at Horton. Yet in the same breath he tells us that she was already a grandmother; and so, whatever she might have been in earlier days, she could hardly be any longer *the Cynosure of neighbouring eyes*, or even fancy that she was so. Therefore, unless Milton had expressly told her that she was his Cynosure, the compliment must have been wholly lost. And what need is there for supposing a particular reference to any one? The imaginative process by which Milton animates his castle, is so simple and natural, that I believe there are few young men, who have ever read a tale of romance, in whose minds, when they have been passing by castles, especially if “bosomed high in tufted trees,” the fancy has not sprung up, how lovely a sight it would be, were a beautiful damsel looking out from the turret-window. The very first novel I have happened to take up since writing the above, Arnim’s *Dolores*, opens with a description of an old castle, with its little bright gardens in the turrets, where, he



says, "perchance beautiful princesses may be watching the passing knight among wreaths of flowers of their own training." This is nothing but the ordinary working of the Imagination, "Which, if it would but apprehend some joy, Straight comprehends some bringer of that joy."

These remarks would hardly have been worth making, unless anecdotal explanations of poetry were so much in vogue. People of sluggish imaginations, whose thoughts seldom wander beyond the sphere of their eyes and ears, are glad to detect any mark in a great poet, which brings him down to their level, and proves that he could think of such matters as they themselves talk about with their neighbours. Moreover, as there is an irrepressible instinct of the understanding, which leads us to seek out the causes of things, they who have no eyes to discern the cause in the thing itself, look for it in something round about. They fancy that every thought must needs have an immediate outward suggestment: and if they catch sight of a dry stick lying near a tree, they cry out, *εὕρηκα!* *Here is one of the roots.*

The vanity of these anecdotal explanations is well re-proved by Buttmann in his masterly Essay on the supposed personal allusions in Horace. But unfortunately even his own countrymen have not all taken warning from his admonitions. An overfondness for these exercises of ingenuity is the chief fault in Dissen's otherwise valuable edition of Pindar: where, among a number of similar fantasies, we are told that the famous words, by which critics have been so much puzzled, *ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ*, — which, as the context plainly shews, declare the superiority of water to the other elements, like that of the Olympic to the other games, — were merely meant by the poet to remind Hiero's guests that they ought to mix water with their wine: a conjecture which for impertinence is scarcely surpast by the notorious one, that Shakspeare served as a butcher's boy, because he has a simily about a calf driven to the shambles, and makes Hamlet say, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will." On equally valid grounds might we establish that he practist every trade,



and was a native of every country under heaven: nay, that he, instead of Pythagoras, must have been the real Euphorbus, and that the souls of half mankind must have transmigrated into his.

What then! Is it essential to poetry, that there should be nothing personal and individual in it? nothing indicative of the poet's own feelings? nothing drawn from his own experience? nothing to shew when, and where, and how, and with whom he has lived? Is he to dwell aloof from the earth, as it were in a ring like Saturn's, looking down on it in cold abstraction, without allowing any of its influences to come near him, and ruffle the blank mirror of his soul? So far from it, that the poet, of all men, has the liveliest sympathy with the world around him, which to his eyes "looks with such a look," and to his ears "speaks with such a tone, That he almost receives its heart into his own." Nor has a critic any higher office, than that of tracing out the correspondence between the spirit of a great author, and that of his age and country. Illustrations of manners and customs too may be valuable, as filling up and giving reality to our conception of the world the poet saw around him. Only in such enquiries we must be on our guard against our constitutional tendency to mistake instruments for causes, and must keep in mind that the poet's own genius is the corner-stone and the keystone of his works.

While we confine ourselves to generalities, we may endeavour, and often profitably, to explain the growth and structure of a poet's mind, so far as it has been modified by circumstances. But to descend to particulars, to deduce such and such a thought, or such and such an expression, from such and such an occasion, unless we have some historical ground to proceed on, is hazardous and idle; just as hazardous and idle as it would be to determine why a tree has put forth such and such a leaf, or to divine from what river or cloud the sea has drawn the watery particles which it casts up in such and such a wave. Generals, being few and lasting, we may apprehend: but particulars are so numerous, indefinite, and fleeting, one might as easily mark out and catch a mote dancing in the sunbeam.



Not however that authentic information concerning the processes of a poet's mind, and the origin of his works, when attainable, is to be rejected. In a psychological view it may often be instructive. Even Walter Scott's confessions about the composition of his novels, external and superficial as they are, according to the character of his genius are not without interest. Benvenuto Cellini's one can hardly read without partaking in his anxieties. Cowper's poems derive a fresh charm from their connexion with the incidents of his life. Above all, in Goethe's Memoirs, and of the other writings of his later years, we see the elements of his more genial works, and the *nisus formativus* which gave them unity and shape, exhibited with his own exquisite clearness, like the beautiful fibrous roots of a hyacinth in a glass of water. To take an image something like that which he himself has applied to Shakspeare, after pointing out the hours and the minutes which mankind has reached in the great year of thought, he has opened the watch and enabled us to perceive the springs and the wheels.

Here, to make my peace with anecdote-mongers, let me tell one relating to the origin of the finest statue of the greatest sculptor who has arisen since the genius of Greece droopt and wasted away beneath the yoke of Rome. An illustrious friend of mine, calling on Thorwaldsen some years ago, found him, as he said to me, in a glow, almost in a trance of creative energy. On his enquiring what had happened, *My friend, my dear friend*, said the sculptor, *I have an idea, I have a work in my head, which will be worthy to live. A lad had been sitting to me some time as a model yesterday, when I bade him rest a while. In so doing he threw himself into an attitude which struck me very much. What a beautiful statue it would make! I said to myself. But what would it do for? It would do . . . it would do . . . it would do exactly for Mercury, drawing his sword, just after he has played Argus to sleep. I immediately began modeling. I workt all the evening, till at my usual hour I went to bed. But my idea would not let me rest. I was forced to get up again. I struck a light, and workt at my model for three or four hours; after which I again went to bed. But again I*



*could not rest: again I was forced to get up, and have been working ever since. O my friend, if I can but execute my idea, it will be a glorious statue.*

And a noble statue it is; although Thorwaldsen himself did not think that the execution came up to the idea. For I have heard of a remarkable speech of his made some years after to another friend, who found him one day in low spirits. Being askt whether anything had distress him, he answered, *My genius is decaying. — What do you mean?* said the visiter. — *Why! here is my statue of Christ: it is the first of my works that I have ever felt satisfied with. Till now my idea has always been far beyond what I could execute. But it is no longer so. I shall never have a great idea again.* The same, I believe, must have been the case with all men of true genius. While they who have nothing but talents, may often be astonisht at the effects they produce, by putting things together which fit more aptly than they expected; a man of genius, who has had an idea of a whole in his mind, will feel that no outward mode of expressing that idea, whether by form, or colours, or words, is adequate to represent it. Thus Luther, when he sent Staupitz his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, said to him (*Epist. clxii*), “*Nec jam adeo placent, quam placuerunt primum, ut videam potuisse latius et clarius eos exponi.*” Thus too Solger, writing about his dialogues to Tieck, says (I. p. 432), “*Now that I have read them through again, I find that they are far from attaining to that which stood before my mind when I wrote them: I feel as though they were a mere extract or shadow thereof. My only consolation is, that so it must doubtless be with every one who has aimed at anything excellent, that the execution of his plan does not satisfy him.*” Hence it comes that men of genius have so often attacht the highest value to their less genial works. God alone could look down on His Creation, and behold that it was all very good. This contrast is remarkt by Bacon, and a grand use is made of it, at the close of the Introduction to the *Novum Organum*: “*Tu postquam conversus es ad spectandum opera quae fecerunt manus Tuae, vidisti quod omnia essent bona*



valde, et requievisti. At homo conversus ad opera quae fecerunt manus suae, vidit quod omnia essent vanitas et vexatio spiritus, nec ullo modo requievit. Quare, si in operibus Tuis sudabimus, facies nos visionis Tuae et sabbati Tui participes."

Thorwaldsen's Mercury, it appears, was suggested by a lad whom he had seen sitting at rest. But does that detract from the sculptor's genius? Every other man living might have seen the lad; and no statue of Mercury would have sprung out of the vision: even as millions upon millions before Newton had seen apples drop, without being led thereby to meditate on universal gravitation. So that, though Genius does not wholly create its works out of nothing, its "mighty world" is not merely what it perceives, but what, as Wordsworth expresses it in his lines on the Wye, "it half creates." u.

Another form of the same Materialism, which cannot comprehend or conceive anything, except as the product of some external cause, is the spirit, so general in these times, which attaches an inordinate importance to mechanical inventions, and accounts them the great agents in the history of mankind. It is a common opinion with these exoteric philosophers, that the invention of printing was the chief cause of the Reformation, that the invention of the compass brought about the discovery of America, and that the vast changes in the military and political state of Europe since the middle ages have been wrought by the invention of gunpowder. It would be almost as rational to say that the cock's crowing makes the sun rise. Bacon indeed, I may be reminded, seems to favour this notion, where, at the end of the First Book of the *Novum Organum*, he speaks of the power and dignity and efficacy of inventions, "quae non in aliis manifestius occurrunt, quam in illis tribus quae antiquis incognitae — sunt, Artis nimirum Imprimendi, Pulveris Tormentarii, et Acus Nauticae. Haec enim tria rerum faciem et statum in orbe terrarum mutaverunt; primum, in re litteraria; secundum, in re bellica; tertium, in navigationibus. Unde innumerae rerum mutationes secutae sunt; ut non imperium aliquod, non secta, non stella, majorem efficaciam



et quasi influxum super res humanas exercuisse videatur, quam ista mechanica exercuerunt." However, not to speak of the curious indication of a belief in astrology, it must be remembered that Bacon's express purpose in this passage is to assert the dignity of inventions, that is, not of the natural, material objects in themselves, but of those objects transformed and fashioned anew by the mind of man, to serve the great interests of mankind. The difference between civilized and savage life, he had just said, "non solum, non coelum, non corpora, sed artes praestant." In other words, the difference lies, not in any material objects themselves, but in the intelligence, the mind, that employs them for its own ends. These very inventions had existed, the greatest of them for many centuries, in China, without producing any like result. For why? Because the utility of an invention depends on our making use of it. There is no power, none at least for good, in any instrument or weapon, except so far as there is power in him who wields it: nor does the sword guide and move the hand, but the hand the sword. Nay, it is the hand that fashions the sword. The means and instruments, as we see in China, may lie dormant and ineffective for centuries. But when man's spirit is once awake, when his heart is alert, when his mind is astir, he will always discover the means he wants, or make them. Here also is the saying fulfilled, that they who seek will find.

Or we may look at the matter in another light. We may conceive that, whenever any of the great changes ordained by God's Providence in the destinies of mankind are about to take place, the means requisite for the effecting of those changes are likewise prepared by the same Providence. Niebuhr applied this to lesser things. He repeatedly expresses his conviction that the various vicissitudes by which learning has been promoted, are under the controul of an overruling Providence; and he has more than once spoken of the recent discoveries, by which so many remains of Antiquity have been brought to light, as Providential dispensations, for the increase of our knowledge of God's works, and of His creatures. His convic-



tion was, that, though we are to learn in the sweat of our brow, and though nothing good can be learnt without labour, yet here also everything is so ordered, that the means of knowing whatever is needful and desirable may be discovered, if man will only be diligent in cultivating and making the most of what has already been bestowed on him. He held, that to him who has will be given,—that not only will he be enabled to make increase of the talents he has received, but that he is sure to find others in his path. This way of thinking has been re-proved as profane, by those who yet would perhaps deem it impious if a man, when he cut his finger, or caught a cold, did not recognise a visitation of Providence in such accidents. Now why is this? In all other things we maintain that man's labour is of no avail, unless God vouchsafes to bless it,—that, without God's blessing, in vain will the husbandman sow, in vain will the merchant send his ships abroad, in vain will the physician prescribe his remedies. Why then do we outlaw knowledge? Why do we declare that the exercise of our intellectual powers is altogether alien from God? Why do we exclude them, not only from the sanctuary, but even from the outer court of the temple? Why do we deny that poets and philosophers, scholars and men of science, can serve God, each in his calling, as well as bakers and butchers, as well as hewers of wood and drawers of water?

It is true, there is often an upstart pride in the Understanding; and we are still prone to fancy that Knowledge of itself will make us as gods. Though so large a part of our knowledge is derivative, from the teaching either of other men or of things, and though so small a tittle of it can alone be justly claimed by each man as his own, we are apt to forget this, and to regard it as all our own, as sprung, like Minerva, full-grown out of our own heads; for this among other reasons, that, when we are pouring it forth, in whatsoever manner, its original sources are out of sight; nor does anything remind us of the numberless tributaries by which it has been swelled. This tendency of Knowledge however to look upon itself as self-created and independent of God is much encouraged by the practice of



the religious to treat it and speak of it as such. Were we wise, we should discern that the intellectual, the natural, and the moral world are three concentric spheres in God's world, and that it is a robbery of God to cut off any one of them from Him, and give it up to the Prince of Darkness. As we read in the *Book of Wisdom*, it is God, that *hath given us certain knowledge of the things that are, to know how the world was made, and the operation of the elements,—the beginning, ending, and midst of the times,—the alterations of the turning of the sun, and the change of seasons,—the circuits of years, and the positions of stars,—the natures of living creatures, and the furies of wild beasts,—the violence of winds, and the reasonings of men.*

Thus then does it behove us to deem of inventions, as instruments ordained for us, by the help of which we are to fulfill God's manifold purposes with regard to the destinies of mankind. At the fit time the fit instrument shews itself. If it comes before its time, it is still-born : man knows not what to do with it ; and it wastes away. But when the mind and heart and spirit of men begin to teem with new thoughts and feelings and desires, they always find the outward world ready to supply them with the means requisite for realizing their aims. In this manner, when the idea of the unity of mankind had become more vivid and definite,—when all the speculations of History and Science and Philosophy were bringing it out in greater fullness,—when Poetry was becoming more and more conscious of its office to combine unity with diversity and multiplicity, and individuality with universality,—and when Religion was applying more earnestly to her great work of gathering all mankind into the many mansions in the one great house of the Eternal Father,—at this time, when men's hearts were yearning more than ever before for intercourse and communion, the means of communication and intercourse have been multiplied marvellously. This is good, excellent ; and we may well be thankful for it. Only let us be diligent in using our new gifts for their highest, and not merely for meaner purposes ; and let us beware of man's tendency to idolize the works of his own



hands. The Greek poet exclaimed with wonder at the terrible ingenuity of man, who had yoked the horse and the bull, and had crost the roaring sea: and still, though the immediate occasions of his wonder would be somewhat changed, he would cry, *πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ, κούδὲν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει*. But, though a Heathen, he kept clear of the twofold danger of worshipping either man or his work. May we do so likewise! For there is not a whit to choose between the worship of steam, and that of the meanest Fetish in Africa. Nor is the worship of Man really nobler or wiser. U.

I spoke some pages back of Greek literature as being characterized by its *ἄσπετος αἰθήρ*, its serene, transparent brightness. Ought I not rather to have said that this is the characteristic of the Christian mind, of that mind on which the true Light has indeed risen? Not, it appears to me, so far as that mind has been manifested in its works of poetry and art; at least with the exception of a starry spirit here and there, such as Fra Angelico da Fiesole and Raphael. For the Greeks lookt mainly, and almost entirely, at the outward, at that which could be brought in distinct and definite forms before the eye of the Imagination. To this they were predisposed from the first by their exquisite animal organization, which gave them a lively susceptibility for every enjoyment the outward world could offer, but which at the same time was so muscular and tightly braced as not to be overpowered and rendered effeminate thereby: and this their natural tendency to receive delight from the active enjoyment of the outward world found everything in the outward world best fitted to foster and strengthen it. The climate and country were such as to gratify every appetite for pleasurable sensation, without enervating or relaxing the frame, or allowing the mind to sink into an Asiatic torpour. They rewarded industry richly: but they also called for it, and would not pamper sloth. By its physical structure Greece gave its inhabitants the hardihood of the mountaineer. Yet the Greeks were not like other mountaineers, whose minds seem mostly to have been bounded by their own narrow horizon, so as hardly



to take count of what was going on in the world without: to which cause may in a great measure be ascribed the intellectual barrenness of mountainous countries, or, if this be too strong an expression, the scantiness of the great works they have produced, when compared with the feelings which we might suppose they would inspire. But the Greek was not shut in by his mountains. Whenever he scaled a hight, the sea spread out before him, and wooed him to come into her arms, and to let her bear him away to some of the smiling islands she encircled. Hence, like the hero, who in his Homeric form is perhaps the best representative of the Greek character, *πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἶδεν ἄστεα, καὶ νόον ἔγνω*. He had the two great stimulants to enterprise before him. The voice of the Mountains, and the voice of the Sea, "each a mighty voice," were ever rousing and stirring and prompting him; each moreover checking the hurtful effects of the other. The sea enlarged the range and scope of his thoughts, which the mountains might have hemmed in. Thus it saved him from the "homely wits," which Shakspeare ascribes to "home-keeping youth." The mountains on the other hand counteracted that homelessness, which a mere sea-life is apt to breed, except in those in whom there is a living consciousness that on the sea as on the shore they are equally in the hand of God: to which homelessness, and want of a solid ground to strike root in, it is mainly owing that neither Tyre nor Carthage, notwithstanding their power and wealth, occupies any place in the intellectual history of mankind. To the Greeks however, as to us, who have a country and a home upon the land, the sea was an inexhaustible mine of intellectual riches. Nor is it without a prophetic symbolicalness that the sea fills so important a part in both the Homeric poems. The amphibious character of the Greeks was already determined: they were to be lords of land and sea. Both these voices too, "Liberty's chosen music," as Wordsworth terms them in his glorious sonnet, called the Greeks to freedom: and nobly did they answer to the call, when the sound of the mighty Pan was glowing in their ears, at Marathon and Thermopylae, at Salamis and Platea.



Freedom moreover, and the free forms of their constitutions, brought numerous opportunities and demands for outward activity. The Greek poets and historians were also soldiers and statesmen. They had to deal with men, to act with them, and by them, and upon them, in the forum, and in the field. Their converse was with men in the concrete, as living agents, not with the abstraction, man, nor with the shadowy, self-reflecting visions of the imagination. Even at the present day, though our habits and education do so much to remove the distinctions among the various classes of society, there is a manifest difference between those authors who have taken an active part in public life, and those who are mere men of letters. The former, though they may often be deficient in speculative power, and unskilled in the forms of literature, have a knowledge of the practical springs of action, and a temperance of judgement, which is seldom found in a recluse, unaccustomed to meet with resistance among his own thoughts, or apt to slip away from it when he does, and therefore unpractised in bearing or dealing with it. That mystic seclusion, so common in modern times, as it has always been in Asia, was scarcely known in Greece. Even the want of books, and the consequent necessity of going to things themselves for the knowledge of them, sharpened the eyes of the Greeks, and gave them livelier and clearer perceptions: whereas our eyes are dimmed by poring over the records of what others have seen and thought; and the impressions we thus obtain are much less vivid and true.

Added to all this, their anthropomorphic Religion, which sprang in the first instance out of these very tendencies of the Greek mind, reacted powerfully upon them, as the free exercise of every faculty is wont to do, and exerted a great influence in keeping the Greeks within the sphere which Nature seemed to assign to them, by preventing their thinking or desiring to venture out of that sphere, and by teaching them to find contentment and every enjoyment they could imagine within it. For it was by abiding within it that they were as gods. The feeling expressed in the speech of Achilles in Hades was one in which the whole people partook:



*βουλοίμην κ' ἐπάρουρος ἔων θητευέμεν ἄλλω,  
ἢ πᾶσιν νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.*

Through the combined operation of these causes, the Greeks acquired a clearness of vision for all the workings of life, and all the manifestations of beauty, far beyond that of any other people. Whatever they saw, they saw thoroughly, almost palpably, with a sharpness incomprehensible in our land of books and mists.

To mention a couple of instances: the anatomy of the older Greek statues is so perfect, that Mr. Haydon, — whose scattered dissertations on questions of art, rich as they often are in genius and thought, well deserve to be collected and preserved from a newspaper grave, — in his remarks on the Elgin marbles, pledged himself that, if any one were to break off a toe from one of those marbles, he would prove “the great consequences of vitality, as it acts externally, to exist in that toe.” Yet it is very doubtful whether the Greeks ever anatomized human bodies, — at all events they knew hardly anything of anatomy scientifically, from an examination of the internal structure, — before the Alexandrian age. Now, even with the help of our scientific knowledge, it is a rarity in modern art to find figures, of which the anatomy is not in some respect faulty; at least where the body is not either almost entirely concealed by drapery, or cased, like the yolk of an egg, in the soft albumen of a pseudo-ideal. When it is otherwise, as in the works of Michael Angelo and Annibal Caracci, we too often see studies, rather than works of art, and muscular contortions and convolutions, instead of the gentle play and flow of life. Mr. Haydon indeed contends that the Greek sculptors must have been good anatomists: but all historical evidence is against this supposition. The truth is, that, as such wonderful stories are told of the keen eyes which the wild Indians have for all manner of tracks in their forests, so the Greeks had a clear and keen-sightedness in another direction, which to us, all whose perceptions are mixt up with such a bundle of multifarious notions, and who see so many things in everything, beside what we really do see, appears quite inconceivable. They



studied life, not as we do, in death, but in life; and that not in the stiff, cramped, inanimate life of a model, but in the fresh, buoyant, energetic life, which was called forth in the gymnasia.

Another striking example of the accuracy of the Greek eye is supplied by a remark of Spurzheim's, that the heads of all the old Greek statues are in perfect accordance with his system, and betoken the very intellectual and moral qualities which the character was meant to be endowed with; although in few modern statues or busts is any correspondence discoverable between the character and the shape of the head. For groundless and erroneous as may be the psychological, or, as the authors themselves term them; the phrenological views, which have lately been set forth as the scientific anatomy of the human mind, it can hardly be questioned that there is a great deal of truth in what Coleridge (*Friend* iii. p. 62) calls the indicative or gnomonic part of the scheme, or that Gall was an acute and accurate observer of those conformations of the skull, which are the ordinary accompaniments, if not the infallible signs, of the various intellectual powers. But in these very observations he had been anticipated above two thousand years ago by the unerring eyes of the Greek sculptors.

In like manner do the Greeks seem, by a kind of intuition, to have at once caught the true principles of proportion and harmony and grace and beauty in all things,—in the human figure, in architecture, in all mechanical works, in style, in the various forms and modes of composition. These principles, which they discerned from the first, and which other nations have hardly known anything of, except as primarily derivative from them, they exemplified in that wonderful series of masterpieces, from Homer down to Plato and Aristotle and Demosthenes; a series of which we only see the fragments, but the mere fragments of which the rest of the world cannot match. Rome may have more regal majesty; modern Europe may be superior in wisdom, especially in that wisdom of which the owl may serve as the emblem: but in the contest of Beauty no one could hesitate; the apple must be awarded to Greece.



This is what I meant by speaking of the ἄσπετος αἶθῆρ of Greek literature. The Greeks saw what they saw thoroughly. Their eyes were piercing; and they knew how to use them, and to trust them. In modern literature, on the other hand, the pervading feeling is, that we see through a glass darkly. While with the Greeks the unseen world was the world of shadows, in the great works of modern times there is a more or less conscious feeling that the outward world of the eye is the world of shadows, that the tangled web of life is to be swept away, and that the invisible world is the only abode of true, living realities. How strongly is this illustrated by the contrast between the two great works which stand at the head of ancient and of Christian literature, the Homeric poems, and the *Divina Commedia*! While the former teem with life, like a morning in spring, and everything in them, as on such a morning, has its life raised to the highest pitch, Dante's wanderings are all through the regions beyond the grave. He begins with overleaping death, and leaving it behind him; and to his imagination the secret things of the next world, and its inhabitants, seem to be more distinctly and vividly present than the persons and things around him. Nor was Milton's home on earth. And though Shakspeare's was, it was not on an earth lying quietly beneath the clear, blue sky. How he drives the clouds over it! how he flashes across it! Ever and anon indeed he sweeps the clouds away, and shines down brightly upon it,—but only for a few moments together. Thus too has it been with all those in modern times whose minds have been so far opened as to see and feel the mystery of life. They have not shrunk from that mystery in reverent awe like the Greeks, nor planted a beautiful, impenetrable grove around the temple of the Furies. While the Greeks, as I said just now, could not dream of anatomizing life, we have anatomized everything: and whereas all their works are of the day, a large portion of ours might fitly be designated by the title of *Night Thoughts*. As to the frivolous triflers, who take things as they are, and skip about and sip the surface, they are no more to be reckoned into account in estimating the charac-



ter of an age, than a man would take the flies and moths into account in drawing up an inventory of his chattels.

Perhaps however the reason why modern literature has not had more of this serenity and brightness, is that it has so seldom been animated by the true spirit of Christianity in any high degree. A little knowledge will merely unsettle a man's prejudices, without giving him anything better in their stead: and Christianity, intellectually as well as morally, unless it be indeed embraced with a longing and believing heart, serves only to make our darkness visible. The burning and shining lights of Christianity have rather been content to shine in the vallies: those on the hills have mostly been lights of this world, and therefore flaring and smoking. For individual Christians there are, individual Christians, I believe, there have been in all ages, whose spirits do indeed dwell in the midst of an *ἁσπερος αἰθήρ*. Nay, as Coleridge once said to me, "that in Italy the sky is so clear, you seem to see beyond the moon," so are there those who seem to look beyond and through the heavens, into the very heaven of heavens.

U.

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Thirlwall, in his History, — in which the Greeks have at length been called out of their graves by a mind combining their own clearness and grace with the wealth and power of modern learning and thought, and at whose call, as at that of a kindred spirit, they have therefore readily come forth, — remarks, that Greece "is distinguisht among European countries by the same character which distinguishes Europe itself from the other continents, — the great range of its coast, compared with the extent of its surface." The same fact, and its importance, are noticed by Frederic Schlegel in his second Lecture on the *Philosophy of History*. Nothing could be more favorable as a condition, not only of political and commercial, but also of intellectual greatness. Indeed this might be added to the long list of grounds for the truth of the Pindaric saying, *ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ*, and would suggest itself in an ode address to Hiero far more naturally and appropriately than the superiority of wine and water to wine; a superiority which it may be a



mark of barbarism to deny, but which few Englishmen would acknowledge.

A similar extent of coast was also one of the great advantages of Italy, and is now one of the greatest in the local condition of England. Goethe, who above all men had the talent of expressing profound and farstretching thoughts in the simplest words, and whose style has more of light in it, with less of lightning, than any other writer's since Plato, has thrown out a suggestion in one of his reviews (vol. xlv. p. 227), that "perhaps it is the sight of the sea from youth upward, that gives English and Spanish poets such an advantage over those of inland countries." He spoke on this point from his own feelings: for he himself never saw the sea, till he went to Italy in his 38th year: and it is ingeniously remarkt by Francis Horn, though apparently without reference to Goethe's observation, in his *History of German Poetry and Eloquence* (iii. p. 225), that "whatever is indefinite, or seems so, is out of keeping with Goethe's whole frame of mind: everything with him is *terra firma* or an island: there is nothing of the infinitude of the sea. This conviction (he adds) forced itself upon me, when for the first time, at the northernmost extremity of Germany, I felt the sweet thrilling produced by the highest sublimity of Nature. Here Shakspeare alone comes forward, whom one finds everywhere, on mountains and in vallies, in forests, by the side of rivers and of brooks. Thus far Goethe may accompany him: but in sight of the sea, and of such rocks on the sea, Shakspeare is by himself." Solger, too, in one of his letters (i. p. 320), when speaking of his first sight of the sea, says, "Here for the first time I felt the impression of the illimitable, as produced by an object of sense, in its full majesty."

To us, who have been familiar with the Sea all our lives, it might almost seem as though our minds would have been "poor shrunk things," without its air to brace and expand them,—if for instance we had never seen the ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα of the waves, as Aphrodite rises from their bosom,—if we had never heard the many-voiced song with which the Nereids now hymn the bridal, now bewail the bereavement of Thetis,—if we



knew not how changeeful the Sea is, and yet how constant and changeless amid all the changes of the seasons,—if we knew not how powerful she is, whom Winter with all his chains can no more bind than Xerxes could, how powerful to destroy in her fury, how far more powerful to bless in her calmness,—if we had never learnt the lesson of obedience and of order from her, the lesson of ceaseless activity, and of deep, unfathomable rest,—if we had no sublunary teacher but the mute, motionless earth,—if we had been deprived of this ever faithful mirror of heaven. The Sea appears to be the great separator of nations, the impassable barrier to all intercourse: *dissociabilis* the Roman poet calls it. Yet in fact it is the grand medium of intercourse, the chief uniter of mankind, the only means by which the opposite ends of the earth hold converse as though they were neighbours. Thus in divers ways the *πόντος ἀτρύγετος* has become even more productive, than if fields of corn were waving all over it.

That it has been an essential condition in the civilizing of nations, all history shews. Perhaps the Germans in our days are the first people who have reached any high degree of culture,—who have become eminent in poetry and in thought,—without its immediate aid. Yet Germany has been called “she of the Danube and the Northern Sea;” and might still more justly be called *she of the Rhine*. For the Danube, not bringing her into connection with the sea, has had a less powerful influence on her destinies: whereas the Rhine has acted a more important part in her history, than any river in that of any other country, except the Nile.

Hence the example of Germany will not enable us to conceive how such a people as Ulysses was to go in search of,—*οἱ οὐκ ἴσασι θάλασσαν Ἄνδρες, οὐδέ θ' ἄλεσσι μεμιγμένον εἶδαρ ἔδουσιν*,—how those who, not knowing the sea, have no salt to season their thoughts with,—how the Russians for instance can ever become civilized; notwithstanding what Peter tried to effect, from a partial consciousness of this want, by building his capital on the Baltic. Still less can one imagine how the centre of Asia, or of Africa, can ever emerge out of barbarism;



unless indeed the Steam-king be destined hereafter to effect, what the Water-king in his natural shape cannot. Genius or knowledge, springing up in those regions, would be like a fountain in an oasis, unable to mingle with its kindred, and unite into a continuous stream. Or if such a thing as a stream were to be found there, it would soon be swallowed up and lost, from having no sea within reach to shape its course to. In the legends Neptune is represented as contending with Minerva for the honour of giving name to Athens, and with Apollo for the possession of Corinth. But in fact he wrought along with them, — and mighty was his aid, — in glorifying their favorite cities.

There is also a further point of analogy between the position of Greece and that of England. Greece, lying on the frontier of Europe toward Asia, was the link of union between the two, the country in which the practical European understanding seized, and gave a living, productive energy to the primeval ideas of Asia. Her sons carried off Europa with her letters from Phenicia, and Medea with her magic from Colchis. When the Asiatics, attempting reprisals, laid hands on her Queen of Beauty, the whole nation arose, and sallied forth from their homes, and bore her back again in triumph: for to whom could she belong rightfully and permanently, except to a Greek? If Io went from them into Egypt, it was to become the ancestress of Hercules.

Now England in like manner is the frontier of Europe toward America, and the great bond of connexion between them. Through us the mind of the Old World passes into the New. What our intellectual office may be in this respect, will be seen hereafter, when it becomes more apparent and determinate, what the character of the American mind is to be. At present England is the country, where that depth and inwardness of thought, which seems to belong to the Germanic mind, has assumed the distinct, outward, positive form of the Roman.

An intermixture of the same elements has also taken place in France, but with a very different result. In the English character, as in our language, the Teutonic or spiritual element



has fortunately been predominant ; and so the two factors have coalesced without detriment : while in France, where the Roman or formal element gained the upperhand, the consequence has been, that they have almost neutralized and destroyed each other. The ideas of the Germans waned into abstractions : the law and order of the Romans shriveled into rules and forms, which no idea can impregnate, but which every insurgent abstraction can overthrow. The externality of the classical spirit has worn away into mere superficiality. The French character is indeed a character, stampd upon them from without. Their profoundest thoughts are *bons mots*. They are the only nation that ever existed, in which a government can be hist off the stage like a bad play, and which its fall excites less consternation, than the violation of a fashion in dress.

In truth the ease and composure with which the Revolution of July 1830 was accomplisht, and by which almost everybody was so dazzled, notwithstanding the fearful lessons of forty years before, — when in like manner Satan appeared at first as an angel of light, and when all mankind were deluded, and worshipt the new-born fiend, — would have been deemed by a wise observer one of the saddest features about it. O let us bleed when we are wounded ! let not our wounds close up, as if nothing had been cleft but a shadow ! It is better to bleed even to death, than to live without blood in our veins. And in truth blood will flow. If it does not flow in the field from principle, it is sure to flow in tenfold torrents by the guillotine, through that ferocity, which, when Law and Custom are overthrown, nothing but Principle can keep in check. Hearts and souls will bleed, or will fester and rot.

A Frenchman might indeed urge, that his patron saint is related in the legend not to have felt the loss of his head, and to have walkt away after it had been cut off, just as well as if it had been standing on his shoulders. But where no miracle is in the case, it is only the lowest orders of creatures that are quite as brisk and lively after decapitation as before. 1836. U.

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I hate to see trees pollarded . . or nations.

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U.



Europe was conceived to be on the point of dissolution. Burke heard the death-watch, and rang the alarm. A hollow sound past from nation to nation, like that which announces the splitting and breaking up of the ice in the regions around the Pole. Well! the politicians and economists, and the doctors in statecraft, resolved to avert the stroke of vengeance, not indeed by actions like those of the Curtii and Decii;—such actions are extravagant, and chivalrous, and superstitious, and patriotic, and heroic, and self-devoting, and unworthy and unseemly in men of sense, who know that selfishness is the only source of good;—but by borrowing a device from the Arabian fabulist. They seem to have thought they should appease, or at least weary out the minister of wrath, if they could get him to hear through their thousand and one Constitutions. U.

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From what was said just now about the French character, as a combination the factors of which have almost neutralized each other, it follows that the French are the very people for that mode of life and doctrine, which has become so notorious under the title of the *juste milieu*, and which aims at reconciling opposites by a mechanical, or at the utmost by a chemical, instead of an organical union. It is only in the latter, when acting together under the sway of a constraining higher principle, that powers, which, if left to themselves, thwart and battle against each other, can be made to bring forth peace and its fruits. According to the modern theory however, the best way of producing a new being is not by the marriage of the man and woman, but by taking half of each, and tying them one to the other. The result, it is true, will not have much life in it: but what does that matter? It is manufactured in a moment: the whole work goes on before the eyes of the world: and the new creature is fullsized from the first. How stupid and impotent on the other hand is Nature! who hides the germs and first stirrings of all life in darkness; who is always forced to begin with the minutest particles; and who can produce nothing great, except by slow and tedious processes of growth and assimilation. How tardily and snail-like she crawls about her task!



She never does anything *per saltum*. She cannot get to the end of her journey, as we can, in a trice, by a hop, a skip, and a jump. It takes her a thousand years to grow a nation, and thousands to grow a philosopher.

Amen! so be it! Man, when he is working consciously, does not know how to work imperceptibly. He cannot trust to Time, as Nature can, in the assurance that Time will work with her. For, while Time fosters and ripens Nature's works, he only crumbles man's. It is well imagined, that the creature whom Frankenstein makes, should be a huge monster. Being unable to impart a living power of growth and increase by any effort of our will or understanding, or except when we are content to act in subordination to nature, we try, when we set about any work, on which we mean to pride ourselves as especially our own, to render it as big as we can; so that, size being our chief criterion of greatness, we may have the better warrant for falling down and worshipping it. Thus Frankenstein's man-monster is an apt type of the numerous, newfangled, hop-skip-and-jump Constitutions, which have been circulating about Europe for the last half century; in which the old statesmanly practice of enacting new ordinances and institutions, as occasion after occasion arises, has been superseded by attempts to draw up a complete abstract code for all sorts of states, without regard to existing rights, usages, manners, feelings, to the necessities of the country, or the character of the people. Indeed the following description of the monster, when he first begins to move, might be regarded as a satire on the Constitution of 1791. "His limbs were in proportion; and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! His yellow skin scarcely covered the muscles and arteries beneath. His hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing, — his teeth of a pearly whiteness: but these only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, which seemed almost of the same colour as their dun white sockets, his shriveled complexion, and straight, black lips." So it is with abstract constitutions. Their fabricators try to make their parts proportionate, and to pick out the most beautiful features for them: but there are muscular and arterial workings ever



going on in the body of a nation, there is such an intermingling and convolution of passions, and feelings, and consciousnesses, and thoughts, and desires, and regrets, and sorrows, that no yellow parchment, which man can draw over, will cover or hide them. Though the more external and lifeless parts, the hair and teeth, which are so often artificial, may be bright and dazzling, — though the teeth especially may be well fitted for doing their work of destruction, — no art can give a living eye: *ὁμμάτων δ' ἐν ἀχνύιας ἔρρει πᾶς Ἀφροδίτα.*

The man-monster's cruelty too was of the same sort as that of the French constitution-mongers, and of their works; and it resulted from the same cause, the utter want of sympathy with man and the world, such as they are. The misfortune is, that we cannot get rid of them, as he was got rid of, by sending them to the North Pole; although its ice would be an element very congenial to the minds that gave birth to them, and would form a fitting grave for monstrosities, which, starting up in the frozen zone of human nature, were crystallized from their cradle. 1836. U.

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The strength of a nation, humanly speaking, consists not in its population or wealth or knowledge, or in any other such heartless and merely scientific elements, but in the number of its proprietors. Such too, according to the most learned and wisest of historians, was the opinion of antiquity. "All ancient legislators (says Niebuhr, when speaking of Numa), and above all Moses, rested the result of their ordinances for virtue, civil order, and good manners, on securing landed property, or at least the hereditary possession of land, to the greatest possible number of citizens."

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They who are not aware of the manner in which national character and political institutions mutually act and are acted on, till they gradually mould each other, have never reflected on the theory of new shoes. Which leads me to remark, that modern constitution-mongers have shewn themselves as unskilful and inconsiderate in making shoes, as the old limping, sore-



footed aristocracies of the Continent have been intractable and impatient in wearing them. The one insisted that the boot must fit, because, after the fashion of Laputa, it had been cut to diagram: the others would bear nothing on their feet in any degree hard or common. *Leather is the natural covering of the hands: on them we will still wear it: on the legs it is ignoble and masculine. Any other sacrifice we are content to make: but our feet must continue as heretofore, swathed up in fleecy hosiery, especially when we ride or walk. It is a reward we may justly claim for condescending to acts so toilsome. It is a privilege we have inherited, with the gout of our immortal ancestors; and we cannot in honour give it up. But you say, the privilege must be abolisht, because the commodity is scarce. Let the people then make their sacrifice, and give up stockings.*

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Beauty is perfection unmodified by a predominating expression.

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Song is the tone of feeling. Like poetry, the language of feeling, art should regulate, and perhaps temper and modify it. But whenever such a modification is introduced as destroys the predominance of the feeling,—which yet happens in ninety-nine settings out of a hundred, and with nine hundred and ninety-nine taught singers out of a thousand,—the essence is sacrificed to what should be the accident; and we get notes, but no song.

If song however be the tone of feeling, what is beautiful singing? The balance of feeling, not the absence of it.

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Close boroughs are said to be an oligarchal innovation on the ancient Constitution of England. But are not the forty-shilling freeholders, in their present state, a democratical innovation? The one may balance and neutralize the other; and if so, the Constitution will remain practically unaltered by the accession of these two new, opposite, and equal powers. Whereas to destroy the former innovation, without taking away the latter, must change the system of our polity in reality, as well as in idea. 1826.

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When the pit seats itself in the boxes, the gallery will soon drive out both, and occupy the whole of the house. A.

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In like manner, when the calculating, expediential Understanding has superseded the Conscience and the Reason, the Senses soon rush out from their dens, and sweep away everything before them. If there be nothing brighter than the reflected light of the moon, the wild beasts will not keep in their lair. And when that moon, after having reached a moment of apparent glory, by looking full at the sun, fancies it may turn away from the sun, and still have light in itself, it straightway begins to wane, and ere long goes out altogether, leaving its worshipers in the darkness, which they had vainly dreamt it would enlighten. This was seen in the Roman Empire. It was seen in the last century all over Europe, above all in France. U.

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He who does not learn from events, rejects the lessons of Experience. He who judges from the event, makes Fortune an assessor in his judgements.

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What an instance of the misclassifications and misconceptions produced by a general term is the common mistake, which looks on the Greeks and Romans as one and the same people, because they are both called ancients !

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The difference between desultory reading and a course of study may be illustrated by comparing the former to a number of mirrors set in a straight line, so that every one of them reflects a different object, the latter to the same mirrors so skillfully arranged as to perpetuate one set of objects in an endless series of reflexions.

If we read two books on the same subject, the second leads us to review the statements and arguments of the first; the errors of which are little likely to escape this kind of *proving*, if I may so call it; while the truths are more strongly imprinted on the memory, not merely by repetition, — though



that too is of use, — but by the deeper conviction thus wrought into the mind, of their being verily and indeed truths.

Would you restrict the mind then to a single line of study?

No more than the body to any single kind of labour. The sure way of cramping and deforming both is to confine them entirely to an employment which keeps a few of their powers or muscles in strong, continuous action, leaving the rest to shrink and stiffen from inertness. Liberal exercise is necessary to both. For the mind the best perhaps is Poetry. Abstract truth, which in Science is ever the main object, has no link to attach our sympathies to man, nay, rather withers the fibres by which our hearts would otherwise lay hold on him, absorbing our affections, and diverting them from man, who, viewed in the concrete, and as he exists, is the antipode of abstract truth. High therefore and precious must be the worth and benefit of Poetry; which, taking men as individuals, and shedding a strong light on the portions and degrees of truth latent in every human feeling, reconciles us to our kind, and shews that a devotion to truth, however it may alienate the mind from man, only unites it more affectionately to men, in their various relations of love (for love is truth), as children, and fathers, and husbands, and citizens, and, one day perhaps much more than it has hitherto done, as Christians.

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Vice is the greatest of all Jacobins, the arch-leveler.

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A democracy by a natural process degenerates into an ochlocracy: and then the hangman has the fairest chance of becoming the autocrat.

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A.

Many of the supposed increasers of knowledge have only given a new name, and often a worse, to what was well known before.

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U.

God did not make harps, nor pirouettes, nor crayon-drawing, nor the names of all the great cities in Africa, nor conchology, nor the *Contes Moraux*, and a proper command of countenance,



and prudery, and twenty other things of the sort. They must all be taught then; or how is a poor girl to know anything about them?

But health, strength, the heart, the soul, with their fairest inmates, modesty, cheerfulness, truth, purity, fond affection, — all these things He did make; and so they may safely be left to Nature. Nobody can suppose it to be mamma's fault, if they don't come of themselves.

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How fond man is of tinsel! I have known a boy steal, to give away.

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A.

Offenders may be divided into two classes, — the old in crime, and the young. The old and hardened criminal, in becoming so, must have acquired a confidence in his own fate-fencedness, or as he would call it, his luck. The young then are the only offenders whom the law is likely to intimidate. Now to these imprisonment or transportation cannot but look much less formidable, when they see it granted as a commutation, instead of being awarded as a penalty. It is no longer transportation, but getting off with transportation: and doubtless it is often urged in this shape on the novice, as an argument for crime. So that in all likelihood the threat of death, in cases where it can rarely be executed, is worse than nugatory, and positively pernicious.

These remarks refer chiefly to such laws as are still continually violated. With those, which, having accomlisht the purpose they were framed for, live only in the character of the people, let no reformer presume to meddle, until he has studied and refuted Col. Frankland's *Speech on Sir Samuel Romilly's Bills for making alterations in the Criminal Law.* 1826.

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It is an odd device, when a fellow commits a crime, to send him to the antipodes for it. Could one shove him thither in a straight line, down a tunnel, he might bring back some useful hints to certain friends of mine, who are just now busied in asking mother Earth what she is made of. But that a rogue,



by picking a pocket, should earn the circuit of half the globe, seems really meant as a parody on the conceptions of those who hold that the happiness of a future life will consist mainly in going the round of all the countries they have not visited in the present. Unless indeed our legislators fancy that, by setting a man topsy-turvy, they may give his better qualities, which have hitherto been opprest by the weight of evil passions and habits, a chance of coming to the top.

How ingeniously contrived this plan is, to render punishments expensive and burthensome to the state that inflicts them, is notorious. Let this pass however: we must not grudge a little money, when a great political good is to be effected. True, it would be much cheaper and more profitable to employ our convicts in hard labour at home. Far easier too would it be to keep them under moral and religious discipline. But how could Botany Bay go on, if the importation of vice were put a stop to? For, as there is nothing too bad to manure a new soil with, so, reasoning by analogy, no scoundrels can be too bad to people a new land with. The argument halts a little, and seems to be clubfooted, and is assuredly topheavy. In all well-ordered towns the inhabitants are compelled to get rid of their own dirt, in such a way that it shall not be a nuisance to the neighbourhood. It is singular that the English, of all nations the nicest on this point, should in their political capacity deem it justifiable and seemly to toss the dregs and feces of the community into the midst of their neighbour's estate.

Deportation, as the French termed it, for political offenses may indeed at times be expedient, and beneficial, and just. For a man's being a bad subject in one state is no proof that he may not become a good subject under other rulers and a different form of government. More especially in this age of insurrectionary spirits, — when the old maxim, which may occasionally have afforded a sanctuary for establisht abuses, has been converted into its far more dangerous opposite, that *whatever is, is wrong*, — there may easily be persons who from incompatibility of character cannot live peaceably in their own country, yet who may have energy and zeal to fit them for taking an active



part in a new order of things. Such was the origin of many of the most flourishing Greek colonies. Men of stirring minds who found no place in accord with their wishes at home, went in search of other homes, carrying the civilization and the glory of the mother country into all the regions around. Something of the same spirit gave rise to the settlements of the Normans in the middle ages. In this way too states may be formed, great from the power of the moral principle which cements them. In this way were those states formed, which, above all the nations of the earth, have reason to glory in their origin, New England, and Pennsylvania.

But transportation for moral offenses is in every point of view impolitic, injurious, and unjust. "Plantations (says Bacon, speaking of Colonies) are amongst ancient, primitive, and heroical works. — It is a shameful and unblessed thing, to take the scum of people, and wicked condemned men, to be the people with whom you plant. And not only so; but it spoileth the plantation: for they will ever live like rogues, and not fall to work, but be lazy, and do mischief, and spend victuals, and be quickly weary, and then certify over to their country to the discredit of the plantation." Yet, in defiance of this warning from him, whom we profess to revere as the father of true philosophy, and the "wisest of mankind," we have gone on for the last half century peopling the new quarter of the world with the refuse of the gallows; as though we conceived that in morals also two negatives were likely to make an affirmative, — that the coacervation of filth, if the mass be only huge enough, would of itself ferment into purity, — and that every paradox might be lookt for in the country of the *ornithorynchus paradoxus*. Bacon's words however have been fulfilled, in this as in so many other cases; for the prophet of modern science was gifted with a still more piercing vision into the hearts and thoughts of men. What indeed could be expected of a people so utterly destitute of that which is the most precious part of a nation's inheritance, — of that which has ever been one of the most powerful human stimulants to generous exertion, — the glory of its ancestors? What could be expected of a people



who, instead of glory, have no inheritance but shame? For it will hardly be argued in these days, that the Romans, who reached the highest pitch of earthly grandeur, sprang originally from a horde of bandits and outlaws. That fable may be regarded as exploded: and assuredly there never was a nation, in whom the glory of their ancestors was so lively and mighty a principle, as among the Romans. But not content with the ignominy of the original settlement, though we ought to know that disease is ever much more contagious than health, we yearly send out a number of plague-ships, as they may in truth be called, for fear lest the sanitary condition of our Australian colonies should improve.

If any persons are to be selected by preference for the peopling of a new country, they ought rather to be the most temperate, the most prudent, the most energetic, the most virtuous, in the whole nation. For their task is the most arduous, requiring Wisdom to put forth all her strength and all her craft for its worthy execution. Their responsibility is the most weighty; seeing that upon them the character of a whole people for ages will mainly depend. And they will find much to dishearten them, much to draw them astray; without being protected against their own hearts, and upheld and fortified in their better resolves, as in a regularly constituted state all men are in some measure, by the healthy and cordial influences of Law and Custom and Opinion. O that statesmen would consider what a glorious privilege they enjoy, when they are allowed to become the fathers of a new people! This however seems to be one of the things which God has reserved wholly to himself.

Yet how enormous are the means with which the circumstances of England at this day supply her for colonization! How weighty therefore is the duty which falls upon her! With her population overflowing in every quarter, with her imperial fleets riding the acknowledged lords of every sea, mistress of half the islands in the globe, and of an extent of coast such as no other nation ever ruled over, her manifest calling is to do that over the Atlantic and the Pacific, which Greece did so



successfully in the Mediterranean and the Euxine. As Greece girt herself round with a constellation of Greek states, so ought England to throw a girdle of English states round the world, — to plant the English language, the English character, English knowledge, English manliness, English freedom, above all to plant the Cross, wherever she hoists her flag, wherever the simple natives bow to her armipotent sceptre. We have been highly blest with a glory above that of other nations. Of the paramounds in the various realms of thought during the last three centuries, many of the greatest have been of our blood. Our duty therefore is to spread our glory abroad, to let our light shine from East to West, and from Pole to Pole, — to do what in us lies, that Shakspeare and Milton and Bacon and Hooker and Newton may be familiar and honoured names a thousand years hence, among every people that hears the voice of the sea.

Of this duty we have been utterly regardless ; because we have so long been regardless of a still higher duty. For our duties hang in such a chain, one from the other, and all from heaven, that he who fulfills the highest, is likely to fulfill the rest ; while he who neglects the highest, whereby alone the others are upheld, will probably let the rest draggle in the mire. We have long been unmindful, as a nation, of that which in our colonial policy we ought to deem our highest duty, the duty of planting the colonies of Christ. We have thought only of planting the colonies of Mammon, not those of Christ, nor even those of Minerva and Apollo. Nay, till very lately we sent out our colonists, not so much to christianize the Heathens, as to be heathenized by them : and when a Christian is heathenized, then does the saying come to pass in all its darkness and woe, that the last state of such a man is worse than the first.

Let us cast our thoughts backward. Of all the works of all the men who were living eighteen hundred years ago, what is remaining now ? One man was then lord of half the known earth. In power none could vie with him, in the wisdom of this world few. He had sagacious ministers, and able generals. Of all his works, of all theirs, of all the works of the other



princes and rulers in those ages, what is left now? Here and there a name, and here and there a ruin. Of the works of those who wielded a mightier weapon than the sword, a weapon that the rust cannot eat away so rapidly, a weapon drawn from the armory of thought, some still live and act, and are cherished and revered by the learned. The range of their influence however is narrow: it is confined to few, and even in them mostly to a few of their meditative, not of their active hours. But at the same time there issued from a nation, among the most despised of the earth, twelve poor men, with no sword in their hands, scantily supplied with the stores of human learning or thought. They went forth East, and West, and North, and South, into all quarters of the world. They were reviled: they were spit upon: they were trampled under foot: every engine of torture, every mode of death, was employed to crush them. And where is their work now? It is set as a diadem on the brows of the nations. Their voice sounds at this day in all parts of the earth. High and low hear it: kings on their thrones bow down to it: senates acknowledge it as their law: the poor and afflicted rejoice in it: and as it has triumphed over all those powers which destroy the works of man, — as, instead of falling before them, it has gone on age after age increasing in power and in glory, — so is it the only voice which can triumph over Death, and turn the King of terrors into an angel of light.

Therefore, even if princes and statesmen had no higher motive than the desire of producing works which are to last, and to bear their names over the waves of time, they should aim at becoming the fellowlabourers, not of Tiberius and Sejanus, nor even of Augustus and Agrippa, but of Peter and Paul. Their object should be, not to build monuments which crumble away and are forgotten, but to work among the builders of that which is truly the Eternal City. For so too will it be eighteen hundred years hence, if the world lasts so long. Of the works of our generals and statesmen, eminent as several of them have been, all traces will have vanished. Indeed of him who was the mightiest among them, all traces have well-nigh vanished already.



For they who deal in death are mostly given up soon to death, they and their works. Of our poets and philosophers some may still survive; and many a thoughtful youth in distant regions may repair for wisdom to the fountains of Burke and Wordsworth. But the works which assuredly will live, and be great and glorious, are the works of those poor, unregarded men, who have gone forth in the spirit of the twelve from Judea, whether to India, to Africa, to Greenland, or to the isles in the Pacific. As their names are written in the Book of Life, so are their works: and it may be that the noblest memorial of England in those days will be the Christian empire of New Zealand.

This is one of the many ways in which God casts down the mighty, and exalts the humble and meek. Through His blessing there have been many men amongst us of late years, whose works will live as long as the world, and far longer. But, as a nation, the very Heathens will rise up in the judgement against us, and condemn us. For they, when they sent out colonies, deemed it their first and highest duty to hallow the newborn state by consecrating it to their national god: and they were studious to preserve the tie of a common religion and a common worship, as the most binding and lasting of all ties, between the mother-country and its offspring. Now so inherent is permanence in religion, so akin is it to eternity, that the monuments even of a false and corrupt religion will outlast every other memorial of its age and people. With what power does this thought come upon us when standing amid the temples of Paestum! All other traces of the people who raised them have been swept away: the very materials of the buildings that once surrounded them have vanished, one knows not how or whither: the country about is a wide waste: the earth has become barren with age: Nature herself seems to have grown old and died there. Yet still those mighty columns lift up their heads toward heaven, as though they too were "fashioned to endure the assault of Time with all his hours:" and still one gazes through them at the deep-blue sea and sky, and at the hills of Amalfi on the opposite coast of the bay. A day spent



among those temples is never to be forgotten, whether as a vision of unimagined sublimity and beauty, or as a lesson how the glory of all man's works passes away, and nothing of them abides, save that which he gives to God. When Mary anointed our Lord's feet, the act was a transient one: it was done *for His burial*: the holy feet which she anointed, ceast soon after to walk on earth. Yet he declared that, *wheresoever His gospel was preacht in the whole world, that act should also be told as a memorial of her*. So has it ever been with what has been given to God, albeit blindly and erringly. While all other things have perisht, this has endured.

The same doctrine is set forth in the colossal hieroglyphics of Gircnti and Selinus. At Athens too what are the buildings which two thousand years of slavery have failed to crush? The temple of Theseus, and the Parthenon. Man, when working for himself, has ever felt that so perishable a creature may well be content with a perishable shell. On the other hand, when he is working for those whom his belief has enthroned in the heavens, he strives to make his works worthy of them, not only in grandeur and in beauty, but also in their imperishable, indestructible massiness and strength. Moreover Time himself seems almost to shrink from an act of sacrilege; and Nature ever loves to beautify the ruined house of God.

It is not however by the Heathens alone that the propagation of their religion in their colonies has been deemed a duty. Christendom in former days was animated by a like principle. In the joy excited by the discovery of America, one main element was, that a new province would thereby be won for the Kingdom of Christ. This feeling is exprest in the old patents for our Colonies: for instance, in that for the plantation of Virginia, James the First declares his approval of "so noble a work, which may by the providence of Almighty God hereafter tend to the glory of His Divine Majesty, in propagating the Christian religion to such people as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God." For nations, as well as individuals, it might often be wisht, that the child were indeed "father of the man." U.

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In republishing a work like this after intervals of ten and twenty years, it must needs be that a writer will meet now and then with thoughts, which, in their mode of expression at least, belong more or less to the past, and which in one way or other have become out of keeping with the present. If his watch pointed to the right hour twenty years ago, it must be behind time in some respects now. For in addition to the secular precession of the equinoxes in the intellectual world, each year advances a day; and ever and anon comes a leap-year, with an unlookt-for intercalation. Even in the writer's own mind, unless he has remained at a standstill, while all things else have been in motion,—and in that case he can never have had much real life in him,—subsequent reflection and experience must have expanded and matured some opinions, and modified or corrected others. In his relation to the outward world too there must be changes. Truth will have gained ground in some quarters: in others the prevalent forms of error will be different, perchance opposite. Opinions, which were just coming out of the shell, or newly fledged, will have reached their prime, and be flying abroad from mouth to mouth, from journal to journal. He who has sought truth with any earnestness, will at times have the happy reward,—among the pleasures of authorship one of the greatest,—of finding that thoughts, which in his younger days were in the germ, or just sprouting up, or budding forth, have since ripened and seeded,—that truths, of which he may have caught a dim perception, and for which he may have contended with the ardour inspired by a struggle in behalf of what is unduly neglected, are more or less generally recognised,—and, it may even be, that wishes, which, when first uttered, seemed visionary, have assumed a distincter shape, and come forward above the horizon of practical reality.

Thus, in revising these Guesses of former years for a third edition, I am continually reminded of the differences between 1847 and 1827, and these not solely lying within the compass of my own mind. Nor is it uninteresting to have such a series of landmarks pointing out where the waters have advanced, and where they have receded. For instance, the observations



in pp. 40 – 43 pertain to a time when the old Poorlaw, after its corruptions through the thoughtlessness of our domestic policy during the French War, was exciting the reprobation, which has since been poured out, with less reason and more clamour, on its successor. At that time our ministers, one after another, shrank from the dangers which were foreboded from a change ; and this should be borne in mind, though it is mostly forgotten, when the new Poorlaw is tried. It should be remembered that, whatever evils may have ensued, they are immeasurably less than were anticipated. Yet, though the wish exprest above for the correction of the old Poorlaw has in some respects been fulfilled, very little has been done in the view there proposed for elevating the character of our labouring classes. That which was to relieve the purses of the land-owners, has been effected. As to the substitutes requisite in order to preserve the aged and infirm from want, and to foster the feeling of self-dependence and self-respect, they are still problems for the future.

Again, there is now a cheering hope that what is spoken of in these latter pages as the object of a dim, though earnest wish, will at last be accomplisht. More than two centuries have rolled by since Bacon lifted up his oracular voice against the evils of Penal Colonies. The experience of every generation since has strengthened his protest. During the last twenty years those Colonies have been the seats of simple, defecated vice, and have teemed with new, monstrous births of crime. It could not be otherwise, when a people was doomed to grow up as a mere festering mass of corruption, and when the healthier influences of Nature were continually counteracted by the importation of new stores of pestilential matter, as though a hell were continually receiving fresh cargoes of fiends to stock it. At last however our ministers have been stirred with a desire to abate and abolish this tremendous evil. A few years after the utterance of the wish recorded above (in pp. 91 – 94), the Archbishop of Dublin, in two Letters to the late Lord Grey, exposed the mischiefs of Penal Colonies with unanswerable cogency and clearness ; and now the son of that Lord Grey has been awakened to a consciousness of the guilt incurred by



England in maintaining those Colonies, and of our duty to abandon a policy which is planting a new nation out of the refuse of mankind. May God prosper his attempt, and bring it to a happy issue! May our legislators neither be daunted nor deluded by those who assert that such abominations are a necessary safety-valve for the crimes of England!

It is sad indeed that so many of our Judges should uphold the expediency of transportation, in defiance of such appalling facts. But so it ever is with established abuses. Too many good men are apt to put on the trammels of Custom, and to fancy that one cannot walk without them. While the ingenious are ever liable to be ensnared by their own ingenuity, even those who have shewn great ability and integrity in working out the details of a system, though they may be quick in perceiving and removing partial blemishes, will be very slow to recognise and acknowledge the whole system to be vicious. Moreover, through that feebleness of imagination, and that bluntness of moral sympathies, which we all have to deplore, when an evil is once removed from sight, it almost ceases to disturb us; so that, provided our criminals are prevented from breaking the peace in England, we think little of what they may do, or of what may become of them, at the opposite end of the Globe. Nevertheless they who stand on that high ground, whence Principle and Expediency are ever seen to coincide,—if they cling to this conviction, and are resolute in carrying it into act,—may be sure that, after a while, all those whose approbation is worth having,—even they who may have kept aloof, or have laid great stress on scruples and objections in the first instance through timidity or narrowmindedness,—will join in swelling their song of triumph, and in condemning the abuse which they themselves may long have regarded as indispensable to the preservation of social order.

We have an additional ground too for thankfulness, in the higher and wiser notions concerning the duties of Colonization which have been gaining currency of late, and to which the attention of our Legislature has been especially called by Mr. Buller in some excellent speeches. Hence we may hope that



ere long our Government will seriously endeavour to redeem this vast province from the dominion of Chance, and will try to substitute an organic social polity for the vague confluence of appetites and passions by which our Colonies have mostly been peopled.

Above all have we reason for giving thanks to Him who has at length roused our Church to a deeper consciousness of her duties in this region also. Among the events and measures of the last twenty years, I know none which hold out such a rich promise of blessings, or which seem already to project their roots so far into the heart of distant ages, as that which has been done for the better organization and ordering of the Church of Christ in our Colonial Empire. 1847. u.

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Once on a time there was a certain country, in which, from local reasons, the land could be divided no way so conveniently as into foursided figures. A mathematician, having remarkt this, ascertained the laws of all such figures, and laid them down fully and accurately. His countrymen learnt to esteem him a philosopher; and his precepts were observed religiously for years. A convulsion of nature at length changed the face and local character of the district: whereupon a skilful surveyor, being employed to lay out some fields afresh, ventured to give one of them five sides. The innovation is talkt of universally, and is half applauded by some younger and bolder members of the community: but a big-mouthed and weighty doctor, to set the matter at rest for ever, quotes the authority of the above-mentioned mathematician, *that fixer of agricultural positions, and grand landmark of posterity*, who has demonstrated to the weakest apprehensions that a field ought never to have more than four sides: and then he proves, to the satisfaction of all his hearers, that a pentagon has more.

This weighty doctor is one of a herd: everybody knows he cannot tell how many such. Among them are the critics, "who feel by rule, and think by precedent." To instance only in the melody of verse: nothing can be clearer than that a polysyllabic language will fall into different cadences from a language which abounds in monosyllables. The character of languages



too in this respect often varies greatly with their age: for they usually drop many syllables behind them in their progress through time. Yet we continually hear the rule-and-precedent critics condemning verses for differing from the rhythms of former days; just as though there could only be one good tune in metre.

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For the motive of a man's actions, hear his friend; for their prudence and propriety, his enemy. In our every-day judgments we are apt to jumble the two together; if we see an action is unwise, accusing it of being ill-intentioned; and, if we know it to be well-intentioned, persuading ourselves it must be wise; both foolishly; the first the most so.

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Abuse I would use, were there use in abusing;  
But now 't is a nuisance you 'll lose by not losing.  
So reproof, were it proof, I 'd approve your reproving;  
But, until it improves, you should rather love loving.

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How few Christians have imbibed the spirit of their Master's beautiful and most merciful parable of the tares, which the servants are forbidden to pluck up, lest they should root up the wheat along with them! Never have men been wanting, who come, like the servants, and give notice of the tares, and ask leave to go and gather them up. Alas, too! even in that Church, which professes to follow Jesus, and calls itself after His sacred name, the ruling principle has often been to destroy the tares, let what will come of the wheat; nay, sometimes to destroy the wheat, lest a tare should perchance be left standing. Indeed I know not who can be said to have acted even up to the letter of this command, unless it be authors toward their own works.

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U.

It is not without a whimsical analogy to polemical fulminations, that great guns are loaded with iron, pistols and muskets fire lead, rapidly, incessantly, fatiguingly, and ninety-nine times out of a hundred, they say, without effect.

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Knowledge is the parent of love ; Wisdom, love itself.

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They who are sinking in the world, find more weights than corks ready to attach themselves to them ; and even if they can lay hold on a bladder, it is too likely to burst before it raises their heads above water.

A.

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The independence of the men who buy their seats, — a for-  
eigner would think I am speaking of a theatre, — is often urged  
by the opposers of Parliamentary Reform as an advantage  
resulting from the present system. And independent those  
gentlemen certainly are, at least of the people of England,  
whose interests they have in charge. But the parliamentary  
balance has two ends ; and shewing that a certain body of  
members are not dependent on the people, will hardly pass for  
proof that they are not hangers on at all. *Independent* then is  
not the fit term to describe these members by : the plain and  
proper word is *irresponsible*. Now their being so may be una-  
voidable, may even be desirable for the sake of some contin-  
gent good. But can it be good in itself, and for itself ? can it  
be a thing to boast of ? Observe, we are talking of representa-  
tives, not of peers, or king. 1826.

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In proportion as each word stands for a separate conception,  
language comes nearer to the accuracy and unimpressiveness of  
algebraic characters, so useful when the particular links in a  
chain of reasoning have no intrinsic value, and are important  
only as connecting the premisses with the conclusion. But cir-  
cumlocutions magnify details ; and their march being sedate  
and stately, the mind can keep pace with them, yet not run  
itself out of breath. In the due mixture of these two modes,  
lies the secret of an argumentative style. As a general rule,  
the first should prevail more in writing, the last in speaking ;  
circumlocution being to words, what repetition is to arguments.  
The first too is the fitter dress for a short logical sentence, the  
last for a long one, in which the feelings are any wise appealed  
to ; though to recommend in the same breath, that shortness



should be made still shorter, and that length should be lengthened, may sound paradoxical.

Yet this amounts to much the same thing with the old Stoic illustration. Zeno, says Cicero (*Orat.* 32), “manu demonstrare solebat, quid inter dialecticos et oratores interesset. Nam cum compresserat digitos, pugnumque fecerat, dialecticam aiebat ejusmodi esse: cum autem diduxerat, et manum dilataverat, palmae illius similem eloquentiam esse dicebat. With an evident reference to this illustration, Fuller (*Holy State*, B. II. c. 5) says of Campian, that he was “excellent at the flat hand of rhetoric, which rather gives pats than blows; but he could not bend his fist to dispute.”

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Oratory may be symbolized by a warrior's eye, flashing from under a philosopher's brow. But why a warrior's eye, rather than a poet's? Because in oratory the will must predominate.

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The talk without effort is after all the great charm of talking.

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The proudest word in English, to judge by its way of carrying itself, is *I*. It is the least of monosyllables, if it be indeed a syllable: yet who in good society ever saw a little one?

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Foreiners find it hard to understand the importance which every wellbred Englishman, as in duty bound, attaches to himself. They cannot conceive why, whenever they have to speak in the first person, they must stand on tiptoe, lifting themselves up, until they tower, like Ajax, with head and shoulders above their comrades. Hence in their letters, as in those of the uneducated among our own countrymen, we now and then stumble on a little *i*, with a startling shock, as on coming to a short step in a flight of stairs. A Frenchman is too courteous and polished to thrust himself thus at full length into his neighbour's face: he makes a bow, and sticks out his tail. Indeed this big one-lettered pronoun is quite peculiar to John Bull, as much so as Magna Charta, with which perchance it may not be altogether unconnected. At least it certainly is an apt symbol of



our national character, both in some of its nobler and of its harsher features. In it you may discern the Englishman's freedom, his unbending firmness, his straightforwardness, his individuality of character: you may also see his self-importance, his arrogance, his opiniativeness, his propensity to separate and seclude himself from his neighbours, and to look down on all mankind with contempt. As he has bared his representative *I* of its consonants and adjuncts, in like manner has he also stript his soul of its consonants, of those social and affable qualities, which smoothe the intercourse between man and man, and by the help of which people unite readily one with another. Look at four Englishmen in a stage-coach: the odds are, they will be sitting as stiff and unsociable as four *Ies*. Novalis must have had some vision of this sort in his mind, when he said (vol. iii. p. 301): "Every Englishman is an island."

But is *I* a syllable? It has hardly a better claim to the title, than Orson, before he left the woods, had to be called a family. By the by, they who would derive all language from simple sounds, by their juxtaposition and accumulation, and all society from savages, who are to unite under the influence of mutual repulsion, may perceive in *I* and Orson, that the isolated state is as likely to be posterior to the social, as to be anterior. You have only to strip vowels of their consonants, man of his kindly affections, which are sure to dry up of themselves, and to drop off, when they have nothing to act on. Death crumbles its victims into dust: but dust has no power in itself to coalesce into life.

U.

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Perhaps the peculiar self-importance of our *I* may number among the reasons why our writers nowadays are so loth to make use of it; as though its mere utterance were a mark of egotism. This over-jealous watchfulness betrays that there must be something unsound. In simpler times, before our self-consciousness became so sensitive and irritable, people were not afraid of saying *I*, when occasion arose: and they never dreamt that their doing so could be an offense to their neighbours. But now we eschew it by all manner of shifts. We



multiply, we dispersonate ourselves : we turn ourselves outside in. We are ready to become *he, she, it, they*, anything rather than *I*.

A tribe of writers are fond of merging their individuality in a multitudinous *we*. They think they may pass themselves off unnoticed, like the Irishman's bad guinea, in a handful of halfpence. This is one of the affectations with which the literature of the day is tainted, a trick caught, or at least much fostered, by the habit of writing in Reviews. Now in a Review, — which, among divers other qualities of Cerberus, has that of many-headedness, and the writers in which speak in some measure as the members of a junto, — the plural *we* is warrantable ; provided it be not thrust forward, as it so often is, to make up for the want of argument by the show of authority. This distinction is justly drawn by Chateaubriand, in the preface to his Memoir on the Congress of Verona: “En parlant de moi, je me suis tour-à-tour servi des pronoms *nous* et *je* ; *nous* comme représentant d'une opinion, *je* quand il m'arrive d'être personnellement en scène, ou d'exprimer un sentiment individuel. Le *moi* choque par son orgueil ; le *nous* est un peu janséniste et royal.”

Still, in ordinary books, except when the author can reasonably be conceived to be speaking, not merely in his own person, but as the organ of a body, or when he can fairly assume that his readers are going along with him, his using the plural *we* impresses one with much such a feeling as a man's being afraid to look one in the face. Yet I have known of a work, a history of great merit, which was sent back to its author with a request that he would weed the *Ies* out of it, by a person of high eminence ; who however rose to eminence in the first instance as a reviewer, and the eccentricities in whose character and conduct may perhaps be best solved by looking upon him as a reviewer transformed into a politician. For a reviewer's business is to have positive opinions upon all subjects, without need of steadfast principles or thoroughgoing knowledge upon any : and he belongs to the hornet class, unproductive of anything useful or sweet, but ever ready to sally forth and sting, — to the class



of which Iago is the head, and who are "nothing, if not critical."

So far indeed is the anxiety to suppress the personal pronoun from being a sure criterion of humility, that there is frequently a ludicrous contrast between the conventional generality of our language, and the egotism of the sentiments exprest in it. Under this cover a man is withheld by no shame from prating about his most trivial caprices, and will say, *we think so and so, we do so and so*, ten times, where Montaigne might have hesitated to say *I* once. Often especially in scientific treatises, — which, from the propensity of their authors to look upon words, and to deal with them, as bare signs, are not seldom rude and amorphous in style, — the plural *we* is mere clumsiness, a kind of refuge for the destitute, a help for those who cannot get quit of their subjectivity, or write about objects objectively. This, which is the great difficulty in all thought, — the forgetting oneself, and passing out of oneself into the object of one's contemplation, — is also one of the main difficulties in composition. It requires much more self-oblivion to speak of things as they are, than to talk about what *we see*, and what *we perceive*, and what *we think*, and what *we conceive*, and what *we find*, and what *we know*: and as self-oblivion is in all things an indispensable condition of grace, which is infallibly marred by self-consciousness, the exclusion of such references to ourselves, except when we are speaking personally or problematically, is an essential requisite for classical grace in style. This, to be sure, is the very last merit which any one would look for in Dr Chalmers. He is a great thinker, and a great and good man; and his writings have a number of merits, but not this. Still even in him it produces a whimsical effect, when, in declaring his having given up the opinion he once held on the allsufficiency and exclusiveness of the miraculous evidence for Christianity, although he is speaking of what is so distinctively personal, he still cannot divest himself of the plurality he has been accustomed to assume: see the recent edition of his Works, vol. iii. p. 385. Droll however as it sounds, to find a man saying, *We formerly thought differently, but we have now*



*changed our mind*, the passage is a fine proof of the candour and ingenuousness which characterize its author: and every lover of true philosophy must rejoice at the accession of so illustrious a convert from the thaumatolatri by which our theology has been debased for more than a century.

Moreover the plural *we*, though not seldom used dictatorially, rather diminishes than increases the weight of what is said. One is slow to believe that a man is much in earnest, when he will not stand out and bear the brunt of the public gaze; when he shrinks from avowing, *What I have written, I have written*. Whereas a certain respect and deference is ever felt almost instinctively for the personality of another, when it is not impertinently protruded: and it is pleasant to be reminded now and then that we are reading the words of a man, not the words of a book. Hence the interest we feel in the passages where Milton speaks of himself. This was one of the things which added to the power of Cobbett's style. His readers knew who was talking to them. They knew it was William Cobbett, not the *Times*, or the *Morning Chronicle*,—that the words proceeded from the breast of a man, not merely from the mouth of a printing-press. It is only under his own shape, we all feel, that we can constrain Proteus to answer us, or rely on what he says.

In a certain sense indeed the authorial *we* will admit of a justification, which is beautifully exprest by Schubert, in the Dedication of his *History of the Soul*. "It is an old custom for writers to dedicate the work of their hands to some one reader, though it is designed to serve many. — This old custom appears to be of the same origin with that for authors, when they are speaking of themselves, or of what they have done, not to say *I*, but *we*. Both practices would seem originally to have been an open avowal of that conviction, which forces itself upon us in writing books, more strongly than in any other employment, — namely, that the individual mind cannot produce anything worthy, except in a bond of love and of unity of spirit with another mind, assoeiated with it as its helpmate. For this is one of the purposes of life and of its labours, that a



man should find out how little there is in him that he has received in and through himself, and how much that he has received from others, and that hereby he may learn humility and love."

Another common disguise is that of putting on a domino. Instead of coming forward in their own persons, many choose rather to make their appearance as *the Author, the Writer, the Reviewer*. In prefaces this is so much the fashion, that our best and purest writers, Southey for instance, and Thirlwall, have complied with it. Nay, even Wordsworth has sanctioned this prudish coquetry by his practice in the Preface to *the Excursion*, and in his other later writings in prose. In earlier days he shewed no reluctance to speak as himself.

This affectation is well ridiculed by Tieck, in his *Dramaturgische Blaetter*, i. 275. "It has struck me for years (he says), as strange, that our reviewers have at length allowed themselves to be so overawed by the everlasting jests and jeers of their numberless witty and witless assailants, as to have dropt the plural *we*; much to their disadvantage, it seems to me; nay, much to the disadvantage of true modesty, which they profess to be aiming at. In a collective work, to which there are many anonymous contributors, each, so long as he continues anonymous, speaks in the name of his colleagues, as though they agreed with him. The editor too must examine and approve of the articles: so that there must always be two persons of one mind; and these may fairly call themselves *we*. Reviewers moreover have often to lift up their voices against whatever is new, paradoxical, original, — and are compelled on the other hand, whether by their own convictions, or by personal considerations, to praise what is middling and commonplace. Hence no sovereign on earth can have a better right to say *we*, than such a reviewer; who may lie down at night with the calmest conscience, under the conviction that he has been speaking as the mouthpiece of thousands of his countrymen, when he declared, *We are quite unable to understand this and that*, or, *We can by no means approve of such a notion*. How tame in comparison is the newfangled phrase! *The reviewer confesses that he cannot understand this*.



“Still stranger is it to see, how writers in journals, even when they sign their names, and thus appear in their own persons, have for some time almost universally shunned saying *I*, just as if they were children, with an unaccountable squeamishness, and have twisted and twined about in the uncouthest windings, to escape from this short, simple sound. Even in independent works one already meets with such expressions as *The writer of this*, or, *The writer of these lines*, — a long-winded, swollen *I*, which is carrying us back to a stiff, clumsy, lawpaper style. In journals the phrase is, *The undersigned has to state*, *Your correspondent conceives*. Ere long we shall find in philosophical treatises, *The thinker of this thought takes the liberty of remarking*, or, *The discoverer of this notion begs leave to say*. Nay, if this modesty be such a palpable virtue, as it would seem to be from the general rage for it, shall we not soon see in descriptive poetry, *The poet of these lines walkt through the wood?* Even this however would be far too presumptuous, to call oneself a poet. So the next phrase will be, *The versifier of this feeble essay Walkt, if his memory deceive him not, Across a meadow, where, audacious deed! He pluckt a daisy from its grassy couch*: or, *The youth, whose wish is that he may hereafter Be deemed a poet, sauntered toward the grove*. There is no end of such periphrases; and perhaps the barbarism will spread so widely that compositors, whenever they come to an *I* in a manuscript, will change it into one of these trailing circumlocutions. When I look into Lessing and his contemporaries, I find none of this absurd affectation. Modesty must dwell within, in the heart; and a short *I* is the modestest, most natural, simplest word I can use, when I have anything I want to say to the reader.”

There is another mode of getting rid of our *I*, which has recently become very common, especially in ladies notes, so that I suppose it is inculcated by *the Polite Letter-writer*; though, to be sure, *I* is such an inflexible, unfeminine word, one cannot wonder they should catch at any means of evading it. Ask a couple to dinner: Mrs Tomkins will reply, *Mr Tomkins and myself will be very happy*. This indeed is needlessly awkward:



for she might so easily betake herself to a woman's natural place of shelter, by using *we*. But one person will tell you, *Lord A. and myself took a walk this morning*; another, *Col. B. and myself fought a duel*; another, *Miss E. and myself have been making love to each other*. "Thus by myself myself is self-abused." One might fancy that, it having been made a grave charge against Wolsey, that he said, *The King and I*, everybody was haunted by the fear of being indicted for a similar misdemeanour.

In like manner *myself* is often used, incorrectly, it seems to me, instead of the objective pronoun *me*. Its legitimate usage is either as a reciprocal pronoun, or for the sake of distinction, or of some particular emphasis; as when Juliet cries, "Romeo, doff thy name, And for that name, which is no part of thee, *Take all myself*;" or as when Adam says to Eve, "*Best image of myself*, and dearer half." In the opening of the Paradisiacal hymn,—"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good, Almighty! Thine this universal frame, Thus wondrous fair! *Thyself how wondrous then!*"—there is an evident contrast: *If thy works are so wondrous, how wondrous must Thou Thyself be!* In like manner when Valentine, in *the Two Gentlemen of Verona*, says of Proteus, "I knew him as myself; And though *myself* have been an idle truant, Omitting the sweet benefit of time, To clothe my age with angel-like perfection, Yet hath Sir Proteus—Made use and fair advantage of his days;"—it amounts to the same thing as if he had said, *Though I for my part have been an idle truant*. Where there is no such emphasis, or purpose of bringing out a distinction or contrast, the simple pronoun is the right one. Inaccuracies of this kind also, though occasionally found in writers of former times, have become much more frequent of late years. Even Coleridge, when speaking about his projected poem on Cain, says, "The title and subject were suggested *by myself*." In such expressions as *my father and myself, my brother and myself*, we are misled by homœophony: but the old song beginning "My father, my mother, and I," may teach us what is the idiomatic, and also the correct usage.



On the other hand, *me* is often substituted vulgarly and ungrammatically for *I*. For the objective *me*, on which others act, is very far from being so formidable a creature, either to oneself or to others, as the subjective *I*, the ground of all consciousness, and volition, and action, and responsibility. Grammatically too it seems to us as if *I* always required something to follow it, something to express doing or suffering. Hence, when one cries out, *Who is there?* three people out of four answer *Me*. Hence too such expressions as that in Launce's speech, where he gets so puzzled about his personal identity, after having once admitted the thought that he could be anything but himself: "I am the dog . . . no, the dog is himself; and I am the dog . . . oh, *the dog is me*, and I am myself . . . ay, so, so." It may be considered a token of the want of individuality in the French character, that their *je* is incapable of standing alone; and that, in such phrases as the foregoing, *moi* would be the only admissible word. U.

This shrinking from the use of the personal pronoun, this autophoby, as it may be called, is not indeed a proof of the modesty it is designed to indicate; any more than the hydrophobia is a proof that there is no thirst in the constitution. On the contrary, it rather betrays a morbidly sensitive self-consciousness. It may however be regarded as a mark of the decay of individuality of character amongst us, as a symptom that, as is mostly the case in an age of high cultivation, we are ceasing to be living persons, each animated by one pervading, formative principle, ready to follow it whithersoever it may lead us, and to stake our lives for it, and that we are shriveling up into encyclopedias of opinions. To refer to specific evidence of this is needless. Else abundance may be found in the want of character, the want of determinate, consistent, steadfast principles, so wofully manifest in those who have taken a prominent part in the proceedings of our Legislature of late years. There is still one rock indeed, stout and bold and unshakable as can be desired: but the main part of the people about him have been washt and ground down to



sand, the form of which a breath of air, a child's caprice, a man's foot will change. Or what other inference can be drawn from the vapid characterlessness of our recent poetry and novels of modern life, when compared with that rich fund of original, genial, humorous characters, which seemed to be the peculiar dower of the English intellect, and which abode with it, amid all the vicissitudes of our literature, from the age of Shakspeare, nay, from that of Chaucer, down to the days of Swift and Defoe and Fielding and Smollett and Goldsmith?

Yet by a whimsical incongruity, at the very time when strongly markt outlines of character are fading away in the haze of a literary and scientific amalgama, every man, woman, and child has suddenly started up *an individual*. This again is an example how language is corrupted by a silly dread of plain speaking. Our ancestors were *men* and *women*. The former word too was often used generally, as it is still, like the Latin *homo*, for every human being. Unluckily however we have no form answering to the German *Mensch*; and hence, in seeking for a word which should convey no intimation of sex, we have had recourse to a variety of substitutes: for, none being strictly appropriate, each after a time has been deemed vulgar; and none has been lasting.

In Chaucer's days *wight* was the common word in the singular, *folk* in the plural. Neither of these words had any tinge of vulgarity then attacht to them. In the *Doctor's Tale*, he says of Virginia, "Fair was this maid, of excellent beautee, Aboven every *wight* that man may see:" where we also find *man* used indefinitely, as in German, answering to our present *one*, from the French *on*, *homo*. So again soon after: "Of alle treason sovereign pestilence Is, when a *wight* betrayeth innocence." A hundred other examples might be cited. In like manner *folk* is used perpetually, especially in the *Parson's Tale*: "Many be the ways that lead *folk* to Christ;" "Sins be the ways that lead *folk* to hell." When Shakspeare wrote, both these words had lost somewhat of their dignity. Biron calls Armado "a most illustrious *wight*;" and the contemptuous application of this term to others is a piece of Pistol's gasconading. The use of it



is also a part of the irony with which Iago winds up his description of a good woman: "She was a *wight* . . . if ever such *wight* were . . . To suckle fools, and chronicle small beer." *Folk* was seldom used, except with the addition of a plural *s*, in such expressions as *old folks*, *good folks*, *country folks*. The word in repute then, in the singular, was *a body*, of which we retain traces in the compounds, *somebody*, *nobody*, *anybody*, *everybody*. Rosalind, on recovering from her fainting fit, says, "*A body* would think this was well counterfeited;" where we should now say *a person*. Bianca, in *the Taming of the Shrew*, speaks of "*a hasty-witted body*." That there was nothing derogatory in the word, is clear from Angelo's calling himself "*so eminent a body*." Other words, such as *a soul*, *a creature*, *a fellow*, were mostly attended with a by-shade of meaning.

A number were summed up under the general word *people*, the Latin counterpart of the Saxon *folk*, which it superseded. Of this use we find the germs in our Bible, in the expressions *much people*, *all people*, *all the people*. "O wonder! (cries Miranda, when she first sees the shipwreckt party;) How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world, That has *such people* in it!" Bassanio, after opening the casket, compares himself to one "That thinks he hath done well *in people's eyes*." So too Richard the Second says of himself, "Thus play I in one person *many people*." These passages justify the idiomatic use of the word, which, it is to be hoped, will still keep its ground, in spite of the ignorant affectation of unidiomatic fine writing.

Next everybody became *a person*; a word which is not inappropriate, when we bethink ourselves of its etymology, seeing that so many persons are in truth little else than masks, and that every breath of air will sound through them: for to the lower orders, who do not wear masks, the term is seldom applied. Several causes combined to give this word general circulation. It was a French word: it belonged to Law Latin, and to that of the Schools: it was adopted from the Vulgate by our translators. It was coming into common use in Shakespeare's time. Angelo asks Isabella, what she would do, "Find-



ing herself desired of *such a person*, Whose credit with the judge could save her brother." Dogberry says, "Our watch have comprehended two auspicious *persons*." Rosalind tells Orlando, that "Time travels in divers paces with divers *persons*."

Nowadays however all these words are grown stale. Such grand people are we, for whom the world is too narrow, our dignity will not condescend to enter into anything short of a quadrisyllable. No! give us a fine, big, long word, no matter what it means: only it must not have been degraded by being applied to any former generation. As a woman now deems it an insult to be called anything but a *female*, — as a strumpet is become an *unfortunate female*, — and as every day we may read of sundry *females* being taken to Bowstreet, — in like manner everybody has been metamorphosed into an *individual*, by the Circe who rules the fashionable slang of the day. You can hardly look into a newspaper, but you find a story how five or six *individuals* were lost in the snow, or were overturned, or were thrown out of a boat, or were burnt to death. A minister of state informs the House of Commons, that twenty *individuals* were executed at the last assizes. A beggar this morning said to me, that he was an *unfortunate individual*. A man of literary eminence told me the other day that an *individual* was looking at a picture, and that this *individual* was a painter. One even reads, how an *individual* met another *individual* in the street, and how these two *individuals* quarreled, and how a third *individual* came up to part the two *individuals* who were fighting, and how the two *individuals* fell upon the third *individual*, and belaboured him for his pains. This is hardly an exaggerated parody of an extract I met with a short time back from a speech, which was pronounced to be "magnificent," and in which the word recurs five times in eighteen lines. Nay, a celebrated preacher, it is said, has been so destitute of all feeling for decorum in language, as to call our Saviour "this eminent *individual*." Also too! even Wordsworth, of all our writers the most conscientiously scrupulous in the use of words, in a note to one of the poems in his last volume, says that it was "never seen by the *individual* for whom it was intended." So



true is the remark, which Coleridge makes, when speaking of the purity of Wordsworth's language, that "in prose it is scarcely possible to preserve our style unalloyed by the vicious phraseology which meets us everywhere, from the sermon to the newspaper." For, if Landor has done so, it is because he has spent so much of his life abroad. Hence his knowledge of our permanent language has been little troubled by the rubbish which floats on our ephemeral language, and from which no man living in England can escape.

When and whence did this strange piece of pompous inanity come to us? and how did it gain such sudden vogue? It sounds very modern indeed, scarcely older than the Reform-Bill. Have we caught it from Irish oratory? or from the Scotch pulpit? both of which have been so busy of late years in corrupting our mother English. To the former one might ascribe it, from seeing that, of all classes, our Irish speakers are the fondest of babbling about *individuals*. Its empty grandiloquence too sounds like a voice from the Emerald Isle; while its philosophical pretension would bespeak the north of the Tweed. Or is it a Gallicism? for the French too apply their *individu* to particular persons, though never, I believe, thus promiscuously. Its having got down already into the mouth of beggars is a curious instance of the rapidity with which words circulate in this age of steampresses, and steamcoaches, and steamboats, and steamthoughts, and steamconstitutions.

The attempt to check the progress of a word, which has already acquired such currency, may perhaps be idle. Still it is well if one can lead some of the less thoughtless to call to mind, that words have a meaning and a history, and that, when used according to their historical meaning, they have also life and power. The word in question too is a good and valuable word, and worth reclaiming for its own appropriate signification. We want it; we have frequent occasion for it, and have no substitute to fill its place. It should hardly be used, except where some distinction or contrast is either exprest or implied.

A man is an *individual*, as regarded in his special, particular unity, not in his public capacity, not as a member of a body:



he is an *individual*, so far as he is an integral whole, different and distinct from other men : and that which makes him what he is, that in which he differs and is distinguisht from other men, is his *individuality*, and *individuates* or *individualizes* him. Thus, in the Dedication of *the Advancement of Learning*, Bacon says to the King : "I thought it more respective to make choice of some oblation, which might rather refer to the propriety and excellency of your *individual* person, than to the business of your crown and state." Milton indeed uses *individual* for *undivided* or *indivisible* ; as for instance in that grand passage of his Ode on Time, where he says that, when Time is at an end, "Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss With an *individual* kiss." And this usage is common in our early writers. Raleigh, in the Preface to his History (p. 17), speaks of the notion of Proclus, "that the compounded essence of the world is continued and knit to the Divine Being by an *individual* and inseparable power." To our ears however this sounds like a Latinism. Indeed this is the only sense in which the Romans used the word.

The sense it bears with us, it acquired among the Schoolmen, from whom we derive so large a portion of our philosophical vocabulary ; as may be seen ; for instance, in the following passage of Anselm's *Monologium* (c. xxvii.) : "Cum omnis substantia tractetur, aut esse universalis, quae pluribus substantiis essentialiter communis est, — ut, hominem esse, commune est singulis hominibus ; aut est *individua*, quae universalem essentiam communem habet cum aliis, — quemadmodum singuli homines commune habent cum singulis, ut homines sint." Thus Donne, in his 38th Sermon (vol. ii. p. 172), speaking of Christ, says : "This is that mysterious Person, who is *singularis*, and yet not *individuus* ; *singularis*, — there never was, never shall be any such ; — but we cannot call him *individual*, as every other particular man is, because *Christitatis non est genus*, there is no genus or species of Christs : it is not a name which can be communicated to any other, as the name of man may to every *individual* man." Again Bacon, in the first Chapter of the second Book *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, writes : "Historia



proprie *individuorum* est. — Etsi enim Historia Naturalis circa species versari videatur, tamen hoc fit ob promiscuam rerum naturalium similitudinem; ut, si unam noris, omnes noris. — Poesis etiam *individuorum* est. — Philosophia *individua* dimittit, neque impressiones primas *individuorum*, sed notiones ab illis abstractas complectitur.”

This usage might be illustrated by a number of passages from our metaphysical writers; as where Locke says (iii. 3, 4), that men “in their own species,—wherein they have often occasion to mention particular persons, make use of proper names; and there distinct *individuals* have distinct denominations.” This example shews how easily the modern abuse might grow up. In the following sentence from the *Wealth of Nations* (B. v. c. 1), — “In some cases the state of society places the greater part of *individuals* in such situations as naturally form in them almost all the abilities and virtues which that state requires,” — there is still an intimation of the antithesis properly implied in the word. But in many passages of Dugald Stewart, who uses it perpetually in the first volume of his *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, publisht in 1792, the antithesis is scarcely discernible; as, for instance, when he says (p. 20), “There are few *individuals*, whose education has been conducted in every respect with attention and judgement.” Here a more idiomatic writer would have said, *There are few persons*.

By the way, a good glossary to the Schoolmen would be an interesting and instructive work; a glossary collecting all the words which they coined, pointing out the changes they made in the signification of old Latin words, explaining the grounds of these innovations, and the wants they were meant to supply, and tracking these words through the various languages of modern Europe. Valuable as Ducange’s great work is for political, legal, ecclesiastical, military, and all manner of technical words, we still want a similar, though a far less bulky and laborious collection of such words as his plan did not embrace, especially of philosophical, scientific, and medical words, before we can be thoroughly acquainted with the alterations which



Latin underwent, when, from being the language of Rome, it became that of all persons of education throughout Europe. Even from Ducange it would be well if some industrious grammarian would pick out all such words as have left any offspring amongst us. Then alone shall we be prepared for understanding the history of the English language, when its various elements have been carefully separated, collected, arranged, and classified.

U.

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The offense charged against Wolsey is usually conceived to have lain in his having prefixt his name to the King's; as though, when he wrote *Ego et Rex meus*, it had been tantamount to saying *I and the King*; an expression so repugnant to our English notions of good-breeding, that it seems to us to imply the most overweening assumption of superiority. Hence, when the lords are taunting him in Shakspeare, Norfolk says, "Then that in all you writ to Rome, or else To forein princes, *Ego et Rex meus* Was still inscribed, *in which you brought the King To be your servant*." Thus the article of the Bill against him is stated by Holinshed, from whom Shakspeare's words are copied: "Item, in all writings which he wrote to Rome, or any other forein prince, he wrote *Ego et Rex meus*, *I and my King*, as who would say that the King were his servant." The charge is given in similar words by Grafton, by Hall, and by Foxe. Addison too understood it in the same sense. In his paper on Egotism (*Spectator*, 562), he says, "The most violent egotism which I have met with in the course of my reading, is that of Cardinal Wolsey, *Ego et Rex meus*, *I and my King*."

From this one might suppose that the grievance would have been removed, had he written *Rex meus et ego*, violating the Latin idiom; which in such expressions follows the natural order of our thoughts, and, inasmuch as a man's own feelings and actions must usually be foremost in his mind, makes him place himself first, when he has to speak of himself along with another. Hence Wolsey's last biographer, in the *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*, talks of "the *Ego et Rex meus* charge, which only betrays its framer's ignorance of the Latin idiom." Yet, when



one finds that the first name subscribed to the Bill against Wolsey is that of Thomas More, a modest man will be slow to believe that it can have been drawn up with such gross ignorance. Nor was it. A transcript of the Bill from the Records is given by Lord Herbert in his *Life of Henry the Eighth*, and has lately been reprinted in the *State-Trials*: and there the fourth article stands as follows. "Also the said Lord Cardinal, of his presumptuous mind, in divers and many of his letters and instructions sent out of this realm to outward parties, had joined himself with your Grace, as in saying and writing in his said letters and instructions, *The King and I would ye should do thus*;—*The King and I give you our hearty thanks*: whereby it is apparent that he used himself more like a fellow to your Highness, than like a subject." So that the blunder is imaginary. The charge was, not that he placed himself above and before the King, but that he spoke of himself along and on a level with the King, in a manner ill befitting a subject and a servant. The inaccuracy in Foxe's report was noted long ago by Collier in his *Ecclesiastical History*.

"It is always a mistake (says Niebuhr) to attribute ignorance on subjects of general notoriety to eminent men, in order to account for what we may find in them running counter to current opinions." This, and Coleridge's golden rule,—"*Until you understand an author's ignorance, presume yourself ignorant of his understanding*,"—should be borne in mind by all writers who feel an itching in their forefinger and thumb to be carping at their wisers and betters.

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The substitution of plurality for unity, and the unwillingness to use the simple personal pronoun, are not confined to that of the first person. In the languages of modern Europe this and divers other expedients have been adopted to supersede the pronoun of the second person: and only among certain classes, or in particular cases, is it thought allowable nowadays to address any one by his rightful appellation, *thou*. This is commonly supposed to be dictated by a desire of shewing honour



to him whom we are addressing; as may be seen, for instance, in Luther's remark on the use of the plural in the first words of the Book of Genesis: "Explodenda igitur est Judaeorum frigida cavillatio, quod reverentiae causa plurali numero sit usus. — Praesertim cum id non sit omnibus linguis commune, quod nobis Germanis usitatum est, ut reverentia sit plurali numero uti, cum de uno aliquo loquimur." But the further question arises: why is it esteemed a mark of honour to turn an individual into a multitude? Surely we do not mean to intimate that he must multiply himself like Kehama, in order to storm our hearts by bringing a fresh self against every entrance. Might not one rather expect that the mark of honour would be to separate him from all other men, and to regard him exclusively as himself, and by himself? as Cressida's servant tells her, that Ajax is "a very man *per se*, And stands alone." The secret motive, which lies at the bottom of these conventions, I believe to be a reluctance, in the one case to obtrude one's own personality, in the other to intrude on the personality of another. In both there is the feeling of conscious sinfulness, leading us to hide among the trees.

In the Greeks and Romans, as there was not the same consciousness of a sinful nature, neither was there the same shrinking from personality in their addresses to each other. We see this in many features of their literature, especially of their oratory; which modern critics, judging them perversely, according to the feelings and notions of later times, pronounce to be in bad taste. For with us a personality means an insult, and such as no gentleman will be guilty of. But the ancients felt differently on this matter: nor did they ever fancy there could be anything indecorous or affronting in calling each other simply *σὺ* or *tu*. This is of a piece with their unscrupulousness about the exhibition of the naked form. Regarding human nature as one, they were little sensible of the propriety of concealing any part of it. If they did so, in conformity to the custom of wearing clothing, in the statues of real personages, whom they wisht to represent as their countrymen had been wont to see them, they proved that this did not arise from any moral delicacy,



inasmuch as nakedness was deemed appropriate to the statues of most of the gods. Whereas in modern times the feeling of the duplicity of our nature has been so strong, and it has been so much the custom to look upon the body as the main root and source of evil, that our aim has been to hide every part of it, except the face as the index, and the hand as the instrument of the mind. So too are we studious to conceal every action of our animal nature, even those, such as tears and the other outward signs of grief, in which the animal nature is acting under the sway of the spiritual. To us the tears of Achilles, the groans of Philoctetes, the yells of Hercules, seem, not merely unheroic, but unmanly. Nay, even a woman would be withheld by shame from making such a display of her weakness.

In like manner it strikes our minds as such insolent familiarity for a man to *thou* his superiors, that most people, I imagine, would suppose that under the Roman Empire at all events it can never have been allowable to address an emperor with a bare *tu*. If any one needs to be convinced of the contrary, he has only to look into Pliny's letters to Trajan, or Fronto's to Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius: he will find that no more ceremony was observed in writing to the master of the world, than if he had been a common Roman citizen. Many striking speeches too, shewing this, are recorded. For instance, that of Asinius Gallus to Tiberius: *Interrogo, Caesar, quam partem reipublicae mandari tibi velis?* That of Haterius: *Quousque patieris Caesar non adesse caput reipublicae?* That of Piso, which Tacitus calls *vestigium morientis libertatis*: *Quo loco censebis, Caesar?* *Si primus, habebo quod sequar: si post omnes, vereor ne imprudens dissentiam.* That of Subrius Flavius, when askt by Nero, why he had conspired against him: *Oderam te: odisse coepi, postquam parricida matris et uxoris et auriga et histrio et incendiarius exstitisti.* The same thing is proved by the extraordinary, tumultuous address of the Senate to Pertinax on the death of Commodus: *Parricida trahatur. Rogamus, Auguste: parricida trahatur. Exaudi Caesar. Delatores ad leonem. Exaudi Caesar. Delatores ad leonem. Exaudi Caesar. Gladiatorem in spoliario. Exaudi Caesar.*



From a couple of passages in the Augustan History indeed, one might imagine that Diocletian's love of pomp and ceremony had shewn itself in exacting the plural from those who address him. The authors of the several Lives have not been satisfactorily ascertained: but in that of Marcus Aurelius the writer says: *Deus usque etiam nunc habetur, ut vobis ipsis, sacratissime imperator Diocletiane, et semper visum est et videtur: qui eum inter numina vestra, non ut caeteros, sed specialiter veneramini, ac saepe dicitis, vos vita et clementia tales esse cupere, qualis fuit Marcus.* At the end of the Life of Lucius Verus, which no doubt is by the same writer, after denying the report that Marcus Aurelius had poisoned Verus, he adds: *Post Marcum, praeter vestram clementiam, Diocletiane Auguste, imperatorem talem nec adulatio videatur posse confingere.* How these two passages are to be accounted for, I know not. They are too personal to allow of our supposing that Maximian was comprehended in them. Was it an Oriental fashion, which Diocletian tried to introduce, along with the Persian diadem and silk robes and tissue of gold, and which was dropt from its repugnance to the genius of the Latin language? In the other addresses the ordinary style is the singular; as may be seen in those to Diocletian, in the lives of Elius Verus, of Heliogabalus, and of Macrinus; and in those to Constantine, in the Lives of Geta, of Alexander Severus, of the Maximins, of the Gordians, and of Claudius.

Such too, so far as my observation has extended, was the style under the Byzantine Empire. In their rescripts indeed, and other ordinances, the Roman emperors spoke in the plural number, as may be seen in every other page of Justinian's Codex. For the use of the plural *nos* was already common among the Romans, at least among the aristocracy, in their best ages; the bent of their spirit leading them to merge their own individual, more than any other people has ever done, in their social character, as members whether of their family, or of their order, or of the Roman nation. In this too they shewed that they were a nation of kings. For a sovereign's duty is to forget his own personality, and to regard himself as the imper-



sonation of the State. He should exactly reverse Louis the Fourteenth's hateful and fearful speech: *La France c'est moi*. Instead of swallowing up his country in his voracious maw, he should identify himself with it, and feel that his whole being is wrapt up in his people, and that apart from them he is nothing, no more than a head when severed from its body. As Hegel says, in his *Philosophy of Law* (§ 279), when explaining the difficulty attendant on a monarchical constitution, that the will of the State is to be embodied in an individual: "This does not mean that the monarch may act arbitrarily. On the contrary he is bound to the concrete substance of the measures proposed to him, and, if the constitution is firmly established, will often have little more to do than to sign his name. But this name is of importance: it is the apex, beyond which we cannot pass. One might say, that an organic constitution had existed in the noble democracy of Athens. But we see at the same time that the Greeks were wont to draw their ultimate decisions from things wholly external, from oracles, the entrails of victims, the flight of birds, and that they regarded Nature as a power which declares and pronounces what is good for man. Self-consciousness had not yet attained to the abstraction of pure subjectivity, to the condition in which the decisive *I will* is to be uttered by man. This *I will* forms the great distinction between the ancient and the modern world, and must therefore have its peculiar expression in the great edifice of the State. — The objections which have been urged against monarchy, — that through the sovereign the condition of the State becomes subject to chance, since he may be ill educated, or altogether unworthy of standing at the head of it, and that it is absurd for this to be the reasonable idea of a State, — are groundless, from being based on the assumption that the peculiarities of individual character are the material point. In a perfectly organized constitution we merely need the apex of a formal decision; and the only thing indispensable in a sovereign is a person who can say *Yes*, and put the dot on the *I*. For the apex should be such that the peculiarities of character shall be of no moment. — In a well regulated monarchy the legislature determines the



objective measures, to which the monarch has merely to affix the subjective *I will*." Hence *nos, nous, wir, we*, is the fitting style for princes in their public capacity; as it is for all who are speaking and acting, not in their own persons, but as officers of the State. For them to say, *I order so and so*, might seem almost as impertinent, as for a servant to say, *I am to have a party at dinner tomorrow*. In these days our household ties are so loosened, that most servants would say, *My Master is to have a party tomorrow*, or perhaps, entirely disguising the relation between them, would call him *Mr. A*. In simpler times, when there was more dutiful affection and loyalty, they would have said *we*, like Caleb Balderstone. The use of *nos* however by the Roman emperors did not involve that of *vos* in addresses to them; any more than our calling everybody *you* implies that they call themselves *we*.

It would require a long and laborious examination, with the command of a well-stockt public library, to make out when and how and by what steps the use of the plural pronoun in speaking to another became prevalent in the various languages of modern Europe. Grammarians have hardly turned their attention to this point. The difficulty of such an enquiry is the greater, because the language of books in this respect has by no means fallen in with that of ordinary life. Poetry especially, as its aim is to lift men above the artificial conventions of society, has retained the natural, simple pronoun much more extensively than common speech. Hence the use of *thou* in poetry does not prove that it would have been used under the same circumstances in conversation; though the use of the plural pronoun justifies our inferring that it was already current, and probably much widelier spread. In Boccaccio's Novels, where one might expect to find a closer reflexion of common life, the singular pronoun appears to be used constantly. From his letters, however, it would seem to have been already superseded in most cases by the plural in the intercourse of society; though Ranke, in his *Histories of Romanesque and Germanic Nations* (p. 105), says of the Florentines at the end of the fifteenth century, that "they all called each other *thou*, and only used



*you* or *messere* in speaking to a knight, a doctor, or to an uncle." Petrarch, whose reverent love leads him to address Laura by the plural pronoun, uses the singular in sonnets written to his friends, and uniformly in his letters. Indeed the Roman *tu* seems to have been general in Latin epistles, except those to sovereign princes, at least since the Revival of Learning: for in earlier times it had been common to use *vos*. We find *tu* constantly in Luther's letters, even in those to the Pope, in Melancthon's, in Milton's private ones. In those written for Cromwell, sovereign princes are called *vos*; and so is Mazarin. The prince of Tarentum, Mendez de Haro, and the Conde Mirano are *tu*. In the Provençal of the Troubadours, Raynouard observes, *vos* is almost always used in speaking to a single person. In the *Fabliaux* we find distinctions answering to those which have prevailed almost ever since in French: *tu* is used to indicate familiarity; *vous*, respect. Parents say *tu* to their children, husbands to their wives: the children and wives use the more respectful *vous*. The same sort of distinction seems to prevail in the Niebelungen Lay; in which, as in the Homeric poems, the representation of manners probably agreed very nearly with what was actually found in the world. In the conversation between Chriemhild and her mother, and in that between Siegfried and his parents, the parents use *du*, the son and daughter *ir*. The princes and knights sometimes take one form, sometimes the other, the singular apparently where there is more intimacy, or more passion. Husbands and wives use both forms indiscriminately. Pfizer, in his Life of Luther (p. 22), remarks that, when Luther's father heard of his son's having become a monk, he wrote a severe rebuke to him, calling him *Du*, having previously used the more respectful plural *Ihr*, since he had taken his master's degree. Is the general prevalence of the plural in modern Europe derived from the Teutonic languages? Or did it arise from the same cause in them and the Romanesque together?

In England the peculiarity has been the entire exclusion of *thou* from the language of the great body of the people. Now and then indeed one sees it in those loveletters which are un-



lucky enough to find their way into a court of justice : but it is not appropriated, as in France, Italy, and Germany, for the expression of familiarity. We enter into no bond to *thou* one another, as our neighbours do to *tutoyer*, and to *dutzen*. This may be a mark of our characteristic reserve and shrinking from every demonstration of feeling. But when was this sentence of banishment against *thou* issued ? In Robert of Gloucester, and our other old verse chroniclers, it seems to be the constant word, being used even by Cordelia in her reply to her father. So is it in Peirs Plouhman ; the nature of which work, however, leads us to look for a close adherence to the language of the Bible : and I doubt whether even Mr Belsham can have gone so far in modernizing the words of the Scriptures, as to substitute *you* for *thou*. That no conclusion can be drawn from Peirs Plouhman with regard to the usage, at least of the higher classes in his time, is clear from Chaucer ; in whom *you*, except in passages of familiarity or elevation, is the customary pronoun. From Gower too one may infer that *thou* was then deemed appropriate to the language of familiarity, *you* to that of respect. The Confessor regularly uses *thou* to the Lover ; the Lover *you* or *ye* to the Confessor. Shakspeare's practice would seem to imply that a distinction, like that which prevailed on the Continent, was also recognised in England. Prospero for instance, except in two places, constantly says *thou* to Miranda ; while she always replies with *you*. The same thing is observable in most of Lear's speeches to his daughters, and in Volumnia's more affectionate ones to Coriolanus. When she puts on the reserve of offended dignity, she says *you*. Yet I have not noticed any instance of *thou* in Ellises Collection of Letters ; though some of them go back as far as the reign of Henry the Fifth : but in few of them could one expect it. From Roper's beautiful Life of Sir Thomas More, however, we perceive, that fathers in his days would occasionally, though not uniformly, *thou* their children. " Lo, dost thou not see, Megg, (he said to his daughter, when looking out of his prison-window, while Reynolds and three other monks were led to execution,) that these blessed fathers be now as cheerfully going to their deaths,



as bridegrooms to their marriage? Wherefore thereby *mayest thou see*, mine own good daughter, what a great difference there is between such as have in effect spent all their days in a strait, hard, penitential, and painful life, religiously, and such as have in the world, like worldly wretches, *as thy poor father hath done*, consumed all their time in pleasure and ease licentiously. For God, considering their long-continued life in most sore and grievous penance, will no longer suffer them to remain here in this vale of misery and iniquity, but speedily hence taketh them to the fruition of his everlasting Deity. Whereas *thy silly father*, Megg, that, like a most wicked caitiff, hath past forth the whole course of his miserable life most sinfully, God, thinking him not worthy so soon to come to that eternal felicity, leaveth him here yet still in the world further to be plagued and turmoiled with misery." The same thing may be seen in the Earl of Northumberland's speech to his son, in Cavendishes *Life of Wolsey*, when he is warning him against displeasing the king by making love to Anne Boleyn. Wolsey too, in whose service Lord Percy was, talks to him in the same paternal style. From Charles the First's last words to the Duke of Gloucester, we perceive that this practice even then was not obsolete, at least in speaking to young children. "Sweetheart, now they will cut off *thy* father's head. Mark, child, what I say: they will cut off my head, and perhaps make *thee* a king. But mark what I say: you must not be a king so long as your brother Charles and James do live. For they will cut off your brothers heads, (when they can catch them,) and cut off *thy* head too at last; and therefore, I charge you, do not be made a king by them." In Lord Capel's letter to his wife, written on the day on which he was beheaded, in 1649, he uses *thou* throughout. "My eternal life is in Christ Jesus: my worldly considerations in the highest degree *thou* hast deserved. Let me live long here in *thy* dear memory. I beseech *thee*, take care of *thy* health: sorrow not, afflict not *thyself* too much. God will be to *thee* better than a husband, and to my children better than a father."

There was another usage of *thou*, which prevailed for some centuries, namely, in speaking to inferiors. When *you* came



into use among the higher classes, the lower were still address with *thou*. Living in closer communion with Nature, with her simple, permanent forms and ever-recurring operations, they are in great measure exempted from the capricious sway of Fashion, which tosses about the upper twigs and leaves of society, but seldom shakes the trunk. Or at least they were so till lately: for the enormous increase of traffic of every kind, and the ceaseless inroads of the press, which is sending its emissaries into every cottage, are rapidly changing their character. Yet still one regards and treats them much more as children of Nature: and a judicious man would as soon think of feeding them with kickshaws and ragoos, as of talking to them in any but the plainest, homeliest words. What a broad distinction was made with regard to the personal pronoun, may be seen in the interesting account of William Thorpe's examination on a charge of heresy before the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1407; where the archbishop and his clerks uniformly *thou* him, not insultingly, but as a matter of course; while he always uses *you* in his answers. The same distinction is apparent in the dialogues between Othello and Iago. Thus it has happened that we find *thou* in many of the noblest speeches on record, the last words of great and good men to the executioner on the scaffold: and in legal murders of the great and good, notwithstanding the boasted excellence of our laws and courts of justice, the history of England is richer than that of any other country. It does one good to read such words: so I will quote a few examples. For instance, those of Sir Thomas More: *Pluck up thy spirits, man, and be not afraid to do thine office; my neck is very short; take heed therefore, thou strike not awry, for saving of thine honesty.* Those of Fisher, the pious Bishop of Rochester, when the executioner knelt down to him and besought his forgiveness: *I forgive thee with all my heart; and I trust thou shalt see me overcome this storm lustily.* Those of the Duke of Suffolk on the same occasion: *God forgive thee! and I do; and when thou dost thine office, I pray thee do it well, and bring me out of this world quickly; and God have mercy on thee!* When Raleigh was led to the scaffold, a bald-headed



old man prest through the crowd, and prayed that God would support him. *I thank thee, my good friend*, said Raleigh to him, *and am sorry I am in no case to return thee anything for thy good will. But here* (observing his bald head), *take this nightcap; thou hast more need of it now than I.* Shortly after, he bade the executioner shew him the axe: *I prithee let me see it. Dost thou think I am afraid of it?* And after he had laid his head on the block, the blow being delayed, he lifted himself up and said: *What dost thou fear? strike, man.* In Lady Jane Grey's words indeed, as they are given by Foxe, we find *you*: *Pray you, dispatch me quickly. Will you take it off before I lie down?* Perhaps it may have seemed to her gentle spirit that *thou* was somewhat unfeminine: though it was the word used by mistresses in speaking to their servants, as we may perceive from the scenes between Olivia and Malvolio, and from those between Julia and Lucetta in *the Two Gentlemen of Verona*; where Julia, when she is offended with her maid, passes from the familiar *thou* to the more distant *you*.

It might be imagined that the adoption of the simple pronoun in these speeches was occasioned by the solemnity of the moment, impelling the parting spirit to cast off the artificial, conventional drapery of society. But, — not to mention that this itself would have been idle affectation, to have taken thought at such a moment about using a word at variance with the language of ordinary life, — in speeches made at the same time to persons of their own rank we find the same men saying *you*: and other anecdotes in the biographies of the sixteenth century shew that *thou* was in common use then in speaking to the lower orders, and even to inferiors, who were above them. When Bernard Gilpin begged Bishop Tonsal to allow that he would resign either his rectory or archdeaconry, that excellent bishop replied, *Have I not told thee beforehand, that thou wilt be a beggar? I found them combined; and combined I will leave them.* And among Gilpin's numberless acts of benevolence, it is related that, in one of his rides, seeing a man much cast down by the loss of a horse that had just fallen dead, he told the man he should have the one on which his servant was



mounted. *Ah master*, said the countryman, *my pocket will not reach such a beast as that. Come, come!* answered Gilpin; *take him; take him; and when I demand my money, then thou shalt pay me.* If so many examples of this usage are from dying words, it is because such words have been more carefully recorded, as precious and sacred memorials.

This use of a different pronoun in speaking to the lower orders was in some measure analogous to that of *er*, which still prevails, and was more general a few years since, in Germany; where it was long thought unbecoming for a gentleman to hold any direct personal communication with a boor, or to speak to him otherwise than as if he were a third person. We on the other hand consider it illbred to use *he* or *she* in speaking of any one present.

Hence, as the use of *er* to a gentleman in Germany is deemed a gross offense, which is often to be expiated with blood, so was the use of *thou* in England. This was one of the disgraceful insults to which Coke had recourse, when argument and evidence failed him, at Raleigh's trial. *All that Lord Cobham did*, he cried, *was at thy instigation, thou viper: for I thou thee, thou traitor.* And again, when he had been completely baffled, he exclaimed: *Thou art the most vile and execrable traitor that ever lived. I want words sufficient to express thy viperous treasons.* When Sir Toby Belch is urging Sir Andrew Aguecheek to send a challenge to Viola, he says, *If thou thoust him some thrice it shall not be amiss*; in which words the commentators have needlessly sought an allusion to Raleigh's trial. There is not a syllable in the context to point the allusion, or to remind the hearer either of Raleigh or of Coke. They merely shew, as Coke's behaviour also shews, that to *thou* a man was a grievous insult: and that it was so, George Fox and his followers some time after found to their great cost.

This is well known to be still the shibboleth of Quakerism, the only one probably among the Founder's tenets which has always been held inviolate and inviolable by every member of the sect. For all sects cling the longest to that which is outward and formal in their peculiar creed, and are often the more



tenacious of it, the more their original spirit has evaporated; among other reasons, because by so doing alone can they preserve their sectarian existence. In George Fox himself the determination to *thou* all men was not a piece of capricious trifling. It flowed from the principle which pervaded his whole conduct, the desire of piercing through the husk and coating of forms in which men's hearts and souls were wrapt up, and of dragging them out from their lurking-places into the open light of day; although, as extremes are ever begetting one another, it has come to pass that no sect is so enslaved, so bound hand and foot by forms, as they who started by crying out against and casting away all forms. Thus Nature ever avenges herself, and reestablishes the balance, which man had overweeningly disturbed.

It was at the very beginning of his preaching, that he, who set out on the glorious enterprise of converting all men into friends, tells us in his Journal: "When the Lord sent me forth into the world, I was required to *Thee* and *Thou* all men and women, without any respect to rich or poor, great or small. But oh! the rage that then was in the priests, magistrates, professors, and people of all sorts, but especially in priests and professors. For though *thou* to a single person was according to their own learning, their accidence and grammar rules, and according to the Bible, yet they could not bear to hear it." This was in 1648: but his practice continued to give offense for many years after. In 1661, he says, "the book called *the Battledoor* came forth written to shew that in all languages *thou* and *thee* is the proper and usual form of speech to a single person, and *you* to more than one. This was set forth in examples taken out of the Scriptures, and out of books of teaching in about thirty languages. When the book was finisht, some of them were presented to the King and his Council, to the Bishops of Canterbury and London (Juxon and Sheldon), and to the two Universities one apiece. The King said, it was the proper language of all nations: and the Bishop of Canterbury, being askt what he thought of it, was so at a stand that he could not tell what to say. For it did so inform and convince



people, that few afterward were so rugged toward us for saying *thou* and *thee* to a single person, which before they were exceeding fierce against us for. For this *thou* and *thee* was a sore cut to proud flesh, and them that sought self-honour; who, though they would say it to God and Christ, would not endure to have it said to themselves. So that we were often beaten and abused, and sometimes in danger of our lives, for using those words to some proud men, who would say, *What, you ill-bred clown, do you thou me!* as though there lay breeding in saying *you* to one, which is contrary to all their grammars."

In all this there is no slight admixture of ignorance and of presumption; as is mostly the case with the vehement opposers and defiers of customs not plainly and radically immoral. Of the ignorance one should have no right to complain, were it not for the presumption which thrusts it forward. But the whole proceeding, as Henry More rightly urges in his letter to Penn, — who had employed a chapter of his *No Cross, No Crown*, in an ingenious and elaborate vindication of the usage of his sect, — is inconsistent "with that generosity and freedom and charity and kind complacency, that, one would think, did naturally accompany a truly Christian spirit. The great and royal law, which is to measure all our Christian actions, is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul, and thy neighbour as thyself*. And one point of our love to our neighbour is not to give him offense; but to comply with him in things of an indifferent nature, as all things are that are not of their own nature evil, — unless some Divine law, or the law of our superiors has bound us. But no law, neither Divine or human, has bound us, but that we may say *you*, when the Quakers say *thou*, to a single person. Nay, Custom, which is another Nature, and another Law, and from whence words derive their signification, has not only made *you* to signify as well singularly as plurally, — but has superadded a signification of a moderate respect used in the singular sense; as it has added to *thou*, of the highest respect and reverence (for no man will *You* God, but use the pronoun *Thou* to Him), or else of the greatest familiarity or contempt. So that the



proper use of *you* and *thou* is settled by a long and universal custom."

By these absurdities, simple, honest George Fox sadly maimed his own strength, and lessened the good he might else have effected. So far indeed he was right, that in a regenerate world the bars and bolts, which sever and estrange man from man, would burst, like the doors of St. Paul's prison at Philippi, and that every man's bands would be loost. Something of the kind may be seen even now in the openhearted confidence and affection, which prevail almost at sight among such as find themselves united to each other by the love of a common Saviour, — a confidence and affection foreshewing the blessed Communion of Saints. But this is likelier to be retarded than promoted by efforts to change the outward form, so long as the spirit is unchanged. The very habit of using words which belong to a higher state of feeling than we ourselves have attained to, deadens the sense of truth, and causes a dismal rent in the soul. I am speaking only of such things as are not contrary to good manners. Whatever is must be quelled, before the inward change can be wrought. But that which is indifferent, or solely valuable as the expression of some inward state of feeling, should be left to spring spontaneously from the source, without which it is worthless.

How must Charles the Second have laughed in his sleeve, when he acknowledged that *thou* and *thee* "was the proper language of all nations!" Perhaps it was out of hostility to Quakerism and Puritanism, of which *thou* was deemed the watchword, that it fell so entirely into disuse, as it seems to have done among all ranks in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Locke indeed uses it in his Prefatory Addresses to the Reader. In sermons, when the preacher is appealing to his hearers severally and personally, it is often introduced with much solemnity; as, for instance, in the following grand passage of Donne (*Sermon II.* p. 27). "As the sun does not set to any nation, but withdraw itself, and return again, God, in the exercise of His mercy, does not set to *thy* soul, though he benight it with an affliction. — The blessed Virgin



was overshadowed ; but it was with the Holy Ghost that overshadowed her : *thine* understanding, *thy* conscience may be so too ; and yet it may be the work of the Holy Ghost, who moves in *thy* darkness, and will bring light even out of that, knowledge out of *thine* ignorance, clearness out of *thy* scruples, and consolation out of *thy* dejection of spirit. *God is thy portion*, says David. David does not speak so narrowly, so penuriously, as to say, God hath given *thee thy* portion, and *thou* must look for no more : but, *God is thy portion* ; and, as long as He is God, He hath more to give ; and, as long as *thou* art His, *thou* hast more to receive. *Thou* canst not have so good a title to a subsequent blessing, as a former blessing : where *thou* art an ancient tenant, *thou* wilt look to be preferred before a stranger ; and that is *thy* title to God's future mercies, if *thou* have been formerly accustomed to them. — Though *thou* be but a tabernacle of earth, God shall raise *thee* piece by piece into a spiritual building ; and after one story of creation, and another of vocation, and another of sanctification, He shall bring *thee* up to meet *thyself* in the bosom of *thy* God, where *thou* wast at first in an eternal election. God is a circle Himself ; and He will make *thee* one : go not *thou* about to square either circle, to bring that which is equal in itself to angles and corners, into dark and sad suspicions of God, or of *thyself*, that God can give, or that *thou* canst receive, no more mercy than *thou* hast had already."

Our poets too still bring forward this pronoun now and then for the sake of distinguishing their language from that of prose : but they are seldom guided by any determinate principle, or even by any clear perception of the occasions when it may be appropriate. It is perhaps a singular phenomenon in a cultivated language, that scarcely a writer seems to know when he ought to use such words as *thou*, *you*, and *ye*.

Even the Quakers, at least of late years, as they have been gradually paring away the other tokens of their sect, their coats and hats and bonnets, generally soften the full-mouthed *thou* into *thee* ; whereby moreover they gain the advantage of a two-fold offense against grammar. For this seems to be one of the



ways in which an Englishman delights to display his love of freedom, — by riding over grammatical rules. A Quaker will now say, *Do thee wish for this? Will thee come to me?* thus getting rid of what in our language is felt to be such an incumbrance, one of our few remaining grammatical inflexions. Perhaps our aversion to using the second person of the verb may not have been inoperative in expelling *thou* from our speech. In truth it is by no means so apt a word for expressing the personality of another symbolically, as *tu* and *du*; by which the lips are protruded toward the person we are addressing, pointing to him, and almost shaping themselves for a kiss; as though they belonged to a world in which all mankind were brethren. *You* in this respect has the better of *thou*.

As George Foxes attempt to *thou* and fraternize all mankind was coincident with the outbreak of our Rebellion, so at the beginning of the French Revolution it became the fashion to fraternize and *tutoyer* everybody. At first this may strike us as another of the thousand and one examples of extremes meeting. But frequent as such meetings are, the general formule which embraces, does not explain them: and though there were great and glaring differences between the Jacobins and the early Quakers, there were also several points of resemblance. They had the same eager dislike of every existing institution, on the mere ground of its existing, — the same unhesitating trust in their own impulses, whether regarded as the dictates of the Spirit, or of reason: they both cherish the same delusive notion, that by pruning and lopping they should regenerate mankind. The practice of *thouing* belonged to them both: the refusal of respect to authority and rank belonged to them both: both indulged in a dream of universal peace. The Jacobinical metonomatosis of the months, and of the days of the week, might be lookt upon as a parody of the Quakerian: only their hatred of all religion extended even to these relics of Polytheism: and it was an act suited to the vermin that were then breeding and crawling about the mouldering carcass of European society, to revive the notion, which has been ascribed to Pythagoras, that number is the only god.



It is cheering to observe, how even in these things patient endurance is far mightier than violence, feeble as the one, powerful as the other may appear at the moment. Whatever is good strikes root: Nature and Time delight to foster it: so long as its spirit lasts, they preserve it; and often long after. But evil they reject and disgorge. George Foxes institution still subsists after the lapse of two centuries: that of the Jacobins soon past away; though not without leaving a trace behind. "Le tutoiement (says Bonald, *Pensées*, p. 29) s'est retranché dans la famille: et après avoir tutoyé tout le monde, on ne tutoie plus que ses père et mère. Cet usage met toute la maison à l'aise: il dispense les parens d'autorité, et les enfans de respect." This seems over-severe. When a like change took place in Germany at the end of the last century, and was reprehended as an instance of pert forwardness, it was replied that, in speaking to our Heavenly Father, we always call him *Thou*. It is a sign how lamentably the sense of the true relation between a father and a son had decayed, that it should have been deemed right to enforce the reverence of the son by clothing him in the stiff forms of conventional breeding. In some recent works of fiction, petulant children are represented as saying *Du* to parents, while the modest and wellbred shew their respect by using *Sie*. Of Solger, it is related, in the Preface to his Remains, that, when he was a boy, he and his younger brother used to call each other *Sie*, which, in their childish quarrels, gave a comic solemnity to their tone. In those letters of deep, passionate love, which have just been exposed to the eyes of all Europe in consequence of an unheard of crime, the illfated Duchess of Praslin ordinarily addresses her miserable husband with the familiar *tu*, but at times, assuming the language of outraged dignity, uses *vous*. Among the Germans, it is well known that to *thou* a person is a sign of the most intimate friendship. When Zelter sends Goethe an account of the death of his son, Goethe in his answer tacitly for the first time calls him *du*, as it were, saying, *I will do what I can to replace thy lost son by being a brother to thee.*



This substitution of the plural *you* for the singular *thou* is only one among many devices which have been adopted for the sake of veiling over the plainspeaking familiarity of the latter. The Germans commonly call *you* *they*; the Italians *she* and *her*, which may be regarded as a type of their national effeminacy. In the Malay languages, we are told by Marsden, a variety of substitutes for the first and second pronoun are in use, by which the speaker betokens his own inferiority, or the superiority of the person he is addressing. This seems to be common in Oriental languages, and answers to what we often find in the Bible; for instance in 2 Samuel, c. xix. In Asia man seems hardly to have found out his own personality, or that of others.

U.

After all, they are strange and mighty words, these two little pronouns, *I* and *Thou*, the mightiest perhaps in the whole compass of language. The name *Pronoun* indeed is not quite strictly appropriate to them: for, as the great master of the philosophy of language, William Humboldt, observes, "they are not mere substitutes for the names of the persons for whom they stand, but involve the personality of the speaker, and of the person spoken to, and the relation between them." *I* is the word which man has in common with God, the Eternal, Self-existing *I AM*. *Thou* is the word with which God and his Conscience speak to man, the word with which man speaks and communes with God and his neighbour. All other words, without these two, would belong to things: *I* and *Thou* are inseparable from personality, and bestow personality on whatever they are applied to. They are the two primary elements and conditions of all speech, which implies a speaker, and a person spoken to: and they are the indispensable complements, each to the other; so that neither idea could have been called forth in man without the help of its mate.

This is why it was not good for man to be alone. What in truth would Adam have been, if Eve had never been created? What was he before her creation? A solitary *I*, without a *thou*. Can there be such a being? Can the human mind be



awakened, except by the touch of a kindred mind? Can the spark of consciousness be elicited, except by collision? Or are we to believe that his communion with God was intimate enough to supply the place of communion with beings of his own kind?

The indispensableness of an *object* to arouse the *subject* is finely set before us in *Troilus and Cressida*, in the Dialogue between Ulysses and Achilles.

*Ulysses.*

A strange fellow here

Writes me that man, — how dearly ever parted,  
How much in having, or without, or in, —  
Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,  
Nor feels not what he owes, but by reflexion:  
As when his virtues shining upon others  
Heat them, and they retort that heat again  
To the first giver.

*Achilles.*

This is not strange, Ulysses.

The beauty that is borne here in the face  
The bearer knows not, but commends itself  
To others eyes: nor doth the eye itself,  
That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,  
Not going from itself: but eye to eye opposed  
Salutes each other with each other's form.  
For speculation turns not to itself,  
Till it hath travel'd, and is married there  
Where it may see itself.

Hence it is only by the reciprocal action of these two ideas, the continual play and weaving of them one into the other, that a true system of philosophy can be constructed. In a logical vacuum indeed *I* may dream that it can stand alone: and then it will compass itself about with a huge zero, an all-absorbing negation, summing up everything out of itself, as Fichte did, in the most audacious word ever coined by man, *Nicht-ich*, or *Not-I*. His system, a work of prodigious energy and logical power, was the philosophical counterpart to the political edifice which was set up at the same time in France: and its main fallacy was the very same, the confounding of the particular subjective mind with the eternal, universal mind of the Allwise, — the fancy that, as God pours all truth out of Himself, man may in like manner draw all truth out of himself, — and the



forgetting that, beside *I* and *Not-I*, there is also a *Thou* in the world, our relations to whom, in their manifold varieties, are the source of all our affections, and of all our duties.

By the way, some persons may think that we have cause to congratulate ourselves on the bareness of our *I*, which is such that nothing can adhere to it; inasmuch as it thereby forms a kind of palisade around us, preserving us from the inroads of German philosophy. Nobody acquainted with the various systems, which have sprung up since Kant sowed the teeth of the serpent he had slain, and which have been warring against each other from that time forward, can fail to perceive that in England they must all have been still-born, were it solely from the impossibility of forming any derivatives or compounds from our *I*. One cannot stir far in those systems without such words as *Ichheit*, *ichheitlich*, *ichlich*, *Nicht-ich*. But the genius of our language would never have allowed people to talk about *Ihood*, *Ihoodly*, *Ily*, *Not-I*. Like the sceptre of Achilles, our *I οὔποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄζους Φύσει, ἐπειδὴ πρῶτα τομὴν ἐν ὄρεσσι λειοῖπεν*.

And this, which is true of our pronoun, is also true of that for which it stands. No old stick, no iron bar, no bare *I*, can be more unproductive and barren than Self, when cut off and isolated from the tree on which it was set to grow. U.

Everybody has heard of one speech in Seneca's *Medea*, small as may be the number of those whose acquaintance with that poet has gone much further. In truth the very conception of a tragedy written by a Stoic is anything but inviting, and may be deemed scarcely less incongruous than a garden of granite. Nor would this furnish an unsuitable emblem of those tragedies: the thoughts are about as hard and stiff; and the characters have almost as much life in them.

Still there is one speech in them, which is sufficiently notorious. When *Medea's* nurse exhorts her to be patient, by urging the forlornness of her situation, reminding her how

Abiere Colchi; conjugis nulla est fides;  
Nihilque superest opibus e tantis tibi;

she answers, *Medea superest*: and thus far her answer is a fine



one. But the rhetorician never knew when to have done, in the accumulation either of gold or of words. For, while truth and genius are simple and brief, affectation and hypocrisy, whether moral or intellectual, are conscious that their words are mere bubbles, and blow them till they burst. What follows is wild nonsense :

Medea superest: hic mare et terras vides,  
Ferrumque, et ignes, et deos, et fulmina.

Now how should one translate these two words, *Medea superest*? They are easy enough to construe: but an English poet would hardly make her say, *Medea is left*, or *Medea remains*. The question occurred to me the other day, when listening to a modern opera of little worth, except for the opportunity it has afforded Madame Pasta for putting forth her extraordinary tragic powers; powers to which, as there exhibited, I know not what has been seen comparable in any actress, since she who shed such splendour over the stage in our younger days, welcomed her son back to Rome. Volumnia, I believe, was the last part Mrs. Siddons ever played: at least it was the last I saw her in: and well did it become her in the days of her matronly dignity. Even now, after near twenty years, I still seem to hear the tone of exulting joy and motherly pride, bursting through her efforts to repress it, when, raising her kneeling son, she cried,

Nay, my good soldier, up!  
My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and  
By deed atchieving honour newly-named . . .  
What is it? Coriolanus must I call thee?

Nor will any one easily forget the exclamation with which Medea repells Jason's question, *Che mi resta?* the simple pronoun *Io*. The situations are somewhat unlike: but the passage is evidently an imitation of that in Seneca's tragedy, or at least has come from it at second or third hand. For Corneille's celebrated *Moi*, which the French have extolled as though it had been the grandest word in all poetry, must no doubt have been the medium it past through, being itself merely a prior copy of the same original. In the French tragedy too a like change has been made from the name to the pronoun: and one feels



that this change is imperatively required by the spirit of modern times. An ancient poet could not have used the pronoun : a modern poet in such a situation could hardly use the proper name.

But is not this at variance with what was said before about the readiness of the ancients, and the comparative reluctance in modern times, to make use of the simple personal pronouns ?

No : for this very contrast arises from the objective character of their minds, and the subjective character of ours. They had less deep and wakeful feelings connected with the personal pronoun, and therefore used it more freely. But, from attaching less importance to it, when they wanted to speak emphatically, they had recourse to the proper name. Above all was this the case among the Romans, with whom names had a greater power than with any other people ; owing mainly to the political institutions, which gave the Roman houses a vitality unexampled elsewhere ; so that the same names shine in the *Fasti* for century after century, encircled with the honours of nearly twenty generations. Hence a Roman prized and loved his name, almost as something independent and out of himself, as a kind of household god : and he could speak proudly of it, without being withheld by the bashfulness of vanity. Even the immortality which a Greek or Roman looked chiefly to, was that of his name.

We on the other hand have been taught that there is something within us far more precious and far more lasting than anything that is merely outward. Hence the word *I* has a charm and a power, which it never had before, a power too which has gone on growing, till of late years it has almost swallowed up every other. Two examples of this were just now alluded to, Fichte's egoical philosophy, and the French Constitution, in which everything was deduced from the rights of man, without regard to the rights of men, or to the necessities of things. The same usurpation shews itself under a number of other phases, even in religion. Catholic religion has well-nigh been split up into personal, so that the very idea of the former is almost lost ; and it is the avowed principle of what is called the Religious World, that everybody's paramount, engrossing



duty is to take care of his own soul. Of which principle the philosophical caricature is, that Selfishness is the source of all morality, the ground of benevolence, and the only safe foundation for a State to build on. Thus the awakening of our self-consciousness, which was aroused, in order that, perceiving the hollowness and rottenness of that self, we might endeavour to stifle and get quit of it, has in many respects rather tended to make us more its slaves than ever. In truth it may be said of many a man, that he is impaled upon his *I*. This is as it were the stake, which is driven through the soul of the spiritual suicide.

Still there are seasons, when, asserting its independence of all outward things, an *I* may have great Stoical dignity and grandeur; especially if it rises from the midst of calamities, like a mast still erect and unbending from a wreck. "Frappé deux fois de la foudre,—says De Maistre (*Soirées de Saint Pétersbourg*, i. 11) alluding to the losses and sufferings he had to endure in the Revolution,—je n'ai plus de droit à ce qu'on appelle vulgairement bonheur. J'avoue même qu'avant de m'être raffermi par de salutaires réflexions, il m'est arrivé trop souvent de me demander à moi-même, *Que me reste-t-il!* Mais la conscience, à force de me répondre *Moi*, m'a fait rougir de ma foiblesse."

In a certain sense moreover, and that a most awful one, the question *Quid superest?* concerns us all. For to all a time will come, when we shall be stript as bare of every outward thing, in which we have been wont to trust, as Medea could ever be. And one answer which we shall all have to make to that question, will be the same as hers. When everything else has past away from me, *I* shall still remain. But alas for those who will have no other answer than this!

U.

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No people, I remarkt just now, ever had so lively a feeling of the power of names as the Romans. This is a feature of that political instinct, which characterizes them above every other nation, and which seems to have taught them from the very origin of their state, that their calling and destiny was *regere*



*imperio populos* ; whereby moreover they were endowed with an almost unerring sagacity for picking out and appropriating all such institutions as were fitted to forward their two great works, of conquering and of governing the world.

In the East we seldom hear of any names, except those of the sovereigns and their favorites : and those of both classes often become extinct before the natural close of their lives. In Greece the individual comes forward on the ground of his own character, without leaning on his ancestors for support. The descendants of Aristides, of Pericles, of Brasidas, were scarcely distinguishd from their fellowcitizens. But in Rome the name of the house and family predominated over that of the individual. It is at Rome that we first find family names or surnames, names which do not expire with their owners, but are transmitted from generation to generation, carrying down the honours they have already earned, and continually receiving fresh influxes of fame. Traces of a like institution are indeed perceivable in others of the old Italian nations, and even among the Greeks : but it is among the Romans that we first become familiar with it, and behold its political power. By means of their names, political principles, political duties, political affections were impress on the minds of the Romans from their birth. Every member of a great house had a determinate course markt out for him, the path in which his forefathers had trod : his name admonisht him of what he owed to his country. The Valerii, the Fabii, the Claudii, the Corneli had special and mighty motives to prompt them to patriotism : and a twofold disgrace awaited them, if they shrank from their post. This has been observed by Desbrosses, in his *Traité du Mécanisme des Langues*. “L’usage des noms héréditaires (he says) a prodigieusement influé sur la façon de penser et sur les mœurs. On sait quel admirable effet il a produit chez les Romains. Rien n’a contribué davantage à la grandeur de la république que cette méthode de succession nominale, qui, incorporant, pour ainsi dire, à la gloire de l’état, la gloire des noms héréditaires, joignit le patriotisme de race au patriotisme national.” Niebuhr (vol. ii. p. 376) has pointed out how the measures of



eminent Roman statesmen were often considered as heirlooms, so as to be perfected or revived by namesakes of their first proposers, even after the lapse of centuries. And who can doubt that the younger Cato's mind was stirred by the renown of the elder? or that the example of the first Brutus haunted the second, and whispered to him, that it behoved him also, at whatsoever cost of personal affection, to deliver his country from the tyrant?

The same feeling, the same influence of names, manifests itself in the history of the Italian Republics. Nor have the other nations of modern Europe been without it. Only unfortunately the frivolous love of titles, and the petty ambition of mounting from one step in the peerage to another, have stunted its power. How much greater and brighter would the great names in our history have been, — the names of Howard, and Percy, and Nevile, and Stanley, and Wentworth, and Russell, — if so much of their glory had not been drawn off upon other titles, which, though persons versed in pedigrees know them to belong to the same blood, are not associated with them in the minds of the people? This may be one of the reasons why our nobility has produced so few great men, that is, considering the means and opportunities afforded by our Constitution. Great men rise up into it; and a title is put as an extinguisher upon them. What is the most gorgeous, highflown title which a sovereign of France could devise, even were it that of arch-grand-duke, compared with the name of Montmorency? The Spanish grandees shew a truer aristocratical feeling, in wearing their oldest titles, instead of what are vulgarly deemed their highest.

For the true spirit of an aristocracy is not personal, but corporate. He who is animated by that spirit, would rather be a branch of a great tree, than a sucker from it. The demagogue's aim and triumph is to be lifted up on the shoulders of the mob: when thus borne aloft, he exults, however unsteady his seat, however rapidly he may be sure to fall. But the aristocrat is content to abide within the body of his order, and to derive his honour and influence from his order, more than from



himself. The glory of his ancestors is his. Another symptom of the all-engulfing whirl with which the feeling of personality has been swallowing up everything else for the last century, is the stale, flat ridicule lavished by every witling and dullard on those who take pride in an illustrious ancestry. We had become unable to understand any honour but that which was personal, any merit or claim but personal. We had dwindled and shrunk into a host of bare *Ies*.

Even the way in which a Roman begins his letter, heading it with his name at full length, was significant. Whereas we skulk with ours into a corner, and often pare it down to initials.

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U.

A rumpled rose-leaf lay in my path. There was one little stain on it: but it was still very sweet. Why was it to be trampled under foot, or lookt on as food for swine?

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There is as much difference between good poetry and fine verses, as between the smell of a flower-garden and of a perfumer's shop.

---

When you see an action in itself noble, to suspect the soundness of its motive is like supposing everything high, mountains among the rest, to be hollow. Yet how many unbelieving believers pride themselves on this uncharitable folly! These are your silly vulgar-wise, your shallow men of penetration, who measure all things by their own littleness, and who, by professing to know nothing else, seem to fancy they earn an exclusive right to know human nature. Let none such be trusted in their judgements upon any one, not even on themselves always.

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Certain writers of works of fiction seem to delight in playing at cup and ball with vice and virtue. Is it *right*, you thought you saw? you find it to be *wrong*: *wrong*? presto! it has become *right*. Their hero is a moral prodigy, mostly profligate, often murderous, not seldom both; but, whether both or either,



always virtuous. Possessing, as they inform us, a fine understanding, resolved, as he is ever assuring us, to do right in despite of all mankind, he is perpetually falling into actions atrocious and detestable, — not from the sinfulness of human nature, — not from carelessness, or presumption, or rashly dallying with temptation, — but because the world is a moral labyrinth, every winding in which leads to monstrous evil. Such an entanglement of circumstances is devised, as God never permits to occur, except perhaps in extraordinary times to extraordinary men. Into these the hero is thrown headlong; and every foul and bloody step he takes, is ascribed to some amiable weakness, or some noble impulse, deserving our sympathy and admiration.

And what fruits do these eccentric geniuses bring us from their wilderness of horrors? They seduce us into a pernicious belief that feeling and duty are irreconcilable; and thus they hypothetically suspend Providence, to necessitate and sanction crime.

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Our poetry in the eighteenth century was prose; our prose in the seventeenth, poetry.

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Taste appreciates pictures : connoisseurship appraises them.

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T.

We are always saying with anger or wonder, that such and such a work of genius is unpopular. Yet how can it be otherwise? Surely it would be a contradiction, were the most extraordinary books in a language the commonest; at least till they have been made so by fashion, which, to say nothing of its capriciousness, is oligarchal.

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Are you surprised that our friend Matthew has married such a woman? and surprised too, because he is a man of genius? That is the very reason of his doing it. To be sure she came to him without a shift to her back: but his genius is rich enough to deck her out in purple and fine linen. So long as



these last, all will go on comfortably. But when they are worn out and the stock exhausted, alas poor wife ! shall I say ? or alas poor Matthew !

---

Jealousy is said to be the offspring of Love. Yet, unless the parent makes haste to strangle the child, the child will not rest till it has poisoned the parent\*  
A.

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Man has,

First, animal appetites ; and hence animal impulses.

Secondly, moral cravings ; either unregulated by reason, which are passions ; or regulated and controlled by it, which are feelings : hence moral impulses.

Thirdly, the power of weighing probabilities ; and hence prudence.

Fourthly, the *vis logica*, evolving consequences from axioms, necessary deductions from certain principles, whether they be mathematical, as in the theorems of geometry, or moral, as of Duty from the idea of God : hence Conscience, at once the voice of Duty speaking to the soul, and the ear with which the soul hears the commands of Duty.

This idea, the idea of God, is, beyond all question or comparison, the one great seminal principle ; inasmuch as it combines and comprehends all the faculties of our nature, converging in it as their common centre, — brings the reason to sanction the aspirations of the imagination, — impregnates law with the vitality and attractiveness of the affections, — and establishes the natural, legitimate subordination of the body to the will, and of both to the *vis logica* or reason, by involving the necessary and entire dependence of the created on the Creator. But, although this idea is the end and the beginning, the ocean and the fountain-head of all duty, yet are there many contributory streams of principle, to which men in all ages have been content to trust themselves. Such are the disposition to do good for its own sake, patriotism, that earthly religion of the ancients, obedience to law, reverence for parents.

A few corroborative observations may be added.



First: passion is refined into feeling by being brought under the contrall of reason; in other words, by being in some degree tempered with the idea of duty.

Secondly: a deliberate impulse appears to be a contradiction in terms: yet its existence must be admitted, if we deny the existence of principles. For there are actions on record, which, although the results of predetermination, possess all the self-sacrifice of a momentary impulse. The conduct of Manlius when challenged by the Gaul, contrasted with that of his son on a like occasion, strikingly illustrates the difference between principle and impulse: of which difference moreover, to the unquestionable exclusion of prudence, the premeditated self-devotion of Decius furnishes another instance.

Thirdly: the mind, when allowed its full and free play, prefers moral good, however faintly, to moral evil. Hence the old confession, *Video meliora, proboque*: and hence are we so much better judges in another's case than our own. In like manner the philosophic Apostle demonstrates the existence of the law written in our hearts, from the testimony borne by the conscience to our own deeds, and the sentence of acquittal or condemnation which we pass on each other. And although this preference for good may in most cases be so weak, as to require the subsidiary support of promises and threats, yet the auxiliary enactment is not to be confounded with the primary principle. For, in the Divine Law certainly, and, I believe, in Human Law also, where it is not the arbitrary decree of ignorance or injustice, the necessity and consequent obligation to obedience must have existed, at least potentially, from all eternity; Law being an exposition, and not an origination of Duty: while punishment, a thing in its very nature variable, is a subsequent appendage, "because of transgressions." Even the approval of conscience, although coincident with the performance of the act approved, must be as distinct from it as effect from cause; not to insist on that approval's not being confined to duty in its highest sense, but being extended on fitting occasions both to moral impulses and to prudence.

Fourthly: there are classes of words, such as *generous* and



*base, good and bad, right and wrong*, which belong to the moral feelings and principles contended for, and which have no meaning without them: and their existence, not merely in the writings of philosophers, but in the mouths of the commonalty, should perhaps be deemed enough to establish the facts, of which they profess to be the expressions and exponents. Surely the trite principle, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, is applicable here also, and may for once be enlisted in the service of the good cause. But besides, the existence of Duty, as in itself an ultimate and satisfactory end, is notoriously a favorite topic with great orators; who can only be great, because their more vivid sensibility gives them a deeper practical insight into the springs and workings of the human heart; and who, it is equally certain, would not even be considered great, were their views of humanity altogether and fundamentally untrue. Without going back to Demosthenes, the most eloquent writers of our days have distinguished themselves by attacks on the selfish system.

To the same purpose is the epitaph on Leonidas and his Spartans: *They fell in obedience to the laws*. Were not obedience a duty in itself, without any reference to a penalty, this famous epitaph would dwindle into an unintelligible synonym for *They died to escape whipping*. On the other hand, were not such obedience possible, the epitaph would be rank nonsense.

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The fact is, if the doctrines of the selfish philosophers, — as I must call them, in compliance with usage, and for lack of a more appropriate name, though they themselves, were they consistent, would shrink from the imputation of anything so fantastical and irrational as *the love of wisdom*, and would rather be styled systematic self-seekers, — if, I say, their doctrines are true, every book that was ever written, in whatsoever language, on whatsoever subject, and of whatsoever kind, unless it be a mere table of logarithms, ought forthwith to be written afresh. For in their present state they are all the spawn of falsehood cast upon the waters of nonsense. Great need verily is there that this school of exenterated rulemongers and eviscerated logicians should set about rewriting every book, ay, even their



own. For, whatever they may have thought, they have been fain to speak like the rest of the world, with the single exception of Mr Bentham; who, discerning the impossibility of giving vent to his doctrines in any language hitherto spoken by man, has with his peculiar judgement coined a new gibberish of his own for his private circulation. Yet one might wager one should not read many pages, before even he would be caught tripping.

Clumsy as this procedure may be, it is at all events honester and more straightforward than the course adopted by Hobbes; who, instead of issuing new tokens, such as everybody might recognize to be his, chose to retain the terms in common use, stamping their impress however on the base metal of his own brain, and trying to palm this off as the king's English. If any one wishes to see the absolute incompatibility of the selfish doctrines with the universal feelings of mankind, let him read the eighth and ninth chapters of Hobbeses *Human Nature*, and remark how audaciously he perverts and distorts the words he pretends to explain, as the only means of keeping them from giving the lie to his system. It is curious, to what shifts a man, who is often a clear thinker, and mostly writes with precision, is compelled to resort, when, having mounted the great horse of philosophy with his face tailward, he sets off on this *a posteriori* course, shouting, *Look! how fast I am getting on! It is true, instead of coming to meet me, everything seems to be running away: but this is only because I have emancipated myself from the bondage of gravitation, and can distinguish the motion of the earth as it rolls under me; while all other men are swept blindly along with it.*

When one looks merely at the style of Hobbes, and at that of Mr Bentham's later works, it is not easy to conceive two writers more different. Yet they have much in common. Both have the same shrewdness of practical observation, the same clearness of view, so far as the spectacles they have chosen to put on allow them to see,—the same fondness for stringing everything on a single principle. Both have the same arrogant, overweening, contemptuous self-conceit. Both look with the



same vulgar scorn on all the wisdom of former times, and of their own. Both deem they have a monopoly of all truth, and that whatever is not of their own manufacture is contraband. Both too seem to have been men of regular moral habits, having naturally cold and calm temperaments, undisturbed by lively affections, unruffled by emotions, with no strong feelings except such as were kindled or fanned by self-love. Thus they both reached a great age, exemplifying their systems, so far as this is possible, in their own lives; and they only drew from themselves, while they fancied they were representing human nature.

In knowledge indeed, especially in the variety of his information, Mr Bentham was far superior to the sophist of Malmsbury; although what made him so confident in his knowledge, was that it was only half-knowledge. He wanted the higher Socratic half, the knowledge of his own ignorance. Hobbes, it is said, was wont to make it a boast, that he had read so little; for that, if he had read as much as other men, he should have been as ignorant. What his ignorance in that case might have been, we cannot judge; but it could not well have been grosser than what he is perpetually displaying. To appreciate the arrogance of his boast, we must remember that he was the friend of Selden; who, while his learning embraced the whole field of knowledge, was no way inferior to Hobbes in the vigour of his practical understanding, and in sound, sterling, desophisticating sense was far superior to him.

As to the difference in style between the two chiefs of the selfish school, it answers to that in their political opinions. For a creed, which acknowledges no principles beyond the figments of the understanding, may accommodate itself to any form of government; not merely submitting to it, as Christianity does, for conscience sake, but setting it up as excellent in itself, and worshipping it. Accordingly we find them diverging into opposite extremes. While Hobbes bowed to the ground before the idol of absolute monarchy, his successor's leanings were all in favour of democracy. The former, caring only about quiet, and the being able to pursue his studies undisturbed, wisht to



leave everything as it was ; and thus in style too conformed, so far as his doctrines allowed, to common usage. Mr Bentham on the other hand, as he ever rejoiced to see society resolving into its elements, seemed desirous to throw back language also into a chaotic state. Unable to understand organic unity and growth, he lookt upon a hyphen as the one bond of union. U.

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By a happy contradiction, no system of philosophy gives such a base view of human nature, as that which is founded on self-love. So sure is self-love to degrade whatever it touches. U.

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There have indeed been minds overlaid by much reading, men who have piled such a load of books on their heads, their brains have seemed to be squasht by them. This however was not the character of the learned men in the age of Hobbes. Though they did not all rise to a commanding highth above the whole expanse of knowledge, like Scaliger, or like Niebuhr in our times, so as to survey it at once with a mighty, darting glance, discerning the proportions and bearings of all its parts ; yet the scholars of those days had no slight advantages, on the one hand in the comparative narrowness and unity of the field of knowledge, and on the other hand in the labour then required to traverse it ; above all, in the discipline of a positive education, and in having determinate principles, according to which every fresh accession of information was to be judged and disposed of. Their principles may have been mixt up with a good deal of error ; but at all events they were not at the mercy of the winds, to veer round and round with every blast. Their knowledge too was to be drawn, not at second or third or tenth hand, from abstracts and abridgements, and compilations and compendiums, and tables of contents and indexes, but straight from the original sources. Hence they had a firmer footing. They often knew not how to make a right use of their knowledge, and lackt critical discrimination : but few of them felt their learning an incumbrance, or were disabled by it for walking steadily. Thus even in their scantiness of means



there were advantages ; just as, according to the great law of compensation, riches of every kind have their disadvantages. That which we acquire laboriously, by straining all our faculties to win it, is more our own, and braces our minds more. Even in Melanchthon's time this was felt, and that the greater facilities in obtaining books were not purely beneficial. The exercise of transcribing the ancient writers, he tells his pupils (*Oper.* III. 378), had its good. "Demosthenes fertur octies descripsisse Thucydidem. Ego ipse Pauli Epistolam ad Romanos Graecam ter descripsi. Ac memini me ex Capnione audire, quondam eo solidius fuisse doctos homines, quia certos auctores, et in qualibet arte praecipuos, cum manu sua singuli describerent, penitus ediscebant. Nunc distrahi studia, nec immorari ingenia certis auctoribus, vel scribendo, vel legendo." It is true, there is an aptness to exaggerate the evils of improvements, as well as the benefits ; and a man may be great in spite of his riches, even as he may enter into the Kingdom of Heaven in spite of them. But great men are such by an inward power, not through outward means, and may be all the greater for the want of those means.

Yet on the other hand in Bacon himself one may perceive that many of the flaws, which here and there disfigure his writings, would have vanished if he had entertained less disparaging notions of his predecessors, and not allowed himself to be dazzled by the ambition of being in all things the reformer of philosophy. Even if learning were mere ballast, a large and stout ship will bear a heavy load of it, and sail all the better. But a wise man will make use of his predecessors as rowers, who will waft him along far more rapidly and safely, and over a far wider range of waters, than he could cross in any skiff of his own. Adopting Bacon's image, that we see beyond antiquity, from standing upon it, at all events we must take up our stand there, and not kick it from under us : else we ourselves fall along with it. True wisdom is always catholic, even when protesting the most loudly and strongly. It knows that the real stars are those which move on calmly and peacefully in the midst of their heavenly brotherhood. Those which rush out



from thence, and disdain communion with them, are no stars, but fleeting, perishable meteors.

Even in poetry, he would be a bold man who would assert that Milton's learning impaired his genius. At times it may be obtrusive; but it more than makes amends for this at other times. Or would Virgil, would Horace, would Gray, have been greater poets, had they been less familiar with those who went before them? For this is the real question. They must be compared with themselves, not with other poets more richly gifted by Nature.

Desultory reading is indeed very mischievous, by fostering habits of loose, discontinuous thought, by turning the memory into a common sewer for rubbish of all sorts to float through, and by relaxing the power of attention, which of all our faculties most needs care, and is most improved by it. But a well-regulated course of study will no more weaken the mind, than hard exercise will weaken the body: nor will a strong understanding be weighed down by its knowledge, any more than an oak is by its leaves, or than Samson was by his locks. He whose sinews are drained by his hair, must already be a weakling.

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U.

We may keep the devil without the swine, but not the swine without the devil.

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The Christian religion may be looked upon under a twofold aspect, — as revealing and declaring a few mysterious doctrines, beyond the grasp and reach of our reason, — and as confirming and establishing a number of moral truths, which, from their near and evident connexion with our social wants, might enter into a scheme of religion, such as a human legislator would devise.

The Divine origin of any system confining itself to truths of the latter kind would be liable to strong suspicions. For what a mere man is capable of deducing, will not rise high enough to have flowed down from heaven. On the other hand a system composed wholly of abstruse doctrines, however it might



feed the wonder of the vulgar, could never have been the gift of God. A Being who knows the extent of our wants, and the violence of our passions, — all whose ordinary dispensations moreover are fraught with usefulness, and stampt with love, — such a Being, our Maker, could never have sent us an unfruitful revelation of strange truths, which left men in the condition it found them in, as selfish, as hardhearted, as voluptuous. Accordingly, as Dr. Whately has shewn in his *Essays on some Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*, the practical character of a Revelation, and its abstaining from questions of mere curiosity, is an essential condition, or at least a very probable mark of its truth.

Christianity answers the anticipations of Philosophy in both these important respects. Its precepts are holy and imperative; its mysteries vast, undiscoverable, unimaginable; and, what is still worthier of consideration, these two limbs of our Religion are not severed, or even laxly joined, but, after the workmanship of the God of Nature, so “lock in with and overwrap one another,” that they cannot be torn asunder without rude force. Every mystery is the germ of a duty: every duty has its motive in a mystery. So that, if I may speak of these things in the symbolical language of ancient wisdom, — everything divine being circular, every right thing human straight, — the life of the Christian may be compared to a chord, each end of which is supported by the arc it proceeds from and terminates in.

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Were not the mysteries of antiquity, in their practical effect, a sort of religious peerage, to embrace and absorb those persons whose enquiries might endanger the establisht belief? If so, it is a strong presumption in favour of Christianity, that it contains none; especially as it borrows no aid from castes.

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A use must have preceded an abuse, properly so called.

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Nobody has ever been able to change today into tomorrow, — or into yesterday; and yet everybody, who has much energy of character, is trying to do one or the other.

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I could hardly feel much confidence in a man who had never been imposed upon.

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U.

There are instances, a physician has told me, of persons, who, having been crowded with others in prisons so ill ventilated as to breed an infectious fever, have yet escaped it, from the gradual adaptation of their constitutions to the noxious atmosphere they had generated. This avoids the inference so often drawn, as to the harmlessness of mischievous doctrines, from the innocent lives of the men with whom they originated. To form a correct judgement concerning the tendency of any doctrine, we should rather look at the fruit it bears in the disciples, than in the teacher. For he only made it ; they are made by it.

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*La pobreza no es vileza*, Poverty is no disgrace, says the Biscayan proverb. *Paupertas ridiculos homines facit*, says the Roman satirist. Is there an Englishman, who, being asked which is the wiser and better saying, would not instantly answer, *The first* ? Yet how many are there, who half an hour after would not quiz a poor gentleman's coat or dinner, if the thought of it came across them ? Be consistent, for shame, even in evil. But no ! still be inconsistent ; that your practice, thus glaringly at variance with your principle, may sooner fall to the ground.

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*Who wants to see a masquerade ?* might be written under a looking-glass.

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U.

Languages are the barometers of national thought and character. Horne Tooke, in attempting to fix the quicksilver for his own metaphysical ends, acted much like a little playfellow of mine, at the first school I was at, who screwed the master's weatherglass up to fair, to make sure of a fine day for a holiday.

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Every age has a language of its own ; and the difference in the words is often far greater than in the thoughts. The main employment of authors, in their collective capacity, is to trans-



late the thoughts of other ages into the language of their own. Nor is this a useless or unimportant task: for it is the only way of making knowledge either fruitful or powerful.

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Reviewers are forever telling authors, they can't understand them. The author might often reply: *Is that my fault?* U.

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The climate might perhaps have absorbed the intellect of Greece, instead of tempering it to a love of beauty, but for the awakening and stirring excitements of a national poem, barbaric wars, a confined territory, republican institutions and the activity they generate, the absence of any recluse profession, and a form of worship in which art predominated. The poets of such a people would naturally be lyrical. But at Athens Homer, the Dionysiacs, and Pericles, by their united influence, fostered them into dramatists. The glories of their country inspired them with enthusiastic patriotism; and an aristocratical religion (which, until it was supplanted by a vulgar philosophy, was revered, in spite of all its errors,) gave them depth, and made them solemn at least, if not sublime. Energy they owed to their contests, and correctness to the practist ears of their audience.

On the other hand, the centurion's rod, the forum, the consulate, Hannibal, and in later times the Civil Wars,—pride, and the suppression of feeling taught by pride,—Epicureanism, which dwarfed Lucretius, though it could not stifle him,—the overwhelming perfection of the great Greek models, and the benumbing frost of a jealous despotism,—would not allow the Romans, except at rare intervals, to be poets. Perhaps the greatest in their language is Livy.

Such at least must be the opinion of the author of Gebir, whose writings are more deeply impregnated, than those of any Englishman of our times, with the spirit of classical antiquity. In a note on that singular poem, he goes so far as to compare Livy with Shakspeare, and in one respect gives the advantage to the Roman. "Shakspeare (he says) is the only writer that ever knew so intimately, or ever described so accurately, the



variations of the human character. But Livy is always great." The same too must have been the opinion of the great historian, who seemed to have been raised up, after a lapse of eighteen centuries, to revive the glories of ancient Rome, and to teach us far more about the Romans, than they ever knew about themselves. Niebuhr agrees with Landor in praising Livy's brilliant talent for the representation of human character; while in another place he justly complains of Virgil's inability to infuse life into the shadowy names with which he has swelled the muster-roll of his poem.

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South's sentences are gems, hard and shining: Voltaire's look like them, but are only French paste.

Kant extends this contrast to the two nations, in his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, where he says, § 4, "In England profound thoughts are native, — tragedy, epic poetry, and the massive gold of wit; which is beat out by a French hammer into thin leaves of a great superficialities."

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Some men so dislike the dust kickt up by the generation they belong to, that, being unable to pass, they lag behind it.

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Half the failures in life arise from pulling in one's horse as he is leaping.

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How much better the world would go on, if people could but do now and then, what Lord Castlereagh used to deprecate, and turn their backs upon themselves!

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The most mischievous liars are those who keep sliding on the verge of truth.

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Hardly anything is so difficult in writing, as to write with ease.

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Contrast is a kind of relation.

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Instead of watching the bird as it flies above our heads, we chase his shadow along the ground; and finding we cannot grasp it, we conclude it to be nothing.

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There is something odd in the disposition of an Englishman's senses. He sees with his fingers, and hears with his toes. Enter a gallery of pictures: you find all the spectators longing to become handlers. Go to hear an opera of Mozart's: your next neighbour keeps all the while kicking time . . . as if he could not kill it without.

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U.

Excessive indulgence to others, especially to children, is in fact only self-indulgence under an *alias*.

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U.

Poverty breeds wealth; and wealth in its turn breeds poverty. The earth, to form the mound, is taken out of the ditch; and whatever may be the highth of the one, will be the depth of the other.

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Pliny speaks of certain animals that will fatten on smoke. How lucky would it be for sundry eloquent statesmen, if they could get men to do so!

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U.

The great cry with everybody is, *Get on! get on!* just as if the world were travelling post. How astonisht people will be, when they arrive in heaven, to find the angels, who are so much wiser, laying no schemes to be made archangels!

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Is not every true lover a martyr?

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U.

Unitarianism has no root in the permanent principles of human nature. In fact it is a religion of accidents, depending for its reception on a particular turn of thought, a particular state of knowledge, and a particular situation in society. This alone is a sufficient disproof of it.

But moreover its postulates involve the absurdity of coupling infinity with man. No wonder that, beginning with raising him



into a god, it has ended with degrading him into a beast. In attempting to erect a Babel on a foundation of a foot square, the Socinians constructed a building which, being top-heavy, overturned; and its bricks, instead of stopping at the ground, struck into it from the violence of the fall.

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Calvinism is not imaginative. To stand therefore, it should in some degree be scientific: whereas no system of Christianity presents greater difficulties to the understanding, none so great to the moral sense. Heavy as these difficulties are, the unbending faith of the Swiss Reformer would have borne up under still heavier. But after a few generations, when zeal subsides, such a weight is found to be inconvenient; and men loosen the articles which press the hardest, until they slip off one after another. Scepticism however, like other things, is enlarged and pampered by indulgence: as the current gets more sluggish, the water gets thicker: and the dregs of Calvinism stagnate into Socinianism.

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A Christian is God Almighty's gentleman: a gentleman, in the vulgar, superficial way of understanding the word, is the Devil's Christian. But to throw aside these polisht and too current counterfeits for something valuable and sterling, the real gentleman should be gentle in everything, at least in everything that depends on himself,—in carriage, temper, constructions, aims, desires. He ought therefore to be mild, calm, quiet, even, temperate,—not hasty in judgement, not exorbitant in ambition, not overbearing, not proud, not rapacious, not oppressive; for these things are contrary to gentleness. Many such gentlemen are to be found, I trust; and many more would be, were the true meaning of the name borne in mind and duly inculcated. But alas! we are misled by etymology; and because a gentleman was originally *homo gentilis*, people seem to fancy they shall lose caste, unless they act as Gentiles.

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To no kind of begging are people so averse, as to begging pardon; that is, when there is any serious ground for doing so.



When there is none, this phrase is as soon taken in vain, as other momentous words are upon light occasions. On the other hand there is a kind of begging which everybody is forward enough at; and that is, begging the question. Yet surely a gentleman should be as ready to do the former, as a reasonable man should be loth to do the latter.

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U.

What a proof it is that the carnal heart is enmity, to find that almost all our prejudices are against others! so much so indeed, that this has become an integral part of the word: whatever is to a man's prejudice, is to his hurt. Nay, I have sometimes found it hard to convince a person, that it is possible to have a prejudice in favor of another. It is only Christian love, that can believe all things, and hope all things, even of our fellow-creatures.

But is there not a strange contradiction here? The carnal heart, which thinks so basely of its neighbours, thinks haughtily of itself: while the Christian, who knows and feels the evil of his own nature, can yet look for good in his neighbours. How is this to be solved?

Why, it is only when blinded by selflove, that we can think proudly of our nature. Take away that blind; and in our judgements of others we are quicksighted enough to see there is very little in that nature to rely on. Whereas, the Christian can hope all things; because he grounds his hope, not on man, but on God, and trusts that the same power which has wrought good in him, will also work good in his neighbour.

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U.

Temporary madness may perhaps be necessary in some cases, to cleanse and renovate the mind; just as a fit of illness is to carry off the humours of the body.

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A portrait has one advantage over its original: it is unconscious: and so you may admire, without insulting it. I have seen portraits which have more.

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U.

A compliment is usually accompanied with a bow, as if to beg pardon for paying it.

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A.



Thought is the wind, knowledge the sail, and mankind the vessel.

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Children always turn toward the light. O that grown-up people in this would become like little children. U.

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Civilization takes the heart, and sticks it beside the head, just where Spurzheim finds the organ of acquisitiveness. No wonder she fancies she has elevated man altogether, since she has thus raised the most valuable part of him, and at the same time has thus enlarged the highest.

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Men have often been warned against old prejudices: I would rather warn them against new conceits. The novelty of an opinion on any moral question is a presumption against it. Generally speaking, it is only the half-thinker, who, in matters concerning the feelings and ancestral opinions of men, stumbles on new conclusions. The true philosopher searches out something else, — the propriety of the feeling, the wisdom of the opinion, the deep and living roots of whatever is fair or enduring. For on such points, to use a happy phrase of Dugald Stewart's (*Philosophy of the Human Mind*, ii. 75), "our first and third thoughts will be found to coincide."

Burke was a fine specimen of a *third-thoughted* man. So in our own times, consciously and professedly, was Coleridge; who delighted in nothing more than in the revival of a dormant truth, and who ever looked over the level of the present age to the hills containing the sources and springs whereby that level is watered. Let me cite an instance of what I mean from the life of Jeremy Taylor, by . . . the title has, Reginald Heber. So let me call him then. I only anticipate the affectionate familiarity of future ages, in whose ears (as a friend of mine well prophesies) *the Bishop of Calcutta* will sound as strange, as *the Bishop of Down and Connor* would in ours. The passage I refer to is a defense of the good old institution of *sizars*, or *poor scholars*. Its length prevents my quoting it entire; but I cannot forbear enriching my pages with some of the conclud-



ing sentences. "It is easy to declaim against the indecorum and illiberality of depressing the poorer students into servants. But it would be more candid, and more consistent with truth, to say that our ancestors elevated their servants to the rank of students; softening, as much as possible, every invidious distinction, and rendering the convenience of the wealthy the means of extending the benefits of education to those whose poverty must otherwise have shut them out from the springs of knowledge. And the very distinction of dress, which has so often been complained of, the very nature of those duties, which have been esteemed degrading, were of use in preventing the intrusion of the higher classes into situations intended only for the benefit of the poor; while, by separating the last from the familiar society of the wealthier students, they prevented that dangerous emulation of expense, which in more modern times has almost excluded them from the University." (p. ix.)\*

Was it superfluous to quote a passage, which my readers were already acquainted with? I rejoice to hear it; and wish I could believe they had as good cause for objecting to the following extract from Coleridge's *Literary Biography* (ii. p. 60), containing a similar apology for a practice dictated by natural feelings, but which has often been severely condemned. "It is no less an error in teachers, than a torment to the poor children, to enforce the necessity of reading as they would talk. In order to cure them of *singing*, as it is called, — the child is made to repeat the words with his eyes from off the book; and then indeed his tones resemble talking, as far as his fears, tears,

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\* The foregoing page was just printed off, when the news came that India had lost its good Bishop. At the time when I ventured on that passing mention of him, I was little disturbed by the thought of its inadequateness; knowing that it would not offend him, if the passage ever chanced to meet his eye. He would have deemed himself beholden to the meanest stranger for an offering of honest admiration, and, I doubted not, would accept my tribute of gratitude and affection with his wonted gentleness. And now . . . now that he has been taken from us . . . why should I not declare the truth? Though I should have rejoiced to speak of him worthily, if God had given me the power to speak worthily of such a man, yet, being what I am, that I have said no more does not pain me . . . perhaps because my heart seems to say, that love and sorrow make all gifts equal.



and trembling will permit. But as soon as the eye is again directed to the printed page, the spell begins anew: for an instinctive sense tells the child, that to utter its own momentary thoughts, and to recite the written thoughts of another, as of another, and a far wiser than himself, are two widely different things; and as the two acts are accompanied with widely different feelings, so must they justify different modes of enunciation."

My introductory remarks however, I scarcely need add, apply to ends only, not to means. For means are variable; ends continue the same. The road from London to Edinburgh may be improved; horses may become swifter, carriages lighter: but Edinburgh seems likely to stay pretty nearly in the same spot where it is now.

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The next best thing to a very good joke, is a very bad joke: the next best thing to a very good argument, is a very bad one. In wit and reasoning, as in the streets of Paris, you must beware of the old maxim, *medio tutissimus ibis*. In that city it would lead you into the gutter: in your intellectual march it would sink you in the dry, sandy wastes of dulness. But the selfsame result, which a good joke or a good argument accomplishes regularly and according to law, is now and then reached by their misshapen brethren *per saltum*, as a piece of luck.

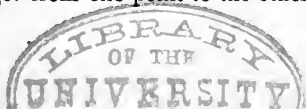
Few trains of logic, however ingenious and fine, have given me so much pleasure,—and yet a good argument is among dainties one of the daintiest,—few, very few, have so much pure truth in them, as the exclamation, *How good it was of God to put Sunday at one end of the week! for, if He had put it in the middle, He would have made a broken week of it.* The feeling here is so true and strong, as to overpower all perception of the rugged way along which it carries us. It gains its point; and that is all it cares for. It knows nothing of doubt or faint-heartedness, but goes to work much like our sailors: everybody, who does not know them, swears they must fail; yet they are sure to succeed. He who is animated with such a never hesitating, never questioning conviction that every ordinance of



God is for good, although he may miss the actual good in the particular instance, cannot go far wrong in the end.

There is a speech of a like character related in Mr. Turner's *Tour in Normandy* (i. p. 120). He entered one day into conversation with a Frenchman of the lower orders, a religious man, whom he found praying before a broken cross. They were sitting in a ruined chapel. "The devotee mourned over its destruction, and over the state of the times which could countenance such impiety; and gradually, as he turned over the leaves of the prayer-book in his hand, he was led to read aloud the 137th Psalm, commenting on every verse as he proceeded, and weeping more and more bitterly, when he came to the part commemorating the ruin of Jerusalem, which he applied to the captive state of France, exclaiming against Prussia as cruel Babylon. *Yet, we askt, how can you reconcile with the spirit of Christianity the permission given to the Jews by the Psalmist to take up her little ones and dash them against the stones? — Ah! you misunderstand the sense; the Psalm does not authorize cruelty: mais, attendez! ce n'est pas ainsi: ces pierres-là sont Saint Pierre; et heureux celui qui les attachera à Saint Pierre; qui montrera de l'attachement, de l'intrépidité pour sa religion!* This is a specimen of the curious perversions under which the Roman Catholic faith does not scruple to take refuge."

"Surely in other thoughts Contempt might die." The question was at best very thoughtless and illjudged: its purpose was to unsettle the poor man's faith: it offered no solution of the doubts it suggested: and no judicious person will so address the uneducated. But it is cheering to see how the Frenchman takes up the futile shaft, and tosses it back again, and finds nothing but an occasion to shew the entireness of his faith. Moreover, though Mr. Turner hardly thought it, there is much more truth in the reply than in the question. All that there is in the latter, is one of those half truths, which, by setting up alone, bankrupt themselves, and become falsehoods; while the Frenchman begins in truth, and ends in truth, taking a somewhat strange course indeed to get from one point to the other.





Still in him we perceive, though in a low and rude state, that wisdom of the heart, that *esprit du cœur* or *mens cordis*, which the *Broad Stone of Honour* inculcates so eloquently and so fervently, and which, if it be severed from the wisdom of the head, is far the more precious of the two; while in their union it is like the odour which in some indescribable way mingles with the hues of the flower, softening its beauty into loveliness. No truly wise man has ever been without it: but in few has it ever been found in such purity and perfection, as in the author of that noble manual for gentlemen, that volume which, had I a son, I would place in his hands, charging him, though such prompting would be needless, to love it next to his Bible. 1826.

U.

These words, written eleven years ago, were an expression of ardent and affectionate admiration for a book, which seemed to me fitted, above almost all others, to inspire young minds with the feelings befitting a Christian gentleman. They refer to the second edition of the *Broad Stone of Honour*, which came out in 1823. Since that time the author has published another edition, or rather another work under the same title; for but a small portion of the new one is taken from the old. To this new one, I regret to say, I cannot apply the same terms. Not that it is inferior to the former in its peculiar excellences. On the contrary the author's style, both in language and thought, has become more mature, and still more beautiful: his reading has been continually widening its range; and he pours forth its precious stores still more prodigally: and the religious spirit, which pervaded the former work, hallows every page of the latter. The new *Broad Stone* is still richer than the old one in magnanimous and holy thoughts, and in tales of honour and of piety. If one sometimes thinks that the author loses himself amid the throng of knightly and saintly personages, whom he calls up before us, it is with the feeling with which Milton must have regarded the moon, when he likened her to "one that had been led astray Through the heaven's wide, pathless way." If he strays, it is "through the heaven's



wide, pathless way ;” if he loses himself, it is among the stars. In truth this is an essential, and a very remarkable feature of his catholic spirit. He identifies himself, as few have ever done, with the good, and great, and heroic, and holy, in former times, and ever rejoices in passing out of himself into them : he loves to utter his thoughts and feelings in their words, rather than his own : and the saints and philosophers and warriors of old join in swelling the sacred consort which rises heavenward from his pages.

Nevertheless the new *Broad Stone of Honour* is not a book which can be recommended without hesitation to the young. The very charm, which it is sure to exercise over them, lightens one’s scruples about doing so. For in it the author has come forward as a convert and champion of the Romish Church, and as the implacable enemy of Protestantism. This polemical spirit is the one great blemish which disfigures this, and still more his later work, *the Ages of Faith*. The object he sets himself is, to shew that all good, and hardly anything but good, is to be found in the bosom of the Romish Church ; and that all evil, and hardly anything but evil, is the growth of Protestantism. These propositions he maintains by what in any other writer one should call a twofold sophism. But Achilles himself was not more incapable of sophistry, than the author of *the Broad Stone of Honour*. No word ever dropt from his pen, which he did not thoroughly believe ; difficult as to us double-minded men it may seem at times to conceive this. Therefore, instead of a twofold sophism, I will call it a twofold delusion, a twofold *Einseitigkeit*, as the more appropriate German word is. He culls the choicest and noblest stories out of fifteen centuries, —and not merely out of history, but out of poetry and romance, —and the purest and sublimest morsels of the great religious writers between the time of the Apostles and the Reformation : and this magnificent spiritual hierarchy he sets before us as a living and trustworthy picture of what the Ages of Faith, as he terms them, actually were. On the other hand, shutting his eyes to what is great and holy in later times, he picks out divers indications of baseness, unbelief, pusillanimity,



and worldlymindedness, as portraying what Europe has become, owing to the dissolution of the unity of the Church. Thus, in speaking of the worthies of the Reformed Churches, he himself not seldom falls into the same strain, which he most justly reprehends in the ordinary Protestant accounts of the middle ages.

Alas! whithersoever one looks throughout Christendom,

ἔνθ' ἄνεμοι πνέουσιν δύο κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης,  
καὶ τύπος ἀντίτυπος, καὶ πῆμ' ἐπὶ πῆματι κείται.

But it grieves one to the heart to see those blowing the bellows, who ought to be extinguishing the flame. For, though wrath is denounced against those who cry *Peace, Peace!* when there is no peace, — against those who would patch up the rent in the Church by daubing it over with untempered mortar, who think that indifference to all principle is the best cement of union, and that to let the bricks lie at sixes and sevens is the surest way of building up a house of them; — it must never be forgotten on the other hand that a blessing waits upon the peacemakers, that they are the true children of God, and that the most hopeful method of restoring the unity of the Church is, while we unflinchingly and uncompromisingly uphold every essential principle, to maintain all possible candour and indulgence with regard to whatever is accidental or personal.

This is the main difference between the old *Broad Stone of Honour* and the new one. The former breathed a fervent longing for the reunion of the Catholic Church: the latter is tinged with the anticatholic spirit so common among those who would monopolize the name of Catholics, and is ever breaking out into hostility against Protestantism. The historical views too of the former were more correct. For the evidence, which was ample to vindicate the middle ages from unconditional reprobation, cannot avail to establish that their character was without spot or blemish. Nor does that which is erroneous and perverse in modern times, though well fitted to humble our supercilious pride, prove that we are a mere mass of corruption. An apology is a different thing from a eulogy; and even a eulogy should have its limits. Nor are hatred and scorn for his



own age likely to qualify a man for acting upon it and bettering it.

These remarks will be taken, I hope, as they are meant. I could not suffer my former sentence about *the Broad Stone of Honour* to stand without explanation. Yet it goes against one's heart to retract praise, where love and admiration are undiminished. I trust that nothing I have said will hurt the feelings of one, who fulfills, as very few men have fulfilled, the idea his writings give of their author, and whom I esteem it a blessed privilege to be allowed to number among my friends. 1837. U.

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Great changes have taken place in the opinions and feelings of many with regard to the Romish Church since the year 1837. The ignorant, truthless abuse, which had long been poured out upon her so unscrupulously, has not indeed ceased to flow, nay, may perhaps be as copious as ever: but it has provoked a reactionary spirit, which is now pouring out apologies and eulogiums, with little more knowledge, and an almost equal carelessness about truth. It would be inconsistent with the character of this little book to engage in such a controversy here. In other places I have been compelled to do so, and, if God gives me life, and power of speech and pen, shall have to do so again and again. For this is one of the chief battles which we in our days are called to wage *because of the word of truth and righteousness*, a battle, about the final issue of which Faith will not let us doubt, but in the course of which many intellects will be cast on the ground and trampled under foot, many may be made captive, and may have their eyes put out, and may even learn to glory in their blindness and their chains. Still we know with whom the victory is; and He will give it to the Truth, and to us, if we seek it earnestly and devoutly, with pure hearts and minds, in her behalf.

Now among the delusions and fallacies, whereby divers minds, apter to follow the impulses of the imagination, than to weigh the force and examine the consistency of a logical chain, have been led to deck out the Church of Rome with charms which do not rightly appertain to her, a chief place I believe,



belongs to those which *the Broad Stone of Honour* and *the Ages of Faith* have set forth with such beauty and richness. Hence, though I must reserve the exposition of those fallacies for another occasion, I feel bound to renew my protest against the misrepresentations of the whole of modern history which run through both these works, the apotheosis of the Middle Ages, and the apodiabolosis of the Reformation and its effects. The author has indeed attempted to reply to my objections in the Epilogue to his last volume, and stoutly maintains, though with his usual admirable Christian courtesy, that his pictures do not give an erroneous impression either of the past or of the present. An argument on this issue could not be carried on without long details, ill-suited to these small pages. Therefore I must leave it to the judgement of such as may be attracted to contemplate the visions of beauty and holiness which are continually rising up in those works. As these visions, however, through the revolutions of opinion, have now become deceptive, I cannot recommend them to the youthful reader, without reminding him at the same time that the theological and ecclesiastical controversies of the nineteenth century are not to be decided by any selection of the anecdotes or apophthegms of the twelfth and thirteenth, and that, even for the sake of forming an estimate on the worth of any particular period, it is necessary to consider that period in all its bearings, in its worse and baser, as well as in its better and nobler features, and in its relative position with reference to the historical development of mankind. If the picture of the Ages of Faith here presented to us were faithful and complete, instead of being altogether partial, it would no way avail to prove that Popery in our days is the one true form of Christianity, any more than York and Lincoln minsters prove that the Italians in our days build finer churches than we do. 1847.

U.

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Every one who knows anything of Horace or of logic, has heard of the accumulating sophism: *Do twelve grains make a heap? do eighteen? do twenty? do twenty-four?* Twenty-four grains make a heap! oh no! they make a pennyweight. The



reply was well enough for that particular case: but, as a general rule, it is safest to answer such captious questions by a comparative, the only elastic and nicely graduated expression of degree which common language furnishes. *Do twelve grains of sand make a heap? A greater than eleven. Are a hundred yards far for a healthy man to walk? Further than ninety-nine.*

There is another mode of defense however, which some may think sufficient, and for which I must refer my readers to Aristotle's Treatise on Irony. *Don't be alarmed at those grains of sand*, said a philosopher to a young man who appeared sadly graveled by the accumulating sophism. *The sophist is only playing the part of the East-wind in the comedy. But you dislike such a quantity of dust blown or thrown so palpably into your eyes? Then put on a veil.*

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Friendship closes its eyes, rather than see the moon eclipsed; while malice denies that it is ever at the full.

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If we could but so divide ourselves as to stay at home at the same time, traveling would be one of the greatest pleasures, and of the most instructive employments in life. As it is, we often lose both ways more than we gain. U.

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Many men spend their lives in gazing at their own shadows, and so dwindle away into shadows thereof. U.

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Not a few writers seem to look upon their predecessors as Egyptians, whom they have full licence to spoil of their jewels; a permission, by the by, which, the Jews must have thought, was not confined to a particular occasion and people, but went along with them whithersoever they went, and has never quite expired. And as the jewels taken from the Egyptians were employed in making the golden calf, which the Israelites worshipt as their god, in like manner has it sometimes happened, that the poetical plagiarism has been so dazzled by his own patch-work, as to forget whereof it was made, and to set it up as an idol in the temple of his self-love.



When we read that the Israelites, at the sight of the calf, which they had seen molten in the wilderness, and the materials for which they had themselves supplied, cried out, *These are thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!*—we can hardly repress our indignation at such reckless folly. Yet how many are there fully entitled to wear the same triple cap! I do not mean misers merely: these are not the sole idolaters of the golden calf nowadays. All who worship means, of whatsoever kind, material or intellectual,—all, for instance, who think, like the able Historian of the War in the Peninsula, that it was wholly by the strength and discipline of our armies, and by the skill of our general, that we overthrew the imperial despotism of France,—all who forget that it is still the Lord of Hosts, who breaketh the bow, and knappeth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariots in the fire,—all who are heedless of that *vox populi*, which, when it bursts from the heaving depths of a nation's heart, is in truth *vox Dei*,—all who take no account of that moral power, without which intellectual ability dwindles into petty cunning, and the mightiest armies, as history has often shewn, become like those armed figures in romance, which look formidable at a distance, but which fall to pieces at a blow, and display their hollowness,—all who conceive that the wellbeing of a people depends upon its wealth,—all the doters on steamengines, and cottonmills, and spinning-jennies, and railroads, on exports and imports, on commerce and manufactures,—all who dream that mankind may be ennobled and regenerated by being taught to read,—all these, and millions more, who are besotted by analogous delusions in the lesser circles of society, and who fancy that happiness may be attained by riches, or by luxury, or by fame, or by learning, or by science,—one and all may be numbered among the idolaters of the golden calf: one and all cry to their idol, *Thou art my god! Thou hast brought us out of the Egypt of darkness and misery: thou wilt lead us to the Canaan of light and joy.* Verily, I would as soon fall down before the golden calf itself, as worship the great idol of the day, the great public instructor, as it is called, the newspaper press. The calf could not even low a lie:



and only when the words of the wise are written upon it, can paper be worth more than gold.

And how is it with those who flatter themselves that their own good deeds have brought them out of Egypt? those good deeds which God has commanded them to wrest as spoils from the land of Sin. How is it with those who blindly trust that their good deeds will go before them, and lead them to heaven? Are they not also to be reckoned among the worshippers of the golden calf? of an idol, which their own hands have wrought and set up; of an idol, the very materials of which would never have been theirs, except through God's command, and the strength His command brings with it. Surely, whether it be for the past, or the future, we need a better leader than any we can either manufacture or mentefacture for ourselves. U.

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One evening, as I was walking by a leafy hedge, a light glanced through it across my eyes. At first I tried to fix it, but vainly; till, recollecting that the hedge was the medium of sight, instead of peering directly toward the spot, I searcht among the leaves for a gap. As soon as I found one, I discovered a bright star glimmering on me, which I then stood watching at my ease.

A mystic in my situation would have wearied himself with hunting for the light in the place where he caught the first glance of it, and would not have got beyond an incommunicable assurance that he had seen a vision from heaven, of a nature rather to be dreamt of than described. A materialist would have asserted the light to be visible only in the gap, because through that alone could it be seen distinctly; and thence would have inferred the light to be the gap, or (if more acute and logical than common) at any rate to be produced by it.

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I have often thought that the beautiful passage, in which our Saviour compares Himself to a Hen gathering her chickens under her wings,—and the sublime one in Deuteronomy, where Jehovah's care and guardianship of the Jewish nation is likened to an Eagle stirring up her nest, fluttering over her young,



spreading abroad her wings, bearing them on her wings, and making them ride on the high places of the earth,—may be regarded as symbolical of the peculiar character of the two dispensations. The earlier was the manifestation of the power of God, and shews Him forth in His kingly majesty: the latter is the revelation of the love of God, full of all gentleness, and household tenderness, and more than fatherly or motherly kindness.

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a.

It has been deemed a great paradox in Christianity, that it makes Humility the avenue to Glory. Yet what other avenue is there to Wisdom? or even to Knowledge? Would you pick up precious truths, you must bend down and look for them. Everywhere the pearl of great price lies bedded in a shell which has no form or comeliness. It is so in physical science. Bacon has declared it: *Natura non nisi parendo vincitur*: and the triumphs of Science since his days have proved how willing Nature is to be conquered by those who will obey her. It is so in moral speculation. Wordsworth has told us the law of his own mind, the fulfilment of which has enabled him to reveal a new world of poetry: *Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop, Than when we soar*. That it is so likewise in religion, we are assured by those most comfortable words, *Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*.

The same truth is well exprest in the aphorism, which Charles the First, when he entered his name on the books at Oxford, in 1616, subjoined to it: *Si vis omnia subdicere, subdice te rationi*. Happy would it have been for him, if that which flowed thus readily from his pen, had also been graven upon his heart! He would not then have had to write it on the history of his country with characters more glaring and terrible than those of ink.

Moreover the whole intercourse between man and man may be seen, if we look at it closely, to be guided and regulated by the same pervading principle: and that it ought to be so, is generally recognised, instinctively at least, if not consciously. As I have often heard said by him, who, among all the persons I have conversed with to the edification of my understanding, had



the keenest practical insight into human nature, and best knew the art of controlling and governing men, and winning them over to their good, — the moment anybody is satisfied with himself, everybody else becomes dissatisfied with him : whenever a person thinks much of himself, all other people cease to think much of him. Thus it is not only in the parable, that he who takes the highest room, is turned down with shame to the lowest ; while he who sits down in the lowest room, is bid to go up higher.

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U.

Strange feelings start up and come forward out of the innermost chambers of Memory, when one is employed, after the lapse of ten or a dozen years, in revising a work like the present, which from its nature must needs be so rich in associations of all kinds, so intimately connected with the thoughts and feelings and visions and purposes of former days, and with the old familiar faces, now hidden from the outward eye, the very sight of which was wont to inspire joy and confidence and strength. What would be the heart of an old weatherbeaten hollow stump, if the leaves and blossoms of its youth were suddenly to spring up out of the mould around it, and to remind it how bright and blissful summer was in the years of its prime? That which has died within us, is often the saddest portion of what Death has taken away, sad to all, sad above measure to those in whom no higher life has been awakened. The heavy thought is the thought of what we were, of what we hoped and purposed to have been, of what we ought to have been, of what but for ourselves we might have been, set by the side of what we are ; as though we were haunted by the ghost of our own youth. This is a thought the crushing weight of which nothing but a strength above our own can lighten. Else if our hearts do but keep fresh, we may still love those who are gone, and may still find happiness in loving them.

During the last few pages I seem to have been walking through a churchyard, strewn with the graves of those whom it was my delight to love and revere, of those from whom I learnt with what excellent gifts and powers the spirit of man



is sometimes endowed. The death of India's excellent bishop, Reginald Heber, in whom whatsoever things are lovely were found, has already been spoken of. Coleridge, who is mentioned along with him, has since followed him. The light of his eye also is quencht: none shall listen any more to the sweet music of his voice: none shall feel their souls teem and burst, as beneath the breath of spring, while the lifegiving words of the poet-philosopher flow over them. Niebuhr too has past from the earth, carrying away a richer treasure of knowledge than was ever before lockt up in the breast of a single man. And the illustrious friend, to whom I alluded just now, — he who was always so kind, always so generous, always so indulgent to the weaknesses of others, while he was always endeavouring to make them better than they were, — he who was unwearied in acts of benevolence, ever aiming at the greatest, but never thinking the least below his notice, — who could descend, without feeling that he sank, from the command of armies and the government of an empire, to become a peacemaker in village quarrels, — he in whom dignity was so gentle, and wisdom so playful, and whose laurelled head was girt with a chaplet of all the domestic affections, — the soldier, statesman, patriot, Sir John Malcolm, — he too is gathered to his fathers. It is a sorry amends, that death allows us to give utterance to that admiration, which, so long as its object was living, delicacy commanded us to suppress. A better consolation lies in the thought, that, blessed as it is to have friends on earth, it is still more blessed to have friends in heaven.

But in truth through the whole of this work I have been holding converse with him who was once the partner in it, as he was in all my thoughts and feelings, from the earliest dawn of both. He too is gone. But is he lost to me? O no! He whose heart was ever pouring forth a stream of love, the purity and inexhaustibleness of which betokened its heavenly origin, as he was ever striving to lift me above myself, is still at my side, pointing my gaze upward. Only the love, which was then hidden within him, has now overflowed and transfigured his whole being; and his earthly form is turned into that of an angel of light.



Thou takest not away, O Death!  
 Thou strikest: Absence perisheth;  
 Indifference is no more.  
 The future brightens on the sight;  
 For on the past has fallen a light,  
 That tempts us to adore.

1837.

U.

The Romans used to say of an argument or opinion which spreads rapidly, that it takes the popular mind. I should rather say, that the popular mind takes the argument or opinion. *Takes it?* Yes; as one takes infection; catches it, rather, as one catches a fever. For truth, like health, is not easily communicated; but diseases and errors are contagious.

This being so, how much to be deplored are democratical elements in a constitution! Not unless the people are the head of the State: and I have always fancied them the heart; a heart which at times may beat too fast, and perhaps feel too warmly; but which by its pulsations evinces and preserves the life and vigour of the social body.

Of what use are forms, seeing that at times they are empty? Of the same use as barrels, which at times are empty too.

Men of the world hold that it is impossible to do a disinterested action, except from an interested motive, — for the sake of admiration, if for no grosser, more tangible gain. Doubtless they are also convinced, that when the sun is showering light from the sky, he is only standing there to be stared at. U.

Everybody is impatient for the time when he shall be his own master. And if coming of age were to make one so, if years could indeed “bring the philosophic mind,” it would rightly be a day of rejoicing to a whole household and neighbourhood. But too often he who is impatient to become his own master, when the outward checks are removed, merely becomes his own slave, the slave of a master in the insolent flush of youth, hasty, headstrong, wayward, and tyrannical. Had he really become his own master, the first act of his do-



minion over himself would have been to put himself under the dominion of a higher Master and a wiser.

U.

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By the ancients courage was regarded as practically the main part of virtue: by us, though I hope we are not less brave, purity is so regarded now. The former is evidently the animal excellence, a thing not to be left out when we are balancing the one against the other. Still the following considerations weigh more with me. Courage, when not an instinct, is the creation of society, depending for occasions of action (which is essential to it) on outward circumstances, and deriving much both of its character and its motives from popular opinion and esteem. But purity is inward, secret, selfsufficing, harmless, and, to crown all, thoroughly and intimately personal. It is indeed a nature, rather than a virtue; and, like other natures, when most perfect, is least conscious of itself and its perfection. In a word, Courage, however kindled, is fanned by the breath of man: Purity lives and derives its life solely from the spirit of God.

The distinction just noticed has also been pointed out by Landor, in the Conversation between Leopold and Dupaty. "Effeminacy and wickedness (he makes Leopold say, vol. i. p. 62) were correlative terms both in Greek and Latin, as were courage and virtue. Among the English, I hear, softness and folly, virtue and purity, are synonymous. Let others determine on which side lies the indication of the more quiet, delicate, and reflecting people." At the same time there is much truth in De Maistre's remark (*Soirées de St. Petersburg*, i. p. 246): "Ce fut avec une profonde sagesse que les Romains appellèrent du même nom la *force* et la *vertu*. Il n'y a en effet point de vertu proprement dite, sans victoire sur nous-mêmes; et tout ce qui ne nous coûte rien, ne vaut rien." Though mere bravery was the etymological groundwork of the name, moral energy became the main element in the idea, and, in its Stoic form, absorbed all the rest of it.

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Much has been written of late years about the spiritual



genius of modern times, as contrasted with the predominance of the animal and sensuous life in the classical nations of antiquity. And no doubt such a distinction exists. With the ancients the soul was the vital and motive principle of the body: among the moderns the tendency has rather been to regard the body as merely the veil or garment of the soul. This becomes easily discernible, when, as in the Tribune at Florence, we see one of Raphael's heavenly Madonnas beside one of those Venuses in which the Spirit of the Earth has put forth all the fascination of its beauty. In the latter we look at the limbs; in the former we contemplate the feelings. Before the one we might perhaps break out into the exclamation of the Bedouin, *Blessed be God, who has made beautiful women!* unless even that thought stray too high above the immediate object before us. In the other the sight does not pause at the outward lineaments, but pierces through to the soul; and we behold the meekness of the handmaiden, the purity of the virgin, the fervent, humble, adoring love of the mother who sees her God in her Child.

But when the source of this main difference between the two great periods in the history of man has been sought after, the seekers have gone far astray. They have bewildered themselves in the mazy forest of natural causes, where, as the old saying has it, *one can't see the wood for the trees!* One set have talkt about the influence of climate; as if the sky and soil of Italy had undergone some wonderful change between the days of Augustus and those when Dante sang and Giotto painted. Others have taken their stand among the Northern nations, echoing Montesquieu's celebrated remark, that this fine system was found in the woods; as though mead and beer could not intoxicate as well as wine; as though Walhalla with its blood and its skull-cups were less sensual than the Elysian Islands of the Blest. A third party have gone a journey into the East: as if it were possible for the human spirit to be more imbruted, more bemired by sensuality, than amid the voluptuousness and the macerations of Oriental religions. The praise is not of man, but of God. It is only by His light, that



we see light. If we are at all better than those first men, who were of the earth, earthy, it is because the second Man was the Lord from Heaven.

Here let me take up the thread of the foregoing remark on the two notions concerning the primary constituent of virtue. Courage may be considered as purity in outward action; purity as courage in the inner man, in the more appalling struggles which are waged within our own hearts. The ancients, as was to be expected, lookt to the former: the moderns have rather fixt their attention on the latter. This does not result however, as seems to be hinted in the first of the passages quoted above, from our superior delicacy and reflexion. At least the same question would recur: whence comes this superiority of ours in delicacy and reflexion? The cause is to be found in Christianity, and in Christianity alone. Heathen poets and philosophers may now and then have caught fleeting glimpses of the principle which has wrought this change: but as the foundation of all morality, the one paramount maxim, it was first proclaimed in *the Sermon on the Mount*.

This leads me to notice a further advantage which the modern principle has over the ancient; that courage is much oftener found without purity, than purity without courage. For although in the physical world one may frequently see causes, without their wonted and natural effects, such barren causes have no place in the moral world. The concatenation there is far more indissoluble, the circulation far more rapid and certain. On the other hand the effect, or something like it, is not seldom seen without the cause. Not only is there the animal instinct, which impurity does not immediately extinguish; there is also a bastard and ostentatious courage, generated and fed by the opinion of the world. But they who are pure in heart, they who know what is promist to such purity, they who shall see God, what can they fear?

The *chevalier sans peur* was the *chevalier sans reproche*. It is with perfect truth that our moral poet has represented his Una as "of nought afraid:" for she was also "pure and innocent as that same lamb."



Truth endues man's purposes with somewhat of immutability.

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"Hell (a wise man has said) is paved with good intentions." Pluck up the stones, ye sluggards, and break the devil's head with them.

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A.

Pouvoir c'est vouloir.

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U.

To refer all pleasures to association is to acknowledge no sound but echo.

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Material evil tends to self-annihilation, good to increase.

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*Graeculus esuriens in coelum, jusseris, ibit.* Alas! the command has gone forth to the whole world; but not even the hungry Greek will obey it.

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U.

We often live under a cloud; and it is well for us that we should do so. Uninterrupted sunshine would parch our hearts: we want shade and rain to cool and refresh them. Only it behoves us to take care, that, whatever cloud may be spread over us, it should be a cloud of witnesses. And every cloud may be such, if we can only look through to the sunshine that broods behind it.

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U.

Forms and regularity of proceeding, if they are not justice, partake much of the nature of justice, which, in its highest sense, is the spirit of distributive order.

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Purity is the feminine, Truth the masculine, of Honour.

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He who wishes to know how a people thrives under a groveling aristocracy, should examine how vigorous and thick the blades of grass are under a plantain.

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Open evil at all events does this good: it keeps good on the



alert. When there is no likelihood of an enemy's approaching, the garrison slumber on their post. U.

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The English constitution being continually progressive, its perfection consists in its acknowledged imperfection.

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In times of public dissatisfaction add readily, to gratify men's men's wishes. So the change be made without trepidation, there is no contingent danger in the changing. But it is difficult to diminish safely, except in times of perfect quiet. The first is giving; the last is giving up. It would have been well for England, if her ministers in 1831 had thought of this distinction.

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Much of this world's wisdom is still acquired by necromancy,—by consulting the oracular dead. U.

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Men of principle, from acting independently of instinct, when they do wrong, are likely to do great wrong. The chains of flesh are not formed of hooks and eyes, to be fastened and loost at will. We are not like the dervise in the Eastern story, that, having left our own body to animate another, we can return to it when we please. Much less can we go on acting a double transmigration between the supernatural and the natural, wandering to and fro between the intellectual and animal states, first unmanning and then remanning ourselves, each to serve a turn. Humanity, once put off, is put off for worse, as well as for better. If we take not good heed to live angelically afterward, we must count on becoming devilish.

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Men are most struck with form and character, women with intellect; perhaps I should have said, with attainments. But happily, after marriage, sense comes in to make weight for us.

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A youth's love is the more passionate: virgin love is the more idolatrous.

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When will talkers refrain from evil-speaking? When listeners refrain from evil-hearing. At present there are many so credulous of evil, they will receive suspicions and impressions against persons whom they don't know, from a person whom they do know . . in authority to be good for nothing.

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*Charity begins at home.* This is one of the sayings with which Selfishness tries to mask its own deformity. The name of Charity is in such repute, to be without it is to be ill spoken of. What then can the self-ridden do? except pervert the name, so that Selfishness may seem to be a branch of it.

The charity which begins at home, is pretty sure to end there. It has such ample work within doors, it flags and grows faint the moment it gets out of them. We see this from what happens in the cases, where even such as reject the prior claim in its ordinary sense, are almost all disposed to maintain it. Very few are there, who do not act according to the maxim, that Charity begins at home, when it is to be shewn to faults or vices, unless indeed they are imaginary or trifling: and few, very few, are truly charitable to the failings of others, except those who are severe to their own. For indifference is not charity, but the stone which the man of the world gives to his neighbour in place of bread.

U.

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Some persons take reproof goodhumouredly enough, unless you are so unlucky as to hit a sore place. Then they wince, and writhe, and start up, and knock you down for your impertinence, or wish you good morning.

U.

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*Proprium humani ingenii est odisse quem laeseris.* Such is the devil's hatred of God: and so fiendish is the nature of hatred, it is seldom very violent, and never implacable and irreconcilable, except when it is unjust and groundless. In truth what we hate is the image of our own wrong set before us in him whom we have injured: and here as everywhere our past sins are the fuel which make our passions burn the fiercest.

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U.



We look to our last sickness for repentance, unmindful that it is during a recovery men repent, not during a sickness. For sickness, by the time we feel it to be such, has its own trials, its own selfishness : and to bear the one, and overcome the other, is at such a season occupation more than enough for any who have not been trained to it by previous discipline and practice.

The same may be said of old age, — perhaps with still more justice, since old age has no beginning.

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The feeling is often the deeper truth, the opinion the more superficial one.

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I suspect we have internal senses. The mind's eye, since Shakspeare's time, has been proverbial : and we have also a mind's ear. To say nothing of dreams, one certainly can listen to one's own thoughts, and hear them, or believe that one hears them, — the strongest argument adducible in favour of our hearing anything.

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Many objects are made venerable by extraneous circumstances. The moss, ivy, lichens, and weatherstains on that old ruin, picturesque and soothing as they are, formed no part in the conception of the architect, nor in the work or purpose of the builder, but are the subsequent adaptations of Time, which with regard to such things is in some sort an agent, bringing them under the influences of Nature. And what should follow? Only that, in obeying the perceptions of the intellect, and distinguishing logically between accidents and properties, we turn not frowardly from the dictates of the heart, nor cease to feel, because we have ascertained the composite nature of our feelings ; as though it were impossible to contemplate the parts in a living whole, and there were no other analysis than dissection. Only this ; and thankfulness for that which has enabled us so to venerate ; and wisdom to preserve the modifying tints, which have coloured the object to the tone of our imaginations.

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The difference between those whom the world esteems as good, and those whom it condemns as bad, is in many cases little else than that the former have been better sheltered from temptation.

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U.

Political economists tell us that self-love is the bond of society. Strange then must be the construction of what is called Society, when it is cemented by the strongest and most eating of all solvents. For self-love not only dissolves all harmonious fellowship between man and man, but even among the various powers and faculties within the breast of the same man; which, when under its sway, can never work together, so as to produce an orderly, organical whole. Can it be, that Society has been feeding upon poisons, till they have become, not merely harmless, but, as this opinion would make them, the only wholesome, nourishing diet?

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U.

Ghosts never work miracles: nor do they ever come to life again. When they appear, it is to beg to be buried, or to beg to be revenged; without which they cannot rest. Both ways their object is to lie in peace. This should be borne in mind by political and philosophical ghostseers, ghostlovers, and ghost-mongers. The past is past, and must pass through the present, not hop over it, into the future.

---

U.

*What are those teeth for, grandmamma?* said little Red-Rid- inghood to the Wolf. *What are those laws for?* might many a simple man ask in like manner of his rulers and governors. And in sundry instances, I am afraid, the Wolf's answer would not be far from the truth.

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U.

It is a mistake to suppose the poet does not know Truth by sight quite as well as the philosopher. He must; for he is ever seeing her in the mirror of Nature. The difference between them is, that the poet is satisfied with worshiping her reflected image; while the philosopher traces her out, and follows her to her remote abode between cause and consequence, and there im-



pregnates her. The one loves and makes love to Truth ; the other esteems and weds her. In simpler ages the two things went together ; and then Poetry and Philosophy were united. But that universal solvent, Civilization, which pulverizes to cement, and splits to fagot, has divided them ; and they are now far as the Poles asunder.

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The imagination and the feelings have each their truths, as well as the reason. The absorption of the three, so as to concentrate them in the same point, is one of the universalities requisite in a true religion.

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Man's voluntary works are shadows of objects perceived either by his senses or his imagination. The inferiority of the copies to their originals in the former class of works is evident. Man can no more string dewdrops on a gossamer thread, than he can pile up a Mont Blanc, or scoop out an ocean. How passing excellent may we then hope to find the realities, from which the offspring of his imagination are the shadows ! since that offspring, all shadowy as they are, will often be fairer than any sensible existence.

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In a mist the hights can for the most part see each other ; but the vallies cannot.

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Mountains never shake hands. Their roots may touch : they may keep together some way up : but at length they part company, and rise into individual, insulated peaks. So is it with great men. As mountains mostly run in chains and clusters, crossing the plain at wider or narrower intervals, in like manner are there epochs in history when great men appear in clusters also. At first too they grow up together, seeming to be animated by the same spirit, to have the same desires and antipathies, the same purposes and ends. But after a while the genius of each begins to know itself, and to follow its own bent : they separate and diverge more and more : and those who, when young, were working in consort, stand alone in their old age.



But if mountains do not shake hands, neither do they kick each other. Their human counterparts unfortunately are more pugnacious. Although they break out of the throng, and strive to soar in solitary eminence, they cannot bear that their neighbours should do the same, but complain that they impede the view, and often try to overthrow them, especially if they are higher.

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U.

Are we really more enlightened than our ancestors? Or is it merely the flaring up of the candle that has burnt down to the socket, and is consuming that socket, as a prelude to its own extinction? Such at least has been the character of those former ages of the world, which have prided themselves on being the most enlightened.

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U.

What way of circumventing a man can be so easy and suitable as a *period*? The name should be enough to put us on our guard: the experience of every age is not.

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I suspect the soul is never so hampered by its enthrallment within the body, as when it loves. Pluck the feathers out of a bird's wings; and, be it ever so young, its youth will not save it from suffering by the loss, when instinct urges it to attempt flying. Unless indeed there be no such thing as instinct; and flying real kites be, like flying paper kites, a mere matter of education: which reminds me to ask why, knowing there are instincts of the body, we are to assume there are no instincts of the mind? To refer whatever we should at first sight take for such to the eliciting power of circumstances, is idle. Circumstances do indeed call them out, at the particular moment when they try their tendencies and strength, but no more create, or rather (since creating is out of the question) no more produce them, except as pulling the end of a roll of string produces it, — that is, *producit* or *draws* it *forth*, — than flying is produced or given by the need of locomotion.

To return to the soul: if, — and I believe the fact to be undeniable, — human nature, until it has been hardened by much



exposure to passion, and become used to the public eye, is fond of veiling love with silence and concealment, while it makes little or no scruple of exhibiting the kindred sentiment of friendship; I see no good way of accounting for this, except by referring such shamefastness of the soul to its sensitive recoil from a form of affection in which, as Nature whispers, its best and purest feelings are combined and kneaded up with body.

The bashfulness which hides affection, from a dread that the avowal will be ill received, — the fear of bringing one's judgment in question by what some may deem a misplaced choice, — the consciousness that all choice is invidious, from involving postponement as well as preference, — all these feelings and motives, I am aware, have often considerable weight. But they must weigh nearly as much in the case of friendship. Friendship indeed may be indulged in boyhood, while love is a boon reserved for our maturity; and hence doubtless frequently during youth a fear of being thought presumptuous, if we are discovered fancying ourselves grown old enough to love. But this can never furnish the right key to a reserve, which is neither limited to youth, nor directly acted on by time, which varies in different countries with their degree of moral cultivation, and in individuals appears to proportion its intensity to the depth and purity of the heart in which it cowers.

The body, the body is the root of it. But these days of adultery are much too delicate to allow of handling the subject further.

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Everybody is ready to declare that Cesar's wife ought to be above suspicion; and many, while saying this, will dream that Cesar must be of their kin. Yet most people, and among them her husband, would be slow to acknowledge, what would seem to follow *a fortiori*, that Cesar himself ought to be so too. Or does a splash of mud defile a man more than a mortifying ulcer?

Among the numberless contradictions in our nature, hardly any is more glaring than this, between our sensitiveness to the slightest disgrace which we fancy cast upon us from without,



and our callousness to the grossest which we bring down on ourselves. In truth they who are the most sensitive to the one, are often the most callous to the other.

U.

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The wise man will always be able to find an end in the means ; though bearing in mind at the same time that they are means to a higher end. And this is according to God's working, every member of whose universe is at once a part and a whole. The unwise man, on the other hand, he whom the Psalmist calls the fool, can never see anything but means in the end. Doing good is with him the means of going to heaven ; and going to heaven is the means of getting to do nothing. For this is the vulgar notion of heaven, — a comfortable sine-cure.

U.

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What if we live many and various lives ? each providing us its peculiar opportunities of acquiring some new good, and casting away the slough of some old evil ; so that the course of our existence should include a series of lessons, and the world be indeed a stage on which every man fills many parts. If the doctrine of transmigration has never been taught in this form, such is perhaps the idea embodied in the *μῦθος*.

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*Impromptus* in recluse men are likely to be *à loisir* ; and presence of mind in thinking men is likely to be recollection. Cesar indeed says it is so generally (B. G. v. 33). "Titurius, uti qui nihil ante providisset, trepidare, concursare, cohortesque disponere ; haec tamen ipsa timide, atque ut eum omnia deficere viderentur : quod plerumque iis accidere consuevit, qui in ipso negotio consilium capere coguntur. At Cotta, qui cogitasset haec posse in itinere accidere, . . . nulla in re communi saluti deerat."

Much to the same purpose is Livy's explanation of Philopemen's readiness in decision, when he suddenly found himself in the presence of a hostile force : xxxv. 28. It is pleasant to see theoretical and practical intellects thus jumping together.

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Napoleon is well said by Tiedge "to have improvised his whole life." He was Fortune's football, which she kickt from throne to throne, until at length by a sudden rebound he fell into the middle of the Atlantic. Whereas a truly great man's actions are works of art. Nothing with him is extemporized or improvised. They involve their consequences, and develope themselves along with the events they give birth to. U.

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He must be a thorough fool, who can learn nothing from his own folly. U.

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Is not man the only automaton upon earth? The things usually called so are in fact heteromatons. U.

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Were nothing else to be learnt from the *Rhetoric* and *Ethics* of Aristotle, they should be studied by every educated Englishman as the best of commentaries on Shakspeare.

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No poet comes near Shakspeare in the number of bosom lines, — of lines that we may cherish in our bosoms, and that seem almost as if they had grown there, — of lines that, like bosom friends, are ever at hand to comfort, counsel, and gladden us, under all the vicissitudes of life, — of lines that, according to Bacon's expression, "come home to our business and bosoms," and open the door for us to look in, and to see what is nestling and brooding there. U.

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How many Englishmen admire Shakspeare? Doubtless all who understand him; and, it is to be hoped, a few more. For how many Englishmen understand Shakspeare? Were Diogenes to set out on his search through the land, I trust he would bring home many hundreds, not to say thousands, for every one I should put up. To judge from what has been written about him, the Englishmen who understand Shakspeare are little more numerous than those who understand the language spoken in Paradise. You will now and then meet with ingenious remarks on particular passages, and even on particular characters,



or rather on particular features in them. But these remarks are mostly as incomplete and unsatisfactory as the description of a hand or foot would be, unless viewed with reference to the whole body. He who wishes to trace the march and to scan the operations of this most marvellous genius, and to discern the mysterious organization of his wonderful works, will find little help but what comes from beyond the German Ocean.

It is scarcely worth while asking the third question: Would Shakspeare have chosen rather to be admired, or to be understood? Not however that any one could understand without admiring, though many may admire without understanding him. Birds are fond of cherries, yet know little about vegetable physiology.

Some years ago indeed there seemed to be ground for hoping that the want here spoken of might be supplied by the publication of Coleridge's Lectures on Shakspeare. For though Coleridge, as he himself says of Warburton, is often hindered from seeing the thoughts of others by "the mist-working swarm," or rather by the radiant flood of his own, — though often, like the sun, when looking at the planets, he only beholds his own image in the objects of his gaze, and often, when his eye darts on a cloud, will turn it into a rainbow, — yet he had a livelier perception, than any other Englishman, of the two cardinal ideas of all criticism, — that every work of genius is at once an organic whole in itself, and the part and member of a living, organic universe, of that poetical world in which the spirit of man manifests itself by successive avatars. These, the two main ideas which have been brought to light and unfolded by the philosophical criticism of Germany since the days of Winckelmann and Lessing, he united with that moral, political, and practical discernment, which are the highest endowments of the English mind, and which give our great writers a dignity almost unparalleled elsewhere, from their ever-wakeful consciousness that man is a moral, as well as sentient and percipient and thinking and knowing being, and that his relations as a moral being are of all the most momentous and the highest. Coleridge's own imagination too enabled him to accompany all



other poets in their boldest flights, and then to feel most truly in his element. Nor could anything be too profound or too subtle for his psychological analysis. In fact his chief failing as a critic was his fondness for seeking depth below depth, and knot within knot: and he would now and then try to dive, when the water did not come up to his ancles.

Above all, for understanding Shakspeare, Coleridge had the two powers, which are scarcely less mighty in our intellectual than in our moral and spiritual life, Faith and Love,—a boundless faith in Shakspeare's truth, and a love for him, akin to that with which philosophers study the works of Nature, shrinking from no labour for the sake of getting at a satisfactory solution, and always distrusting themselves until they have found one, in a firm confidence that Wisdom will infallibly be justified by her children. It is quite touching to see how humbly this great thinker and poet hints his doubts, when the propriety of any passage in Shakspeare appears questionable to his understanding: and most cheering is it to read his assurance, that "in many instances he has ripened into a perception of beauties, where he had before descried faults;" and that throughout his life, "at every new accession of information, after every successful exercise of meditation, and every fresh presentation of experience, he had unfailingly discovered a proportionate increase of wisdom and intuition in Shakspeare." See his *Literary Remains*, Vol. ii. pp. 52, 115, 139. The same truth is enforced by Mr De Quincey in his admirable remarks *on the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth*.

In the study of poetry, as in yet higher studies, it is often necessary that we should believe, before we can understand: and through the energy, patience, and perseverance, which Faith alone can inspire, do we mount to the understanding of what we have already believed in. How, for instance, should we ever have discerned the excellences of the Greek drama, without a previous faith in its excellence, strong enough not to shrink from the manifold difficulties which would else have repelled us? Who would be at the trouble of cracking a nut, if he did not believe there was a kernel within it? A study



pursued in this spirit of faith is sure of being continually rewarded by new influxes of knowledge, not only on account of the spring which such a spirit gives to our faculties, but also because it delivers them from most of the prejudices, which make our minds the thralls of the present. Common men, on the other hand, are prone to look down on whatever passes their comprehension, thus betraying the natural affinity between ignorance and contempt.

Unfortunately Coleridge's Lectures are among the treasures which the waves of forgetfulness have swallowed up. Precious fragments of them however have been preserved; and these, like almost all his writings, are rich in thoughts fitted to awaken reflexion, and to guide it. And that there are writers amongst us, who understand Shakspeare, and might teach others to understand him, is proved by the remarks on *Macbeth* just referred to, as well as by the very acute and judicious *Observations on Shakspeare's Romeo as compared with the Romeo acted on the Stage*. Much delicacy of observation too and elegance of taste is shewn in the *Characteristics of Shakspeare's Women*, — one of the happiest subjects on which a female pen was ever employed.

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U.

“The German writers (Coleridge is reported to have said) have acquired an elegance of thought and of mind, just as we have attained a style and smartness of composition: so that, if you were to read an ordinary German author as an English one, you would say, *This man has something in him; this man thinks*: whereas it is merely a method acquired by them, as we have acquired a style.” *Letters and Conversations of S. T. C.* Vol. ii. p. 4.

Such pieces of tabletalk are not legitimate objects of criticism; because we can never feel sure how far the report is an accurate one, or how far the opinion uttered may have been modified, either expressly by words, or implicitly by the occasion which prompted it. What is here said is quite true, provided it be not understood disparagingly. The peculiar value of modern German literature does not arise, except in a few



instances, from the superior genius of the writers, so much as from their being better trained and disciplined in the principles and method of knowledge. For this advantage they are indebted to their philosophical education. Fifty years ago the common run of German writers were as superficial and immethodical as those of the rest of Europe. The love of system, which has always characterized the nation, only prevented any gleam of light from breaking through the clouds of dulness in which they wrapt themselves. But now, as in most of the better writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we may discern the influence of the scholastic logic, in which they were trained, so one can hardly look into a German work of the present century, on whatever subject of enquiry, without perceiving that it is written by a countryman of Kant and Fichte and Schelling. And surely this is the highest reward which can fall to the lot of any human intellect, to be thus diffused through and amalgamated with the intellect of a whole people, to live in their minds, not merely when they are thinking of you and talking of you, but even when they are totally unconscious of your personal existence.

Nay, what but this is the ground of the superiority of civilized nations to savages? Their minds are better moulded and disciplined, more or less, by the various processes of education. In fact training, if it does not impart strength, fosters and increases it, and renders it serviceable, and prevents its running waste: so that, assuming the quantity of ability allotted by Nature to two nations to be the same, that which has the better system of moral and intellectual culture, will bring up the greater number of able men.

It is true, the forms of philosophical thought, when generally prevalent, so as to become fashionable in a literature, will be used by many without discernment of their value and power. Many will fancy that the possession of a few phrases is enough to open the gates of all knowledge to them, and to carry them at once beyond the wisdom of former ages, without any necessity for personal research or meditation: and imbecility, self-complacently mouthing big phrases, is more than usually offen-



sive. Perhaps too it is impossible to devise any scheme of education, which can be reckoned upon for promoting the development of poetical genius. This is implied in the saying, *Poeta nascitur, non fit*. Nor is genius in philosophy, or in art, though more dependent on foregoing circumstances than in poetry, to be elicited with certainty by any system. But for the talents employed in the various enquiries of philology and science, a great deal may be done by appropriate stimulants and instruction, by putting them in the right way, and setting before them the mark they are to aim at. Hence, whenever a man of genius plants a colony in an unexplored region of thought, he finds followers ready to join him in effecting what his own unassisted arm could only partially have accomplished: and though stray pieces of ore may be picked up without exciting much notice, if a mine of truth has once been successfully opened, it is mostly worked on until it is exhausted.

Soon after reading the remark of Coleridge's just cited, I happened to open a German periodical work containing a dissertation on *the Amphitryon* of Plautus. That play, the writer observes, differs from all the other Roman comedies in having a mythological subject, which occasions essential differences in its treatment; so that it forms a distinct species: and he proposes to examine the nature of this peculiar form of comedy, according to its external and internal character; not to explain the poetical composition of *the Amphitryon*, considered as an individual work of art, but merely to determine the place it is to hold in the history of the Roman drama. Now this, which is exactly the plan any intelligent German writer would have taken in treating the same subject, may exemplify the quality in German literature spoken of by Coleridge. Here too one should say, *This man knows what he is talking about*: and one should say so with good reason. For in criticism, as in every other branch of knowledge, *prudens quaestio dimidium scientiae est*. He who has got the clue, may thread the maze. Yet the method of investigation here is totally different from what an English scholar would have pursued. The notion of regarding *the Amphitryon* as a distinct species of ancient comedy, and of



considering that species in its relation to the rest of the Roman drama, — the distinction drawn between this historical view of it, and the esthetical analysis of it taken by itself, — these are thoughts which would never have entered the head of an English critic, unless he had been inoculated with them either directly or indirectly from Germany. Deluged as we are with criticism in every shape, quarterly, monthly, weekly, and daily, — many thousands of pages as are written on criticism in England every year, — we hardly ever find the glimmering of a suspicion that there is anything essential in the form of a poem, or that there are any principles and laws to determine it, or that a poet has anything to do, except to get an interesting story, and to describe interesting characters, and to deck out his pages with as many fine thoughts and pretty images as he can muster. No wonder that our criticism is so worthless and unprofitable! that it is of no manner of use, either in teaching our writers how to write, or our readers how to read!

Let me allude to another instance. Works containing criticisms on all Shakspeare's plays have been publisht of late years, by Hazlitt in England, and by Francis Horn in Germany. Nobody can doubt that Hazlitt by nature had the acuter and stronger understanding of the two: he had cultivated it by metaphysical studies: he had a passionate love for poetry, and yielded to no man in his admiration for Shakspeare. By his early intercourse with Coleridge too he had been led to perceive more clearly than most Englishmen, that poetry is not an arbitrary and chanceful thing, that it has a reason of its own, and that, when genuine, it springs from a vital idea, which is at once constitutive and regulative, and which manifests itself not in a technical apparatus, but in the free symmetry of a living form. Yet, from the want of a proper intellectual discipline and method, his perception of this truth never became an intuition, nor coalesced with the rest of his knowledge: and owing to this want, and no doubt to that woful deficiency of moral discipline and principle, through which his talents went to rack, Hazlitt's work on Shakspeare, though often clever and sparkling, and sometimes ingenious in pointing out latent beauties in



particular passages, is vastly inferior to Horn's as an analytical exposition of the principles and structure of Shakspeare's plays, tracing and elucidating the hidden, labyrinthine workings of his all-vivifying, all-unifying genius. U.

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When a subtile critic has detected some recondite beauty in Shakspeare, the vulgar are fain to cry that Shakspeare did not mean it. Well! what of that? If it be there, his genius meant it. This is the very mark whereby to know a true poet. There will always be a number of beauties in his works, which he never meant to put into them.

This is one of the resemblances between the works of Genius and those of Nature, a resemblance betokening that the powers which produce them are akin. Each, beside its immediate, apparent purpose, is ever connected by certain delicate and almost imperceptible fibres, by numberless ties of union and communion, and the sweet intercourse of giving and receiving, with the universe of which it forms a part. Hereby the poet shews that he is not a mere "child of Time, But offspring of the Eternal Prime." His works are not narrowed to the climes and seasons, the manners and thoughts that give birth to them, but spread out their invisible arms through time and space, and, when generations, and empires, and even religions have past away, still stand in unwaning freshness and truth. They have a living assimilative power. As man changes, they disclose new features and aspects, and ever look him in the face with the reflexion of his own image, and speak to him with the voice of his own heart; so that after thousands of years we still welcome them as we would a brother.

This too is the great analogy between Genius and Goodness, that, unconscious of its own excellences, it works, not so much by an intelligent, reflective, prospective impulse of the will, as by the prompting of a higher spirit, breathing in it and through it, coming one knows not whence, and going one knows not whither; under the sway of which spirit, whenever it lifts up its head and shakes its locks, it scatters light and splendour around. The question therefore, whether a great poet meant



such a particular beauty, comes to much the same thing as the question, whether the sun means that his light should enter into such or such a flower. He who works in unison with Nature and Truth, is sure to be far mightier and wiser than himself.

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U.

The poet sees things as they look. Is this having a faculty the less? or a sense the more?

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Some hearts are like a melting peach, but with a larger, coarser, harder stone.

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I like the smell of a dunged field, and the tumult of a popular election.

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Almost every rational man can shew nearly the same number of moral virtues. Only in the good man the active and beneficent virtues look outward, the passive and parsimonious inward. In the bad man it is just the contrary. His forethought, his generosity, his longsuffering is for himself; his severity and temperance and frugality are for others. But the religious virtues belong solely to the religious. God hides Himself from the wicked: or at least the wicked blinds himself to God. If he practically acknowledge any, which is only now and then, it is one whose nonexistence is certain, whose fabulousness is evident to him . . the Devil.

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We like slipping, but not falling: our real desire is to be tempted enough.

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The man who will share his wealth with a woman, has some love for her: the man who can resolve to share his poverty with her, has more . . of course supposing him to be a man, not a child, or a beast.

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Our statequacks of late years have thought fit to style themselves *Radical Reformers*: and though the title involves an



absurdity, it is not on that account less fitted for the sages who have assumed it ; many of whom moreover may have no very clear notion what the epithet they give themselves means. For what can a Radical Reformer be ? Is he a Reformer of the roots of things ? But Nature buries these out of sight, and will not allow man to tamper with them, assigning him the task of training and pruning the stem and branches. Or is a Radical Reformer one who tears up a tree by the roots, and reforms it by laying it prostrate ? If so, our Reformers may indeed put in a claim to the title, and might fairly contest it with the hurricane of last autumn. But what can be the good or comfort of a reformation, which is only another name for destruction ?

The word may perhaps be borrowed from medicine, in which we speak of a *radical cure*. This however is a metaphor implying the extirpation, or complete uprooting of the disease, after which the sanative powers of Nature will restore the constitution to health. But there is no such sanative power in a state ; where the mere removal of abuses does not avail to set any vital faculties in action. In truth this is only another form of the error, by which man, ever quicker at destroying than at producing, has confounded repentance with reformation, *μεταμέλεια* with *μετάνοια*. Whereas the true Reformer is he who creates new institutions, and gives them life and energy, and trusts to them for throwing off such evil humours as may be lying in the body politic. The true Reformer is the Seminal Reformer, not the Radical. And this is the way the Sower, who went forth to sow His seed, did really reform the world, without making any open assault to uproot what was already existing. 1837. U.

A writer, for whom I have a high esteem, in the *Politics for the People* (p. 222), objects to the foregoing remarks on the name Radical, and asserts that “there can be no Seminal Reform, without Radical Reform first, where Reform is needed at all. Is the wheat (he asks) sown amidst the stubble, or on the rush-grown meadow, or on the common covered with heather and gorse ? Must not the stern ploughshare first be driven through



the soil, rooting up, right and left, all evil growths of the past, all good growths grown useless ! Was He not the greatest of Radical Reformers, of whose work it was said, *And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees ; therefore every one that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.* Since the first day when the ground was curst for man's sake, and made to bring forth thorns and thistles, it has been every true man's lot and duty to be a Radical Reformer, whether on a small scale or a large. But such Radical Reform is indeed only a means towards Seminal Reform ; the weeds are only pluckt up, that the good seed may be put in ; and that seed every true man is bound to be throwing in as perpetually, as he is perpetually rooting out the weeds. It is not the Radical Reformer who is the Destructive ; it is the blind Conservative, who looks upon the thorns and thistles as holy, instead of feeling that they are God's curse."

In reply to these objections, I will merely point out a couple of fallacies, as they seem to me, contained in them.

The first is, that the analogy between agriculture and state-culture is pusht far beyond its due limits. The vegetable crop, as it has no living soul, no permanent being, — as it has a merely transient purpose, external to itself, — is swept away at the end of the harvest, when that purpose is fulfilled. But no Reformer, however Radical, not even Robespierre, has ventured to lay down that the generations of mankind are to be swept away one after another, in order to make room for their successors. The chain of the human race does not consist of a number of distinct, annual links : each annual link combines the produce of a century ; and all these run one into the other. So too do their habits ; so do their institutions, social and political. There is no new beginning in the history of the world : or, if there is one new era, it was introduced by a superhuman Author ; and even that stretches back through the whole of anterior history. The French Republicans did indeed attempt to establish a new era : but the builders of Babel were not more signally confounded, than they by the powers which they evoked from hell. The inherent vitality of the nation, after a while,



prevailed over the destroyer, not however without incalculable misery at the time, and grievous deterioration to the moral character of the people. Hence I cannot see in what sense we can speak of "driving the stern ploughshare" through the social life and institutions of a nation. He who does not know that a nation has a living, permanent being, and that its organic institutions are intimately connected with that permanent life, — he who feels no reverence for that being, and the institutions connected with it, — he who worships his own notions above them, and would set up his own fancies in their stead, — is sadly lacking in that spirit, which is the primary element in the character of a wise and practical Reformer.

In the next place it seems to me a total mistake, to apply the words of the Baptist, — *And now the axe is laid to the root of the tree, &c.* — to any work ordained for man. When the appointed time comes, God does indeed shew forth His justice by sweeping away that which is utterly corrupt. As He swept away the cities of the plain, so, when her cup was full, did He sweep away Jerusalem. Yet even the Son of God, in His human manifestation, came not to destroy, but to save. He would have gathered Jerusalem under His wings; but she would not: therefore was her house left desolate. Assuredly too this is the only part of His office, which we are called to discharge. As His ministers, we are to be ministers of salvation, not of destruction. The evil in ourselves indeed we are to pluck up, branch and root: but in our dealings with others, unless we have a special office committed to us by the laws of family or national life, our task will mainly be to contend against evil by sowing the seeds of good, not by Radical Reform, but by Seminal. The satirist, the rhetorician, the moralist, will indeed try the former, and will therefore fail. The Christian has a higher power entrusted to him, the power of God's goodness and mercy, — the Gospel of redemption and salvation, — not the woes of the Trojan prophetess, who could gain no credence, but the glad tidings of the Kingdom of Heaven: and if he relies on this one power, he will succeed, where others must needs fail. For Earth cannot overpower



Hell ; but Heaven can. Elijah, under the old Dispensation, might be commissioned to destroy the worship of Baal by the sword : such destruction however is ineffectual, transitory : that which has been destroyed sprouts up again : for the roots dive beyond the reach of the hoe and pickaxe, even into the depths of the heart. Hence you must sow the seed, which will change, and, as it were, leaven the heart, so that the heart itself will cast them out convulsively.

This was what our Lord Himself did. Though the Jewish nation was doomed to perish, every act of His life was designed to save the Jews, if they would accept His salvation. Nor did the Apostles go forth to destroy the idols and idolatries of the nations. In so doing they would have forsaken Christ's way, and would have anticipated Mahomet's. Thry preacht Christ and the Resurrection, — Christ crucified, the power of God unto salvation ; and hereby they overthrew the idolatries and superstitions of the nations, not transitorily, but permanently. So again at the Reformation, Luther, having the true Apostolical spirit in him, — the spirit of a Seminal, not of a Radical Reformer, was ever strenuous in resisting all attempts to carry out the Reformation by destructive, revolutionary, radical measures. *Preach the word of God*, he said, — *preach the truth ; and the truth will set us free*. The shooting of the new leaves will push off the old ones, far more effectually than the winds can tear them off. And the former is the human, Christian procedure : the latter is committed to the blind powers of Nature, though man, acting under the sway of his passions, may at times become their instrument.

These same principles will also regulate the conduct of the true Christian statesman. Like Luther, he will be very slow and reluctant to destroy any ancient institution, knowing that the temporary evils which may arise from its perversion, are caused, not by the institution itself, but by the heart and will of those who pervert it, and that this heart and will would in no degree be corrected by its destruction. He will indeed find frequent occasion for lopping and pruning off morbid outgrowths and overgrowths, as well as for training the healthy growths of



each successive year: but he will remember that this is his business, to prune off, not to cut down. The sophists of the last century, and at the beginning of the present, forgot this: nor is it sufficiently borne in mind now. They forgot that a nation has a living, organic growth, which manifests itself in its constitution, and in its various institutions; they regarded it rather as a machine, which they might take to pieces, and reconstruct at will, this way or that. These notions, which are refuted by the teaching of all the greatest political philosophers, above all of Burke, — and which have been still more signally refuted by the cracking and breaking up of all such manufactured constitutions, — are so likewise by the two great witnesses that the history of the world brings forward, to shew the wisdom and permanence of organic constitutions, expanding and developing themselves along with the growth of the nation, and continuing the same, even as man is the same in manhood and old age as in childhood, notwithstanding the innumerable accretions which he has been continually assimilating and incorporating with himself. These two great witnesses are Rome and England. Both indeed had to pass through divers critical trials, when the wilfulness and selfishness of man tried to suspend and arrest the organic development of the Constitution: and Rome at last perisht, when that development seemed to have become a practical impossibility. But each is the witness for true political wisdom, Rome in the ancient world, England in the modern. 1851.

U.

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Nature is mighty. Art is mighty. Artifice is weak. For Nature is the work of a mightier power than man. Art is the work of man, under the guidance and inspiration of a mightier power. Artifice is the work of mere man, in the imbecility of his mimic understanding.

U.

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*What is the use of it?* is the first question askt in England by almost everybody about almost everything. When foreigners, who have learnt English from our older writers, come amongst us, hearing such frequent enquiries after use, they



must fancy they have fallen among a set of usurers. No wonder so many of them have applied for loans. The only wonder, as we are not usurers, is how they got them.

Still there are a few things, a husband for one's daughter, a Rubens, four horses, a cure of souls,—the use of which is never askt: probably because it is so evident. In those cases the first question, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, is, *What are they worth?* The worth of a cure of souls! O miserable money-loving people! whose very language is prostituted to avarice. Wealth is money: Fortune is money: Worth is money: and, had not God for once been beforehand with the world, Providence would have been money too. The worth of a cure of souls is Heaven or Hell, according as he who is appointed to it does his duty or neglects it.

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You want to double your riches, and without gambling or stockjobbing. Share it. Whether it be material or intellectual, its rapid increase will amaze you. What would the sun have been, had he folded himself up in darkness? Surely he would have gone out. So would Socrates.

This road to wealth seems to have been discovered some three thousand years ago. At least it was known to Hesiod, and has been recommended by him in the one precious line he has left us. But even he complains of the fools, who did not know that half is more than the whole. And ever since, though mankind have always been in full chase after riches, though they have not feared to follow Columbus and Gama in chase of it, though they have waded through blood, and crept through falsehood, and trampled on their own hearts, and been ready to ride on a broomstick, in chase of it, very few have ever taken this road, albeit the easiest, the shortest, and the surest.

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U.

One of the first things a soldier has to do, is to harden himself against heat and cold. He must enure himself to bear sudden and violent changes. In like manner they who enter into public life should begin by dulling their sensitiveness to



praise and blame. He who cannot turn his back on the one, and face the other, will probably be beguiled by his favorite, into letting his enemy come behind him, and wound him when off his guard. Let him keep a firm footing, and beware of being lifted up, remembering that this is the commonest trick by which wrestlers throw their antagonists. U.

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Gratification is distinct from happiness in the common apprehension of mankind; and so is selfishness from wisdom. But passion in its blindness disregards, or rather speaks as if it disregarded, the first distinction; and sophists, taking advantage of this, confound the last. Their confusion however is worse confounded. For it is not every gratification that is selfish, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, which implies blame and sin; but such only as is undue or inordinate, whether in kind or degree. Never was a man called selfish for quenching his thirst with water, where water was not scarce; many a man has been justly, for drinking Champagne. The argument then, if unraveled into a syllogism, would hang together thus:

Some gratifications are selfish:

No gratification is happiness:

therefore,

All happiness is selfish.

I am not surprised that these gentlemen speak ill of logic.

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Misers are the greatest spendthrifts: and spendthrifts often end in becoming the greatest misers. U.

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The principle gives birth to the rule: the motive may justify the exception.

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When the Parisians set up a naked prostitute as the goddess of Reason, they can hardly have been aware what an apt type she afforded of their Reason, and indeed of all Reason,—if that divine name be not forfeited by such a traitorous act,—which turns away its face from heaven, and throws off its allegiance to the truth as it is in God. When Reason has done this,



it is stark naked, and ready to prostitute itself to every capricious lust, whether of the flesh, or of the spirit. One can never repeat too often, that Reason, as it exists in man, is only our intellectual eye, and that, like the eye, to see, it needs light,—to see clearly and far, it needs the light of heaven. U.

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Entireness, illimitableness is indispensable to Faith. What we believe, we must believe wholly and without reserve; wherefore the only perfect and satisfying object of Faith is God. A Faith that sets bounds to itself, that will believe so much and no more, that will trust thus far and no further, is none. It is only Doubt taking a nap in an elbow chair. The husband, whose scepticism is prurient enough to contemplate the possibility of his wife's proving false, richly deserves that she should do so. U.

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Never put much confidence in such as put no confidence in others. A man prone to suspect evil is mostly looking in his neighbour for what he sees in himself. As to the pure all things are pure, even so to the impure all things are impure. U.

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Do you wish to find out a person's weak points? Note the failings he has the quickest eye for in others. They may not be the very failings he is himself conscious of; but they will be their next-door neighbours. No man keeps such a jealous look-out as a rival. U.

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In reading the Apostolical Epistles, we should bear in mind that they are not scientific treatises, armed at all points against carpers and misconceivers, but occasional letters, address to disciples, who, as the writer knew, were both able and inclined to make due allowance for the latitude of epistolary expression.

But is not this what the Socinians contend for?

If it were, I should have nothing to say against them. What I object to in them is their making, not due allowances, but un-



due, — allowances discountenanced by the plainest passages as well as the uniform tenour of the Sacred Writings, by the whole analogy, and, so far as we dare judge of them, the prompting principles of Revelation.

But how shall we discern the due from the undue?

As we discern everything else: by the honest use of a cultivated understanding. If we have not banisht the Holy Spirit by slights and excesses, if we have fed His lamp in our hearts with prayer, if we have improved and strengthened our faculties by education and exercise, and then sit down to study the Bible with enquiring and teachable minds, we need not doubt of discovering its meaning; not indeed purely, — for where find an intellect so colourless as never to tinge the light that falls upon it? not wholly, — for how fathom the ocean of God's word? but with such accuracy, and in such degree, as shall suffice for the uses of our spiritual life. If we have neglected this previous discipline, if we take up the book with stupid or ignorant, lazy or negligent, arrogant or unclean and do-no-good hands, we shall in running through its pages stumble on many things dark and startling, on many things which, aggravated by presumptuous heedlessness, might prove destructively offensive.

What then are the poor to do?

They must avail themselves of oral instruction, have recourse, so far as may be, to written helps, and follow the guidance of God's ministers. But suitable faculties seem indispensable. Let a man be ever so pious and sincere, if blind, he could not see the book, nor, if unlettered, read it, nor, if ignorant of English, know the meaning of the words, nor, if half-witted, comprehend the sentences. Why suppose that the intellectual hindrances to mastering the book end here? especially when we allow the existence of moral hindrances, and are aware that they combine with the intellectual in unascertainable and indefinite proportions; if they do not rather form their essence, or at least their germ. You grant that carelessness and impatience may hide the meaning of the book from us: you should be sure that stupidity does not spring from carelessness, nor bad logic



from impatience, before you decide so confidently that stupidity and bad logic cannot.

*Search the Scriptures*, said Christ. “Non dixit *legite*, sed *scrutamini* (as Chrysostom, quoted by Jeremy Taylor, *On the Minister's Duty*, *Serm. II.* Vol. vi. p. 520, observes on this text), quia oportet profundius effodere, ut quae alte delitescant invenire possimus. The Jews have a saying: *qui non advertit quod supra et infra in scriptoribus legitur, is pervertit verba Dei viventis*. He that will understand God's meaning, must look above, and below, and round about.” Now to look at things below the surface, we must dig down to them. They who omit this, from whatever cause, be it the sluggishness of their will, or merely the bluntness of their instrument, — for this question, though important in judging of the workman, cannot affect the accomplishment of the work, — will never gain the buried treasure. Those on the other hand who dig as they are taught to do, will reach it in time, if they faint not. The number of demi-semi-Christians in the world no more establishes the contrary, than the number of drunkards in the world establishes the impossibility of keeping sober.

But, as Taylor remarks in the same Sermon (p. 509), “though many precious things are reserved for them who dig deep and search wisely, medicinal plants, and corn, and grass, things fit for food and physic, are to be had in every field.” The great duties of a Christian are so plainly exprest, that they who run may read, and that all who listen may understand them: expounders of doctrine are appointed by the Church: and in every case, to every one who truly seeks, sufficient will be given for his salvation.

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How deeply rooted must unbelief be in our hearts, when we are surprised to find our prayers answered! instead of feeling sure that they will be so, if they are only offered up in faith, and are in accord with the will of God. a.

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Moses, when the battle was raging, held up his arms to heaven, with the rod of God in his hand; and thus Israel



overcame Amalek. Hence a notion got abroad through the world, that in times of difficulty or danger the mightiest weapon man can make use of is prayer. But Moses felt his arms grow heavy ; and he was forced to call in Aaron and Hur to hold them up. In like manner do we all too readily weary of prayer, and feel it become a burthen, and let our hands drop ; and then Amalek prevails.

Here however the wisdom of the eighteenth century has devised a substitute, at least for one of the cases in which our ancestors used to hold up their arms to heaven. Franklin has taught us to hold up iron bars to heaven, which have the advantage of never growing weary, and under the guard of which we may feel sure that the storm will pass over without harming us. Besides they allow us to employ our hands to better purpose, in working, or eating, or fighting.

Still there are sundry kinds of dangers, from which Franklin's conductors will not secure us: and against these, till the time when matter shall have utterly choked and stifled spirit, we still need the help of prayer. And as our flesh is so weak, that our prayers soon droop and become faint, unless they are upheld, Christ and the Holy Spirit vouchsafe to uphold our prayers, and to breathe the power of faith into them, so that they may mount heavenward, and to bear them up to the very Throne of Grace.

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U.

All Religions, — for absolute Pantheism is none, — must of necessity be anthropomorphic. The idea of God must be adapted to the capacities of the human imagination. Christianity differs from all other Religions in this, that its anthropomorphism is theopneustic.

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U.

A weak mind sinks under prosperity, as well as under adversity. A strong and deep mind has two highest tides, — when the moon is at the full, and when there is no moon.

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U.

What a pity it is that there are so many words ! Whenever one wants to say anything, three or four ways of saying



it run into one's head together; and one can't tell which to choose. It is as troublesome and puzzling as choosing a ribbon . . . or a husband.

Now on a question of millinery, or of man-millinery, I should be slow to venture an opinion. But style is a less intricate matter; and with regard to the choice of words a clear and simple rule may be laid down, which can hardly be followed too punctually or too assiduously. First however, as it is a lady I am addressing, let me advise you to lessen your perplexities by restricting yourself to home manufactures. You may perhaps think it looks pretty to garnish your letters with such phrases as *de tout mon cœur*. Now *with all my heart* is really better English: the only advantage on the side of the other expression is its being less sincere. Whatever may be the superiority of French silks, or French lace, English words sound far best from English lips: and, notwithstanding the example of Desdemona, one can seldom look with perfect complacency on the woman who gives up her heart to the son of another people. Man may leave country as well as father and mother: for action and thought find their objects everywhere. But must not feelings pine and droop, when cut off from the home and speech of their childhood?

As a general maxim however, when you come to a cross-road, you can hardly do better than go right onward. You would do so involuntarily in speaking: do so likewise in writing. When you doubt between two words, choose the plainest, the commonest, the most idiomatic. Eschew fine words, as you would rouge: love simple ones, as you would native roses on your cheeks. Act as you might be disposed to do on your estate: employ such words as have the largest families, keeping clear of foundlings, and of those of which nobody can tell whence they come, unless he happens to be a scholar.

This is just the advice which Ovid gives:

Munda, sed e medio, consuetaque verba, puellae  
Scribite: sermonis publica forma placet.

To the same effect is the praise which Chaucer bestows on his Virginia:



Though she were wise as Pallas, dare I sain  
Her faconde eke full womanly and plain.  
No contrefeted termes hadde she  
To semen wise: but after her degree  
She spake; and all her wordes more or less  
Sounding in virtue and in gentillesse.

Exquisite examples of this true mother English are to be found in the speeches put by Shakspeare into the mouth of his female characters. "No fountain from its rocky cave E'er tript with foot so free:" never were its waters clearer, more transparent, or more musical. This indeed is the peculiar beauty of a feminine style, *munda verba, sed e medio, consuetaque*, choice and elegant words, but such as are familiar in wellbred conversation,— words not used scientifically, or technically, or etymologically, but according to their customary meaning. It is from being guided wholly by usage, undisturbed by extraneous considerations, and from their characteristic fineness of discernment with regard to what is fit and appropriate, as well as from their being much less blown about by the vanity of writing cleverly or sententiously, that sensible, educated women have a simple grace of style rarely attained by men; whose minds are ever and anon caught and entangled in briary thickets of *hows*, and *how-fars*, and *whys*, and *why-nots*; and who often think much less what they have to say, than in what manner they shall say it. For it is in writing, as in painting and sculpture: let the artist adapt the attitudes of his figures to the feeling or action he wishes to express; and, if his mind has been duly impregnated with the idea of the human form, without his intending it they will be graceful: whereas, if his first aim be to make them graceful, they are sure to be affected.

When women however sally out of their proper sphere into that of objective, reflective authorship,—for which they are disqualified, not merely by their education and habits, but by the subjective character of their minds, by the predominance of their feelings over their intellect, and by their proneness to view everything in the light of their affections,—they often lose the simple graces of style, which within their own element



belong to them. Here too may it be said, that "the woman who deliberates is lost." Going right, not from reflexion, not from calculating the reasons and consequences of each particular step, but from impulse, — whether instinctive, or derivative from habit, or from principle, — when a woman distrusts her impulses, and appeals to her understanding, she is not unlikely to stray ; among other grounds, because this seldom happens, except when some wrong impulse is pulling against the right one, and when she wants an excuse for yielding to it. Men, in speech, as in action, may now and then forsake usage ; having previously explored the principles and laws, of which usage is ever an inadequate exponent. But no woman can safely defy usage, unless it be at the imperious, momentary call of some overpowering affection, the voice of which is its own sanction, and one with the voice of Duty. When a woman deviates from usage, to comply with some rule which she supposes to run counter to it, she is apt to misapply the rule, from ignorance of its grounds and of its limits. For rules, though useful mementoes to such as understand their principles, have no light in themselves, and are mostly so framed as to fail us at the very moment of need. Clear enough when all is clear, they grow dim and go out when it is dark.

The one which has just been proposed, of following your tongue when you are speaking, is a less sure guide for men than for women. Men's minds have so often crawled forth, more or less like a snail stretching out of its shell, from the region of impulse into that of reflexion, that they may need a secondary movement to resume their natural state, and replace the shell on their heads. With them what is nearest is often furthest off ; and what is furthest is nearest. The word which comes uppermost with them will frequently be the book-word, not the word of common speech ; especially if they are in the habit of public speaking, in which there is a strong temptation to make up for emptiness by sound, to give commonplace observations an uncommon look by swelling them out with bloated diction, — to tack a string of conventional phrases to the tail of every proposition, in the hope that this will enable it to fly, —



and to take care that the buckram thoughts, in whatever respects they may resemble Falstaff's men, shall at least have plenty of buckram to strut in. Therefore a man, when writing, may often find occasion to substitute a plainer word for that which had first occurred to him. But with him too the rule holds good, that the plainest word, by which he can express his meaning, is the best. The beginning of Plato's Republic is said to have been found in his tablets written over and over in a variety of ways : the regard for euphony, which was so strong in the Greeks, led him to try all those varieties of arrangement which the power of inversion in his language allowed of. Yet after all, the words, as they now stand, and the order of their arrangement, are the simplest he could have chosen ; and one can hardly conceive how they could have been other than they are. This is the secret of the matchless transparency of his style, through which we look at the thoughts exprest in it, standing as in the lucid distinctness given by a southern atmosphere ; so that only by a subsequent act of reflexion do we discern the exceeding beauty of the medium. Whereas in most writers the words scarcely let the thoughts peer dimly through, or at best deck them out in gorgeous hues, and draw attention to themselves, veiling what they ought to reveal.

The principle I have been urging coincides with that of Cobbett's great rule : "Never think of mending what you write : let it go : no patching. As your pen moves, bear constantly in mind that it is making strokes which are to remain for ever." The power of habit, he rightly observes, is in such things quite wonderful : and assuredly it is not merely our style that would be improved, if we bore constantly in mind that what we do is to last for ever. Did we but keep this conviction steadily before us, with regard to all our thoughts and feelings and words and purposes and deeds, then might we sooner learn to think and feel and speak and resolve and act as becomes the heirs of eternity. One of the main seats of our weakness lies in this very notion, that what we do at the moment cannot matter much ; for that we shall be able to alter and mend and patch it just as we like by and by.



Cobbett's own writings are a proof of the excellence of his rule: what they may want in elegance, they more than make up for in strength. His indeed was a case in which it was especially applicable. Springing out of the lower orders, and living in familiar intercourse with them, he knew their language; he knew the words which have power over the English people: he knew how those words must be wielded to strike home on their understandings and their hearts. His mind had never been tainted with the jargon of men of letters: he had no frippery to throw off ere he could appear in his naked strength: he scorned flourishes and manoeuvres, and marched straight with all his forces to the onset.

In some measure akin to Cobbett's writings in style, though with differences resulting both from personal and national character, are those of the honest and hearty German patriot, Arndt, which did such good service in kindling and feeding the enthusiasm during the war with France. He too was a child of the people, a peasant boy who used to feed his father's cows; and his wings had not been clipped in the schools. So was Luther; whom one can hardly conceive recalling and correcting a word, any more than one can conceive the sun recalling and correcting one of his rays, or the sea one of its waves. He who has a full quiver, does not pick up his arrows. If the first misses, he sends another and another after it. Forgetting what is behind, he presses onward. It is only in going through one's exercise, that one retraces a false movement, and begins anew. To do so in battle would be to lose it.

There is said indeed to be a manuscript of Luther's version of the first Psalm with a great number of interlineations and corrections. This however was a translation: and only when a man's thoughts issue from his own head and heart, can they come forth ready clad in the fittest words. A translator's aim is more complicated; and all he can hope is to approximate nearer and nearer to it. For no language can ever be the complete counterpart of another: indeed no single word in any language can be the complete counterpart to a word in another language, so as to have exactly the same shades and varieties



of meaning, and to be invested with the same associations. Hence a conscientious translator is perpetually drawn in opposite directions, from the wish to accomplish two incompatible objects, to give an exact representation of his original, and at the same time to make that representation an idiomatic one. Difficult as it often must needs be to express one's own meaning to one's wish, it is incomparably more difficult to express another man's, without making him say more or less than he intended.

That the practice inculcated above has the highest of all sanctions, is proved by the Preface to the first edition of Shakespeare, where the editors say of him, "His mind and hand went together ; and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." The same thing is true of the greatest master of style in our days : in the manuscripts of his exquisite *Imaginary Conversations* very few words have ever been altered : every word was the right one from the first. I have also observed the same fact in Arnold's manuscripts, in which indeed, from the simple, easy flow of his style, one might sooner expect it. But Lieber tells us that Niebuhr also said to him, "Endeavour never to strike out anything of what you have once written down. Punish yourself by allowing once or twice something to pass, though you see you might give it better : it will accustom you to be more careful in future ; and you will not only save much time, but also think more correctly and distinctly. I hardly ever strike out or correct my writing, even in my dispatches to the king. Persons who have never tried to write at once correctly, do not know how easy it is, provided your thoughts are clear and well arranged ; and they ought to be so before you put pen to paper." Thus a style, which appears most elaborate, and in which the thoughts would seem to have been subjected to a long process of condensation, may grow to be written almost spontaneously ; as a person may learn to write the stiffest hand with considerable rapidity. Lieber however also cites the similar confession in Gibbon's *Memoirs* ; which shews that this practice is no preservative from all the



vices of affectation. For anything may become nature to man: the rare thing is to find a nature that is truly natural. U.

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Cesar's maxim, that you are to avoid an unusual word as you would a rock, is often quoted, especially by those who are just purposing to violate it. For this is one of the strange distortions of vanity, — which loves to magnify the understanding, at the cost of the will, — that people, when they are doing wrong, are fond of boasting that they know it to be wrong. Cesar himself however was a scrupulous observer of his own rule. A like straightforward plainness of speech characterizes the English Cesar of our age, and is found, with an admixture of philosophical sweetness, in Xenophon. In truth simplicity is the soldierly style. The most manly of men coincide in this point with the most womanly of women. The latter think of the feelings they are to express; the former, of the thoughts and purposes and actions; neither, of the words.

Not however that new words are altogether to be outlawed. What would language have been, had this principle been acted on from the first? It must have been dwarfed in the cradle. Did thoughts remain stationary, so might language: but they cannot be progressive without it. The only way in which a conception can become national property, is by being named. Hereby it is incorporated with the body of popular thought. Either a word already in use may have a more determinate meaning assigned to it: or a new word may be formed, according to the analogies of the language, by derivation or composition: or in a language in which the generative power is nearly extinct, a word may be adopted from some foreign tongue which has already supplied it with similar terms. Only such words should be intelligible at sight to the readers they are designed for. This is one great objection to the new Greek words which Mr Bentham scatters over his pages, side by side with his amorphous, tumble-top-pieces English ones, like Columbine dancing with Pantaloon. They want a note to explain what he meant them to mean, and are just such lifeless things as might be expected from a man who grinds them out of his lexicon, — such dry chips as may



drop from a writer whose mind is a dead hedge of abstractions ; whose chief talent moreover is that of a hedge, to intersect and partition off the field of knowledge. When words are thus brought in with a commentary at their heels, it is much as if a musician were to stop in the middle of a tune, and tell you what notes he is playing.

To the last of the three classes just mentioned belongs the terminology of Science, which is almost wholly Greek. No language was ever so full of life as the Greek in its prime : and, as there have been instances of seeds which have retained their vital power for millennaries, the embers of life still linger about it ; so that two thousand years after, and a thousand miles off, we find it easier to grow Greek words than English. The plastic character of the language, affording unlimited facilities for composition, — and in such wise that its words really coalesce, and are not merely tackt together, — fits it for expressing the innumerable combinations, which it is the business of Science to detect. And as Science is altogether a cosmopolite, less connected than any other mode of intellectual action with the peculiarities of national character, — wherefore the eighteenth century, which confounded science with knowledge, set up the theory of cosmopolitism, — it is well that the vocabulary of Science should be common to all the nations that come and worship at its shrine.

Of all words however the least vivacious are those coined by Science. It is only Poetry, and not Philosophy, that can make a Juliet. It is Poetry, the Imagination in one or other of its forms, that produces what has life in it. Eschylus, Shakspeare, Milton, are wordmakers. So are most humorists, Aristophanes, Rabelais, Swift, Sterne, Charles Lamb, Richter : only many of their words are merely fashioned sportively for a particular occasion, after some amusing analogy, without any thought of their becoming a permanent part of the language. The true criterion of the worth of a new word is its having such a familiar look, and bearing its meaning and the features of its kindred so visible in its face, that we hardly know whether it is not an old acquaintance. Then more especially is it likely to be genuine, when its



author himself is scarcely conscious of its novelty. At all events it should not seem to be the fruit of study, but to spring spontaneously from the inspiration of the moment.

The corruption of style does not lie in a writer's occasionally using an uncommon or a new word. On the contrary a masculine writer, who has been led to adopt a plain, simple style, not like women, by an instinctive delicacy of taste, but by a reflex act of judgement, and who has taken pleasure in visiting the sources of his native language, and in tracing its streams, will feel desirous at times to throw his seed also upon the waters: and he is the very person whose studies will best fit him for doing so. Even Cowper, whose letters are the pattern of pure, graceful, idiomatic English, does not hesitate to coin new words now and then. Such are, *extra-foraneous*, which, though he is so fond of it as to desire that it should be inserted in Johnson's Dictionary, and to use it more than once (Vol. iv. p. 76, vi. 153, of Southey's Edition), is for common purposes a cumbrous substitute for *out-of-doors*,—*a subscalarian*, "a man that sleeps under the stairs" (vi. 286),—*an archdeaconism* (iv. 228),—*syllablemongers* (v. 23),—*a joltation* (v. 55),—*calfless* (v. 61),—*secondhanded* (v. 87), a word inaccurately formed, as according to analogy it should mean, not *at second hand*, but *having a second hand*,—*authorly* (v. 96),—*expu-tory* (v. 102),—*returnable*, likely to return (v. 102),—*translatorship* (v. 253),—*poetship* (v. 313),—*a midshipmanship* ("there's a word for you!" he exclaims, vi. 263),—*man-merchandise* (vi. 127),—*Homer-conners* (vi. 268),—*walkable* (vi. 13),—*seldomcy* (vi. 228). I know not that any of these words is of much value. The last is suggested by an erroneous analogy. "I hope none of my correspondents (he says) will measure my regard for them by the *frequency*, or rather *seldomcy*, of my epistles." A Latin termination is here subjoined to a Saxon word, which such a termination very rarely fits: and two consonants are brought into juxtaposition, from which in our language they revolt.

Some of these words may perhaps have been already in use, at least in speech, if not in writing. It would be both enter-



taining and instructive, were any one to collect the words in English invented by particular authors, and to explain the reasons which may either have occasioned or hindered their being incorporated with the body of the language. In some cases no want of the word has been felt: in others the formation has been incorrect, or unsupported by any familiar analogy. Learning of itself indeed will never avail to make words: but in ages when the formative instinct is no longer vivid, judgement and knowledge are requisite to guide it. For the best and ablest writers are apt to err on this score, as we saw just now in the instance of *seldomcy*. Thus even Landor (*Imaginary Convers.* ii. 278) recommends the adoption of *anidiomatic* as an English word; though our language does not acknowledge the Greek negative prefix, except in words like *anarchy*, introduced in their compound state, so that *anidiomatical* would exemplify itself; and though *unidiomatic* would clearly be a preferable form, which few writers would scruple to use, whether authorized by precedent or no. Nor, I trust, will Coleridge's favorite word, *esemplastic* (*Biographia Literaria*, i. 157), to express the atoning or unifying power of the Imagination, ever become current; for, like others of his Greek compounds, it violates the analogies of that language. Had such a word existed, it would be compounded of *εἰς ἐν πλάττειν*, not, as he intended, of *εἰς ἐν πλάττειν*. On the other hand his word to *desynonymize* (*Biog. Lit.* i. 87) is a truly valuable one, as designating a process very common in the history of language, and bringing a new thought into general circulation. A Latin preposition is indeed prefixt to a Greek theme: but such mixtures are inevitable in a composite language; and this is sanctioned by the words *dephlegmate* and *dephlogisticate*: after the analogy of which I have ventured above (p. 153) to frame the word *desophisticating*.

Few eminent writers, I believe, have not done more or less toward enriching their native tongue. Thus Rousseau, in one of his letters in defense of his Discourse on the Influence of the Arts and Sciences, vindicates his having hazarded the word *investigation*, on the ground that he had wisht "rendre un



service à la langue, en essayant d'y introduire un terme doux, harmonieux, dont le sens est déjà connu, et qui n'a point de synonyme en français. C'est, je crois, toutes les conditions qu'on exige pour autoriser cette liberté salutaire." Sometimes too an author's bequests to his countrymen do not stay quietly at home, but travel from nation to nation, and become a permanent part of the language of mankind. What a loss would it be to the language of modern Europe, if Plato's word, *idea*, and Pythagorases, *philosophy*, with their families, were struck out of them! It would be like striking out an eye; and we should hardly know how to grope our way through the realms of thought without them. Again, when we read in Diogenes Laertius (iii. 24) that Plato *πρῶτος ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀντίποδας ὠνόμασε, καὶ στοιχείον, καὶ διαλεκτικὴν, καὶ ποιότητα, καὶ τῶν περάτων τὴν ἐπίπεδον ἡπιφάνειαν, καὶ θεοῦ πρόνοιαν*, we may see from this, without enquiring into the accuracy of each particular statement, what a powerful lever a well-chosen word may be for helping on the progress of thought, — how it may embody the results of long processes of meditation, and present those results in a form in which they may not only be apprehended at once by every person of intelligence, but may be used as materials for ulterior speculations, like known quantities for the determination of unknown. Various instances of like pregnant words, in which great authors have embodied the results of their speculations, — of words "which assert a principle, while they appear merely to indicate a transient notion, preserving as well as expressing truths," — are pointed out in the great *History of the Inductive Sciences*, in which one of Bacon's worthiest and most enlightened disciples has lately been tracing the progress of scientific discovery throughout the whole world of Nature.

A far worse fault than that of occasionally introducing a new word, — which is not only allowable, but often necessary, as new thoughts keep continually rising above the national horizon, — is that of writing throughout in words alien from the speech of the people. Few writers are apter to fall into this fault, than those who deem it their post to watch and set up a



bark at the first approach of a stranger. The gods in Homer now and then use a word different from that of ordinary men: but he who thinks to speak the language of the gods, by speaking one altogether remote from that of ordinary men, will only speak the language of the goblins. He is not a mystic, but a mystifier.

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U.

There are three genial and generative periods in the history of language.

The first, and far the most important, is that in which the great elementary processes are gone through: when the laws and form of the language are determined, and the body of the thoughts of a people, whether arising out of the depths of its own character, or awakened by the objects around it, fashion and find their appropriate utterance. This is a period of which little notice can be preserved. We are seldom able to watch the processes while they are working. In a primitive, homogeneous language that working is over, before it comes forward in a substantial, permanent shape, and takes its seat in the halls of Literature: and even in a composite language, like our own, arising out of the confluence and fusion of two, we have scanty means for observing their mutual action upon each other. We see them flowing for a while side by side: then both vanish like the Rhine at Laufenburg: and anon the mingled streams start into sight again, though perhaps not quite thoroughly blended, but each in a manner preserving a distinct current for a time, as the Rhone and Saone do at their junction. In this stage a language is rich in expressions for outward objects, and for simple feelings and actions, but contains few abstract terms, and not many compound words, except such as denote obvious combinations of frequent occurrence. The laws and principles of such compositions however are already established: and here and there instances are found of some of the simplest abstract terms; after the analogy of which others are subsequently framed, according to the growing demands of reflexion. Such is the state of our own language in the age of Chaucer: such is that of the German in the *Nibelungen-Lay*; and that of the



Greek in Hesiod and in Homer: in the latter of whom however we already hear the snorting of the horses that are drawing on the car of Apollo, and see the sparks that flash up beneath their feet, as they rush along the pavement of heaven.

Thus far a language has very little that is arbitrary in it, very little betokening the conscious power and action of man. It owes its origin, not to the thoughts and the will of individuals, but to an instinct actuating a whole people: it expresses what is common to them all: it has sprung out of their universal wants, and lives in their hearts. But after a while an intellectual aristocracy come forward, and frame a new language of their own. The princes and lords of thought shoot forth their winged words into regions beyond the scan of the people. They require a gold coinage, in addition to the common currency. This is avowed by Sir Thomas Brown in his Preface. "Nor have we address our pen or style to the people, (whom books do not redress, and are this way incapable of reduction,) but to the knowing and leading part of learning; as well understanding, — except they be watered from higher regions and fructifying meteors of knowledge, these weeds must lose their alimential sap, and wither of themselves." The Imagination, finding out its powers and its office, and feeling its freedom, begins to fashion and mould and combine things according to its own laws. It is no longer content to reflect the outward world and its forms just as it has received them, with such modifications and associations alone as have been bestowed on them in the national mythology. It seizes the elements both of outward nature and of human, and mixes them up in its crucible, and bakes them anew in its furnace. It discerns within itself, that there are other shapes and visions of grandeur and beauty, beside those which roll before the eye, — that there are other sympathies, and deeper harmonies and discords: and for this its new creation it endeavours to devise fitting symbols in words. This is the age of genial power in poetry, and of a luxuriant richness in language; the age of Eschylus and Aristophanes; the age of Ennius and Lucretius, — who however must be measured by the Roman scale; the age of Shakspeare



and Milton. It may be termed the heroic age of language, coming after its golden age, during which, from the unbroken unity of life, there was no call or room for heroes. Custom has not yet markt out the limits within which the plastic powers of the language must be restrained: and they who feel their own strength, and that of their weapon, fancy there is nothing they may not achieve with it. Of the new words formed in this age, many find an echo long after amid the hights of literature; some are so peculiar, they can fit no place except the one they were made for; many fall to the ground and are forgotten, when the sithe of summer mows off the rich bloom of spring.

The third great period in the history of a language is that of its development as an instrument of reason and reflexion. This is the age of verbal substantives, and of abstract derivatives from adjectives, formed, in a homogeneous language, after the analogy of earlier examples, but multiplied far beyond what had sufficed for a simpler, less speculative generation. The dawn of this age we see struggling through the darkness in Thucydides; the difficulties of whose style arise in great measure from his efforts to express thoughts so profound and far-stretching in a language scarcely adapted as yet to such purposes. For, though potentially it had an indefinite wealth in general terms, that wealth was still lying for the most part in the mine: and the simple epical accumulation of sentences, by means of connective particles, was only beginning to give way to a compacter, more logical structure, by the particles of causality and modality. In England, as indeed throughout the whole of modern Europe, the order assigned by Nature for the successive unfolding of the various intellectual powers, in nations as well as individuals, — an order which, unless disturbed by extraneous causes, would needs be far more perceptible, as all general laws are, in an aggregate than in a single unit, — was in some degree altered by the influx of the traditional knowledge amast by prior ages. That knowledge, acting more powerfully, and with more certain benefit, on the reasoning faculties than on the imaginative, accelerated the growth of the



former, and brought them to an earlier maturity ; a result owing mainly to the existence of a large class, who, being the chief depositaries of knowledge, were specially led by their profession, and by the critical and stirring circumstances of the times, to a diligent pursuit of all studies concerning the moral and spiritual nature of man. Hence the philosophical cultivation of our language coincided with its poetical cultivation : and this prematurity was the more easily attainable, inasmuch as the mass of our philosophical words were not of home growth, but imported ready-grown from abroad ; so that, like oranges, they might be in season along with primroses and violets. Yet the natural order was so far upheld, that, while the great age of our poetry is comprised in the last quarter of the sixteenth, and the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the great age of our philosophy and theology reaches down till near the close of the latter. Milton stands alone, and forms a link between the two.

When a nation reaches its noon however, the colours of objects lose much of their brightness ; and even their forms and masses stand out less boldly and strikingly. It occupies itself rather in examining and analysing their details. Finding itself already rich, it lives on its capital, instead of making fresh ventures to increase it, and boasts that this is the only rational, gentlemanly way of living. The superabundant activity, which it will not employ in anything positive, finds a vent in negativeness, — in denying that any previous state of society was comparable to its own, and in issuing peremptory vetoes against all who would try to raise it higher. This is the age when an academy will lay down laws dictatorially, and proclaim what may be said, and what must not, what may be thought, and what must not, — the age when men will scoff at the madness of Xerxes, yet themselves try to fling their chains over the ever-rolling, irrepressible ocean of thought. Nay, they will scoop out a mimic sea in their pleasure-ground, and make it ripple and bubble, and spout up prettily into the air, and then fancy that they are taming the Atlantic ; which however keeps advancing upon them, until it sweeps them away with their



toys. The interdict against every new word or expression during the century previous to the Revolution in France was only one chapter of the interdict which society then enacted against everything genial: and here too that restlessness, which can never be wholly allayed, became negative; and all that was genial was in sin. The dull flat of the *Henriade* abutted on the foaming hellpool of the *Pucelle*.

The futility of all attempts to check the growth of a language, so long at least as a nation continues to exercise any activity even in the lower departments of thought, is proved by the successive editions of the Dictionary published by the French Academy. Not content with crushing and stifling freedom in the State, Richelieu's ambition aimed at becoming autocrat of the French language. He would have had no word uttered throughout the realm, until he had countersigned it. But ancient usage and the wants of progressive civilization were too mighty for him. Every time the Academy have issued their Dictionary afresh, they have found themselves compelled to admit a number of new words into their censorial register: and in the last fifty years more especially a vast influx has taken place. If we look into their modern writers, even into those who, like Chateaubriand, while they acknowledge the power of the present, still retain a reverent allegiance to the past, we find new words ever sprouting up: and the popular literature of *la jeune France*, of those who are the minions, deeming themselves the lords, of the present, seems in language and style, as well as in morals, to bear the character of slavery that has burst its bonds, to be as it were an insurrection of intellectual negroes, rioting in the licence of a lawless, fetterless will.

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U.

That in writing Latin no word should be used, unless sanctioned by the authority of Cicero, or of the Augustan age, is, I believe, a purely modern notion,—and an utterly absurd one, if extended to anything else than a scholastic exercise. For Cicero first taught Philosophy to talk with elegance in Latin; and in doing so he often went round the mark, rather than



straight to it : whereas the fitting of a language to be an instrument of reflective and speculative thought must be the work of many minds, and of more than one generation. A number of new ideas were drawn forth by the discipline of adversity during the first century of the empire. Repelled from outward objects, which till then had been all in all to the Romans, men turned their eyes inward, and explored the depths of their own nature, if so be they might discover something there that would stand firm against the shock and amid the ruin of the world ; while all forms of evil were shooting up in loathsome enormity on every side. Hence the writers in the days of Nero, and those in the days of Trajan, had much to say, and said much, that had never entered into the minds of their forefathers. In the latter ages of Roman literature attempts were made to revive many antiquated words : but no life could be restored to them ; and they merely lie like the bones of the dead around a decaying body. For the regeneration of a language can never be genuine and lasting, except so far as it goes along with a regeneration of the national mind : whereas the Roman mind was dying away, and had no longer the power of incorporating the new regions of thought thrown open to it. A flood of barbarisms rushed in : Christianity came, with its host of spiritualities : all the mysteries of man's nature were to find utterance in Latin, which had always been better fitted for the forum than for the schools. It became the language of the learned, when learning was unfortunately cut off from communion with actual life, and when the past merely lay as a huge, shapeless shadow spread out over the germs of the future. Yet, so indispensable is the power of producing new words to a language, when it is applied to any practical use, Latin, even after it had ceased to be spoken, still retained a sort of life, like that which lingers in the bark of a hollow tree long after its core has mouldered away : and still for centuries it kept on putting forth a few fresh leaves.

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U.

A sort of English has been very prevalent during the last hundred years, in which the sentences have a meaning, but the



words have little or none. As in a middling landscape the general outlines may be correct, and the forms distinguishable, while the details are hazy and indefinite and confused; so here the abstract proposition designed to be exprest is so; but hardly a word is used for which half a dozen synonyms might not have stood equally well: whereas the test of a good style, as Coleridge observes (*Biog. Lit.* ii. 162), is "its untranslatableness in words of the same language, without injury to the meaning." This may be called Scotch English; not as being exclusively the property of our northern brethren; but because the celebrated Scotch writers of the last century are in the first rank of those who have emboweled the substantial, roast-beef and plum-pudding English of our forefathers. Their precedence in this respect is intimately connected with their having been our principal writers on metaphysical subjects since the days of Locke and Shaftesbury and Thomas Burnet and Berkeley and Butler. For metaphysical writers, especially when they belong to a school, and draw their principles from their master's cistern through conduit after conduit, instead of going to the well of Nature, are very apt to give us vapid water instead of fresh. Attaching little importance to anything but abstractions, and being almost without an eye, except for colourless shadows, they merge whatever is individual in that which is merely generic, and let this living universe of infinite variety drop out of sight in the menstruum of a technical phraseology. They lose the sent in the cry, but keep on yelping without finding out their loss: not a few too join in the cry, without having ever caught the sent. How far this will go, may be seen in the dead language of the Schoolmen, who often deal with their words just as if they were so many counters, the rust having eaten away every atom of the original impress. In like manner, when the dry rot gets into the house of a German philosopher, his disciples pick up handfuls of the dust, and fancy it will serve instead of timbers. Even Greek, notwithstanding the vivacity both of the people and the language, lost much of its life and grace in the hands of the later philosophers. Accordingly this Scotch English is the usual style of our writers on speculative subjects.



Opposite to this, and almost the converse of it, is Irish English; in which every word taken by itself means, or is meant to mean something; but he who looks for any meaning in a sentence, might as well look for a green field in St. Gileses. Every Irishman, the saying goes, has a potato in his head: many, I think, must have a whole crop of them. At least the words of their orators are wont to roll out just like so many potatoes from the mouth of a sack, round, and knobby, and rumbling, and pothering, and incoherent. This style too is common nowadays, especially that less kindly, and therefore less Irish modification of it, where the potatoes become prickly, and every word must be smart, and every syllable must have its point, if not its sting. No style is so well suited to scribblers for magazines and journals, and other like manufactures of squibs which are to explode at once, and which, if they did not crack and flash, would vanish without anybody's heeding them.

What then is English English? It is the combination of the two; not that vulgar combination in which they would neutralize, but that in which they strengthen and give effect to each other; where the unity of the whole is not disturbed by the elaborate thrusting forward of the parts, as that of a Dutch picture is often by a herring or an onion, a silk-gown or a rut; nor is the canvas daubed over with slovenly haste to fill up the outline, as in many French and later Italian and Flemish pictures; but where, as in the works of Raphael and Claude, and of their common mistress, Nature, well-defined and beautiful parts unite to make up a well-defined and beautiful whole. This, like all good things, all such good things at least as are the products of human labor and thought, is rare: but it is still to be found among us. The exquisite purity of Wordsworth's English has often been acknowledged. An author in whose pages the combination is almost always realized, and many of whose sentences are like crystals, each separate word in them being itself a lucid crystal, has been quoted several times above. And everybody has seen the writings of another, who may convince the most desponding worshiper of bygone excellence, that our language has not yet been so diluted and enervated, but



Swift, were he living in these days, would still find plain words to talk plain sense in. Nor do they stand alone. In this at least we may boast with Sthenelus, that we are better than our fathers: only they who indulge in such a boast, should remind themselves of their duty, by following it up with Hector's prayer, that our children may be much better than we are. Southey's writings, in style, as in other respects, have almost every merit except the highest. Arnold's style is worthy of his manly understanding, and the noble simplicity of his character. And the new History of Greece is the antipode to its predecessor in this quality, no less than in every other.—1836.

U.

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A word which has no precise meaning, will poorly fulfil its office of being a sign and guide of thought: and if it be connected with matters interesting to the feelings, or of practical moment, it may easily become mischievous. Now in a language like ours, in which the abstract terms are mostly imported from abroad, such terms, when they get into general circulation, are especially liable to be misunderstood and perverted; inasmuch as few can have any distinct conception what their meaning really is, or how they came by it. Having neither tap-roots, nor lateral roots, they are easily shaken and driven out of line; and one gust may blow them on one side, another on another side. Hence arises a confusion of tongues, even within the pale of the same language; and this breeds a confusion of thoughts. Of all classes of paralogisms the most copious is that where a word, used in one sense in the premiss, slips another sense into the conclusion.

For instance, no small part of the blunders made by modern theorizers on education may be traced to their ignorance or forgetfulness that *education* is something more than *instruction*, and that instruction is only the most prominent part of it,—but the part which requires the least care, the least thought, and is practically of the least importance. Nor is this error confined to theorizers: it has crept into every family. Most parents, of whatsoever rank or condition, fancy they have done



all they need do for the education of their children, when they have had them taught such things as custom requires that persons of their class should learn: although with a view to the formation of character, the main end and object of education, it would be almost as reasonable to read a treatise on botany to a flower-bed, under a notion of making the plants grow and blossom. Nay, even those who set themselves to instruct youth, too often forget that their aim should be to unfold and discipline and strengthen the minds of their pupils, to inspire them with a love of knowledge, and to improve their faculties for acquiring it, and not merely to load and stuff them with a certain ready-made quantity of knowledge; which is only power, when it is living, firmly grounded, reproducible, and expansive.

So again there is a tribe of errors, both speculative and practical, which have arisen from the mistaking of *Administration* for *Government*, and the confounding of their appropriate provinces and functions. In our country the *Ministry* have long been vulgarly termed the *Government*; and the *Prime Minister* is strangely misnamed the *head of the Government*; although they have no constitutional existence, and are therefore removable at the pleasure of a sovereign or a parliament: so that, were they indeed the *Government*, and not merely the creatures and agents of a more permanent body, we should be the sport of chance and caprice, as has ever happened to a people when fallen under a despotism. Yet, as they have usurped the name, so have they in great measure the executive part of the office. Thus it has come to pass that, from the Land's End to John of Groat's House, scarcely a man any longer remembers that the business of governors is to govern. Above all have those who call themselves the *Government* forgotten this, persuading themselves that their duty is to be the servants, or rather the slaves, of circumstances and of public opinion. The divine exhortation, — *He that would be chief among you, let him be your servant*, that is, by his own will and deed, — whereby we are called to follow the example of Him who came not to be ministered to, but to minister, — is popularly misread after the Jewish fashion, — *Make him your ser-*



*vant, yea, your slave, and give him the slave's punishment of the cross.* The centralizing tendency, which rightly belongs to Government, and which has been extended during the last half century to all branches of Administration, both on the Continent, and latterly, after an example rather to have been shunned than followed, in England, is another instance of the same perversion. As a government is one, and should embrace all its subjects with its protecting arms, so it has been thought expedient that the rule of uniformity, the substitute of the understanding for the principle of unity, should be carried through all parts of the State, and that the administration should have a hand, or at least a finger, in every man's business. In speculation too this leads to very erroneous judgements concerning countries and times in which juster views on the distinctive nature of Government and Administration prevailed. It must be owing to this general confusion, that in the recent ingenious and thoughtful Essay *On the Attributes of a Statesman*, though by a writer who mostly evinces the clearness of his understanding by the correctness of his language, the Statesman's real characteristics and duties are scarcely toucht upon: and he who ought to be the man of the State, whose eyes should be fixt on the State, and whose mind and heart should be full of it, shrinks up into the holder of a ministerial office.

No less general, and far more mischievous, is another delusion, by which the same word, *ministry*, is confounded with *the Church*. He who enters into the ministry of the Church, is said *to go into the Church*, as though he were not in it before: the body of the ministers too, the Clergy, are commonly called *the Church*, and, by a very unfortunate, but inevitable consequence, are frequently lookt upon as forming, not merely a part, but the whole church. Hence politically the interests of the Church are deemed to be separate from those of the State; and the Church is accounted a portion of the State: whereas it should be coextensive and coincident therewith; nay, should be the State itself spiritualized, under a higher relation, and in a higher power. Hence too in ordinary life the still greater evil, that the more peculiar duties of the Christian profession, as dis-



inct from those enjoined by human ethics, are held to be incumbent on the Clergy alone: whereby their labours are deprived of help which they might otherwise receive, and which they greatly need. Indeed they themselves are far too ready to monopolize their office, and to regard all interference of the Laity in spiritual or ecclesiastical matters as an impertinent intrusion. On the other hand the Laity, instead of being invited and encouraged to deem themselves integral members of the Church, and sharers in all the blessed duties of Christian fellowship, are led to fancy that these are things in which they have no concern, that all they have to do with the Church is to go on a Sunday to the building which bears its name, and that, if they only bring themselves to listen, they may leave it to the preacher to follow his own exhortations.

I am not contending that in any of these instances the perversion in the meaning of the words has been the sole, or even the main source of the corresponding practical error. Rather has the practical error given birth to the verbal. It is the heart that misleads the head in the first instance nine times, for once that the head misleads the heart. Still error, as well as truth, when it is stamped in words, gains currency, and diffuses and propagates itself, and becomes inveterate, and almost ineradicable. All that large and well-meaning class, who swell the train of public opinion, and who, without energy to do right on their own bottom, would often be loth to do what they recognised to be wrong, are apt to be the lackies of words, and will follow the blind more readily than the seeing. On the other hand, in proportion as every word is the distinct, determinate sign of the conception it stands for, does that conception form part and parcel of the nation's knowledge. Now a language will often be wiser, not merely than the vulgar, but even than the wisest of those who speak it. Being like amber in its efficacy to circulate the electric spirit of truth, it is also like amber in embalming and preserving the relics of ancient wisdom, although one is not seldom puzzled to decipher its contents. Sometimes it locks up truths, which were once well known, but which in the course of ages have past out of sight and been



forgotten. In other cases it holds the germs of truths, of which, though they were never plainly discerned, the genius of its framers caught a glimpse in a happy moment of divination. A meditative man cannot refrain from wonder, when he digs down to the deep thought lying at the root of many a metaphorical term, employed for the designation of spiritual things, even of those with regard to which professing philosophers have blundered grossly : and often it would seem as though rays of truths, which were still below the intellectual horizon, had dawned upon the Imagination as it was looking up to heaven. Hence they who feel an inward call to teach and enlighten their countrymen, should deem it an important part of their duty to draw out the stores of thought which are already latent in their native language, to purify it from the corruptions which Time brings upon all things, and from which language has no exemption, and to endeavour to give distinctness and precision to whatever in it is confused, or obscure, or dimly seen.

And they who have been studious thus to purify their native tongue, may also try to enrich it. When any new conception stands out so broadly and singly as to give it a claim for having a special sign to denote it,—if no word for the purpose can be found in the extant vocabulary of the language, no old word, which, with a slight *clinamen* given to its meaning, will answer the purpose,—they may frame a new one. But he who does not know how to prize the inheritance his ancestors have bequeathed to him, will hardly better or enlarge it. A man should love and venerate his native language, as the first of his benefactors, as the awakener and stirrer of all his thoughts, the frame and mould and rule of his spiritual being, as the great bond and medium of intercourse with his fellows, as the mirror in which he sees his own nature, and without which he could not even commune with himself, as the image in which the wisdom of God has chosen to reveal itself to him. He who thus thinks of his native language will never touch it without reverence. Yet his reverence will not withhold, but rather encourage him to do what he can to purify and improve it. Of this duty no Englishman in our times has shewn himself so well aware as Cole-



ridge: which of itself is a proof that he possess some of the most important elements of the philosophical mind. Nor were his exertions in this way unsuccessful. Several words that he revived, some that he coined, are now become current, at least among writers on speculative subjects: and many are the terms in our philosophical vocabulary, which a while back were scattered about promiscuously, as if they all stood for pretty much the same thing, but which he has stamp'd afresh, so that people begin to have some notion of their meaning. Valuable contributions toward the same end are also to be found in the writings of Mr De Quincey; whose clear and subtile understanding, combined as it is with extensive and accurate learning, fits him above most men for such investigations. — 1836. U.

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A statesman, we are told, should follow public opinion. Doubtless . . . as a coachman follows his horses; having firm hold on the reins, and guiding them.

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Suppose one's horse runs away, what is one to do?

Fling the bridle on his neck, to be sure: and then you will be fit to be prime minister of England.

But the horse might throw me.

That too would be mob-like. They are fond of trampling on those who have bent and cringed to them. — 1836. U.

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Ours till lately was a government of maxims, and perhaps is so in great measure still. The economists want to substitute a despotism of systems. But who, until the coming of Christ's Kingdom, can hope to see a government of principles?

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When a ship has run aground, the boats take her in tow. Is not this pretty much the condition of our government, perhaps of most governments nowadays? The art of governing, even in the sense of steering a state, will soon be reckoned among the lost arts, along with architecture, sacred music, sculpture, historical painting, and epic and dramatic poetry. — 1836. U.

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If a government is to stand a storm, it should have a strong anchorage; and that is only to be found in the past. Custom attaches men in the long run, even more than personal affection, and far more than the clearest conviction; as we see, among many other proofs, in the difficulty of breaking off a bad habit, however bad we may acknowledge and deeply feel it to be.

The power of ancestral institutions has been strikingly manifested of late, on the one hand, in the unwillingness which the main body even of our Reformers, — in spite of party zeal, in spite of the charms of rashness and presumption, in spite of the fascination exercised by the love of destroying, and of rebuilding a new edifice of our own creation, in spite of the delusions of false theories, — have shewn to assail the fundamental principles of the Constitution. On the other hand the same power has been evinced by the rapidity with which the feeling of the nation has been resuming its old level, notwithstanding what has been done to shake and pervert it, not merely by temporary excitements, but by the enormous changes in the distribution of wealth, and by the hordes of human beings that have swarmed wherever Commerce has sounded her bell.

Does any one wish to see the converse, how soon the births of yesterday grow rotten, and send up a stench in the nostrils of a whole people? There is no necessity to cast our eyes back on the ghastly pantomime exhibited in France, when constitution followed constitution, each gaudier and flimsier and more applauded and more detested than its predecessors. Alas! we are witnesses of a similar spectacle at home, where friend and foe are united in condemning and reviling what half a dozen years back was cried up as a marvellous structure of political wisdom, that was to be the glory and the bulwark of England for ages.

This is the curse which waits on man's wilfulness. Of our own works we soon grow weary: today we worship, tomorrow we loathe them. The laws we have imposed on ourselves, knowing how baseless and strengthless they are, we are impatient to throw off: and then we are glad to bow even to a yoke



of iron, if it will but deliver us from the misery of being our own masters. — 1836. U.

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Thrift is the best means of thriving. This is one of the truths that force themselves on the understanding of very early ages, when it is almost the only means: and few truths are such favorites with that selfish, housewifely shrewdness, which has ever been the chief parent and retailer of proverbs. Hence there is no lack of such sayings as, *A pin a-day is a groat a-year. Take care of the pence; and the pounds will take care of themselves.*

Perhaps the former of these saws, which bears such strongly markt features of homelier times, may be out of date in these days of inordinate gains, and still more inordinate desires; when it seems as though nobody could be satisfied, until he has dug up the earth, and drunk up the sea, and outgallopt the sun. Many now are so insensible to the inestimable value of a regular increase, however slow, that they would probably cry out scornfully, *A fig for your groat! Would you have me be at the trouble of picking up and laying by a pin a-day, for the sake of being a groat the richer at the end of the year?*

Still both these maxims, taken in their true spirit, are admirable prudential rules for the whole of our housekeeping through life. Nor is their usefulness limited to the purse. That still more valuable portion of our property, our time, stands equally in need of good husbandry. It is only by making much of our minutes, that we can make much of our days and years. Every stitch that is let down may force us to unravel a score.

Moreover, in the intercourse of social life, it is by little acts of watchful kindness, recurring daily and hourly, — and opportunities of doing kindnesses, if sought for, are for ever starting up, — it is by words, by tones, by gestures, by looks, that affection is won and preserved. He who neglects these trifles, yet boasts that, whenever a great sacrifice is called for, he shall be ready to make it, will rarely be loved. The likelihood is, he will not make it: and if he does, it will be much rather for his



own sake, than for his neighbour's. Many persons indeed are said to be penny-wise and pound-foolish: but they who are penny-foolish will hardly be pound-wise; although selfish vanity may now and then for a moment get the better of selfish indolence. For Wisdom will always have a microscope in her hand.

But these sayings are still more. They are among the highest maxims of the highest prudence, that which superintends the housekeeping of our souls. The reason why people so ill know how to do their duty on great occasions, is, that they will not be diligent in doing their duty on little occasions. Here too let us only take care of the pence; and the pounds will take care of themselves: for God will be the Paymaster. But how will He pay us? In kind doubtless: by supplying us with greater occasions, and enabling us to act worthily of them.

On the other hand, as there is a law of continuity, whereby in ascending we can only mount step by step, so is there a law of continuity, whereby they who descend must sink, and that too with an ever increasing velocity. No propagation or multiplication is more rapid than that of evil, unless it be checked,—no growth more certain. He who is in for a penny, to take another expression belonging to the same family, if he does not resolutely fly, will find he is in for a pound. U.

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Few do all that is demanded of them. Few hands are steady enough to hold out a full cup, without spilling the wine. It is well therefore to have a cup which will contain something beyond the exact measure,—to require more than is absolutely necessary for the end we have in view. A.

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One of the most important, but one of the most difficult things for a powerful mind is, to be its own master. Minerva should always be at hand, to restrain Achilles from blindly following his impulses and appetites, even those which are moral and intellectual, as well as those which are animal and sensual. A pond may lie quiet in a plain; but a lake wants mountains to compass and hold it in. U.





Is it from distrusting our reason, that we are always so anxious to have some outward confirmation of its verdicts? Or is it that we are such slaves to our senses, we cannot lift up our minds to recognise the certainty of any truths, but those which come to us through our eyes and ears? that, though we are willing to look up to the sky now and then, we want the solid ground to stand and lie on?

U.

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I was surprised just now to see a cobweb round a knocker: for it was not on the gate of heaven.

U.

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We are apt to confound the potential mood with the optative. What we wish to do, we think we can do: but when we don't wish a thing, it becomes impossible.

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Many a man's vices have at first been nothing worse than good qualities run wild.

U.

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Examples would indeed be excellent things, were not people so modest that none will set, and so vain that none will follow them.

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Surely half the world must be blind: they can see nothing, unless it glitters.

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A person who had been up in a balloon, was askt whether he did not find it very hot, when he got so near the sun. This is the vulgar notion of greatness. People fancy they shall get near the sun, if they can but discover or devise some trick to lift them from the ground. Nor would it be difficult to point out sundry analogies between these bladders from the wind-vaults of Eolus, and the means and implements by which men attempt to raise themselves. All however that can be effected in this way is happily altogether insignificant. The further we are borne above the plain of common humanity, the colder it grows: we swell out, till we are nigh to bursting: and manifold experience teaches us, that our human strength, like that of



Anteus, becomes weakness, as soon as we are severed from the refreshing and renovating breast of our mighty Mother.

On the other hand, it is in the lowly valley that the sun's warmth is truly genial; unless indeed there are mountains so close and abrupt as to overshadow it. Then noisome vapours may be bred there: but otherwise in the valley may we behold the meaning of the wonderful blessing bestowed upon the meek, that they shall inherit the earth. It is theirs for this very reason, because they do not seek it. They do not exalt their heads like icebergs, — which by the by are driven away from the earth, and cluster, or rather jostle, around the Pole; but they flow along the earth humbly and silently; and, wherever they flow, they bless it; and so all its beauty and all its richness is reflected in their pure, calm, peaceful bosoms. U.

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The inheritance of the earth is promist to the godly. How inseparably is this promise bound up with the command to love our neighbours as ourselves! For what is it to inherit land? To possess it; to enjoy it; to have it as our own. Now if we did love our fellow-men *as ourselves*, if their interests, their joys, their good were as dear to us as our own, then would all their property be ours. We should have the same enjoyment from it as if it were called by our name. We can feel the truth of this in the case of a dear friend, of a brother, — still more in that of a husband and wife, who, though two persons, are in every interest one. Were this love extended to all, it would once more make all mankind one people and one family. To this end the first Christians sought to have all things in common: *neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possest was his own* (Acts iv. 32). In proportion as we grow to think and feel that the concerns of others are no less important to us than our own, in proportion as we learn to share their pleasures and their sorrows, to rejoice with them when they rejoice, and to suffer and mourn with them when they suffer and mourn, in the selfsame measure do we taste the blessedness of the promise that we shall inherit the earth. It is not the narrow span of our own garden, of our own field, that



we then enjoy. Our prosperity does not bound our happiness. That happiness is infinitely multiplied, as we take interest in all that befalls our neighbours, and find an everflowing source of fresh joy in every blessing bestowed on every soul around us. a.

This great Christian truth is beautifully exprest by Augustin in his 32d Treatise on St. John, when he is speaking of the union between the individual Christian and the Church. "Quid enim? tu loqueris omnibus linguis? Loquor, plane, quia omnis lingua mea est, id est, ejus corporis cujus membrum sum. Diffusa Ecclesia per gentes loquitur omnibus linguis: Ecclesia est corpus Christi: in hoc corpore membrum es: cum ergo membrum sis ejus corporis quod loquitur omnibus linguis, crede te loqui omnibus linguis. Unitas enim membrorum caritate concordat; et ipsa unitas loquitur quomodo tunc unus homo loquebatur. — Sed tu forsitan eorum omnium quae dixi nihil habes. Si amas, non nihil habes. Si enim amas unitatem, etiam tibi habet quisquis in illa habet aliquid. Tolle invidiam, et tuum est quod habeo: tollam invidiam, et meum est quod habes. Livor separat; sanitas jungit. Oculus solus videt in corpore: sed numquid soli sibi oculus videt? Et manui videt, et pedi videt, et caeteris membris videt. — Rursus sola manus operatur in corpore: sed numquid sibi soli operatur? Et oculo operatur. — Sic pes ambulando omnibus membris militat: membra caetera tacent, et lingua omnibus loquitur. Habemus ergo Spiritum Sanctum, si amamus Ecclesiam."

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This is the great blessing of marriage, that it delivers us from the tyranny of *Meum* and *Tuum*. Converting each into the other, it endears them both, and turns a slavish, deadening drudgery into a free and joyous service. And by bringing home to every one's heart, that he is something better than a mere self, that he is the part of a higher and more precious whole, it becomes a type of the union between the Church and her Lord.

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To Adam Paradise was home. To the good among his descendants home is Paradise.

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God's first gift to man was religion, and a glimpse of personal liberty: His second was love, and a home, and therein the seeds of civilization. His two great institutions are two great charters, bestowed on every creature that labours, and on women. Had they been respected as they ought, no poor folks would ever have been driven to their work like oxen, and trampled down into mere creeping things; nor would any females have been degraded into brute instruments for glutting the casual passions of the male.

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In giving us sisters, God gave us the best of earthly moral antiseptics; that affinity, in its habitual, intimate, domestic, desensualized intercourse of affection, presenting us with the ideal of love in sexual separation; as marriage, or total identification, does with the ideal of love in sexual union. Indeed it bears the same relation to love, that love bears to human nature; being designed to disentangle love from sense, which is love's selfishness, just as love is to disentangle man from selfishness under all its forms. Yet God again has consecrated sense in marriage; so that its delights are only called in to be purified and minted by religion. If they are forbidden to the appetite, it is to raise their character, and to endow it with a blessing; that, being thus elevated, enriched, and hallowed, they may prove the worthier gift to the chastened and subjected imagination.

Here let me cite a passage from one of the wisest and most delightful works of recent times, which, though its author is sometimes over-fanciful, and not seldom led astray by his Romish prejudices, is full of high and holy thoughts on the loftiest subjects of speculation. "*La passion la plus effrénée et la plus chère à la nature humaine verse seule plus de maux sur la terre que tous les autres vices ensemble. Nous avons horreur du meurtre: mais que sont tous les meurtres réunis, et la guerre même, comparés au vice, qui est comme le mauvais principe, homicide dès le commencement, qui agit sur le possible, tue ce qui n'existe point encore, et ne cesse de veiller sur les sources de la vie pour les appauvrir ou les souiller? Comme il doit*



toujours y avoir dans le monde, en vertu de sa constitution actuelle, une conspiration immense pour justifier, pour embellir, j'ai presque dit, pour consacrer ce vice, il n'y en a pas sur lequel les saintes pages aient accumulé plus d'anathèmes temporels. Le sage nous dénonce les suites funestes des *nuits coupables* (iv. 6) ; et si nous regardons autour de nous, rien ne nous empêche d'observer l'incontestable accomplissement de ces anathèmes. La reproduction de l'homme, qui d'un côté le rapproche de la brute, l'élève de l'autre jusqu'à la pure intelligence, par les lois qui environnent ce grand mystère de la nature, et par la sublime participation accordée à celui qui s'en est rendu digne. Mais que la sanction de ces lois est terrible ! Si nous pouvions apercevoir tous les maux qui résultent des innombrables profanations de la première loi du monde, nous reculérions d'horreur. Nos enfans porteront la peine de nos fautes : nos pères les ont vengés d'avance. Voilà pourquoi la seule religion vraie est aussi la seule qui, sans pouvoir tout dire à l'homme, se soit néanmoins emparée du mariage, et l'ait soumis à de saintes ordonnances. Je crois même que sa législation sur ce point doit être mise au rang des preuves les plus sensibles de sa divinité." De Maistre, *Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg*, i. 59 – 61.

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There are persons who would have us love, or rather obey God, chiefly because he outbids the devil.

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I was told once of a man, who lighted a bonfire in his park, and walkt through it to get a foretaste of hell, and try what it felt like. Surely he who could do this must often have been present at scenes which would have furnisht him with a better likeness.

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U.

Some men treat the God of their fathers as they treat their father's friend. They do not deny him ; by no means : they only deny themselves to him, when he is good enough to call upon them.

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Truth, when witty, is the wittiest of all things.

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*Ridentem dicere verum Quid vetat?* In the first place, all the sour faces in the world, stiffening into a yet more rigid asperity at the least glimpse of a smile. I have seen faces too, which, so long as you let them lie in their sleepy torpour, unshaken and unstirred, have a creamy softness and smoothness, and might beguile you into suspecting their owners of being gentle: but, if they catch the sound of a laugh, it acts on them like thunder, and they also turn sour. Nay, strange as it may seem, there have been such incarnate paradoxes as would rather see their fellowcreatures cry than smile.

But is not this in exact accordance with the spirit which pronounces a blessing on the weeper, and a woe on the laugher?

Not in the persons I have in view. That blessing and woe are pronounced in the knowledge how apt the course of this world is to run counter to the kingdom of God. They who weep are declared to be blessed, not because they weep, but *because they shall laugh*: and the woe threatened to the laughers is in like manner, that *they shall mourn and weep*. Therefore they who have this spirit in them will endeavour to forward the blessing, and to avert the woe. They will try to comfort the mourner, so as to lead him to rejoice: and they will warn the laugher, that he may be preserved from the mourning and weeping, and may exchange his passing for lasting joy. But there are many who merely indulge in the antipathy, without opening their hearts to the sympathy. Such is the spirit found in those who have cast off the bonds of the lower earthly affections, without having risen as yet into the freedom of heavenly love, — in those who have stopt short in the state of transition between the two lives, like so many skeletons, stript of their earthly, and not yet clothed with a heavenly body. It is the spirit of Stoicism, for instance, in philosophy, and of vulgar Calvinism, which in so many things answers to Stoicism, in religion. They who feel the harm they have received from worldly pleasures, are prone at first to quarrel with pleasure of every kind altogether: and it is one of the strange perversities



of our self-will to entertain anger, instead of pity, toward those whom we fancy to judge or act less wisely than ourselves. This however is only while the scaffolding is still standing around the edifice of their Christian life, so that they cannot see clearly out of the windows, and their view is broken up into disjointed parts. When the scaffolding is removed, and they look abroad without hindrance, they are readier than any to delight in all the beauty and true pleasure around them. They feel that it is their blessed calling, not only to *rejoice always* themselves, but likewise to *rejoice with all who do rejoice* in innocence of heart. They feel that this must be well-pleasing to Him who has filled His universe with ever-bubbling springs of gladness; so that, whithersoever we turn our eyes, through earth and sky as well as sea, we behold the ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα of Nature. On the other hand, it is the harshness of an irreligious temper, clothing itself in religious zeal, and not seldom exhibiting symptoms of mental disorganization, that looks scowlingly on every indication of happiness and mirth.

Moreover there is a large class of people, who deem the business of life far too weighty and momentous to be made light of; who would leave merriment to children, and laughter to idiots; and who hold that a joke would be as much out of place on their lips, as on a gravestone, or in a ledger. Wit and Wisdom being sisters, not only are they afraid of being indicted for bigamy were they to wed them both; but they shudder at such a union as incestuous. So, to keep clear of temptation, and to preserve their faith where they have plighted it, they turn the younger out of doors; and if they see or hear of anybody taking her in, they are positive he can know nothing of the elder. They would not be witty for the world. Now to escape being so is not very difficult for those whom Nature has so favoured that Wit with them is always at zero, or below it. And as to their Wisdom, since they are careful never to overfeed her, she jogs leisurely along the turnpike-road, with lank and meagre carcass, displaying all her bones, and never getting out of her own dust. She feels no inclination to be frisky, but, if a coach or a waggon passes her, is glad, like her rider, to run behind a



thing so big. Now all these people take grievous offense, if any one comes near them better mounted; and they are in a tremour lest the neighing and snorting and prancing should be contagious.

Surely however ridicule implies contempt: and so the feeling must be condemnable, subversive of gentleness, incompatible with kindness?

Not necessarily so, or universally: far from it. The word *ridicule*, it is true, has a narrow, onesided meaning. From our proneness to mix up personal feelings with those which are more purely objective and intellectual, we have in great measure restricted the meaning of *ridicule*, which would properly extend over the whole region of the *ridiculous*, the laughable, where we may disport ourselves innocently, without any evil emotion; and we have narrowed it so that in common usage it mostly corresponds to *derision*, which does indeed involve personal and offensive feelings. As the great business of Wisdom in her speculative office is to detect and reveal the hidden harmonies of things, those harmonies which are the sources and the overflowing emanations of Law, the dealings of Wit on the other hand are with incongruities. And it is the perception of incongruity, flashing upon us, when unaccompanied, as Aristotle observes (*Poet.* c. v), by pain, or by any predominant moral disgust, that provokes laughter, and excites the feeling of the ridiculous. But it no more follows that the perception of such an incongruity must breed or foster haughtiness or disdain, than that the perception of anything else that may be erroneous or wrong should do so. You might as well argue, that a man must be proud and scornful, because he sees that there is such a thing as sin, or such a thing as folly in the world. Yet, unless we blind our eyes, and gag our ears, and hoodwink our minds, we shall seldom pass through a day, without having some form of evil brought in one way or other before us. Besides the perception of incongruity may exist, and may awaken laughter, without the slightest reprobation of the object laughed at. We laugh at a pun, surely without a shade of contempt either for the words punned upon or for the punster: and if a



very bad pun be the next best thing to a very good one, this is not from its flattering any feeling of superiority in us, but because the incongruity is broader and more glaring. Nor, when we laugh at a droll combination of imagery, do we feel any contempt, but often admiration, at the ingenuity shewn in it, and an almost affectionate thankfulness toward the person by whom we have been amused, such as is rarely excited by any other display of intellectual power; as those who have ever enjoyed the delight of Professor Sedgwick's society will bear witness.

It is true, an exclusive attention to the ridiculous side of things is hurtful to the character, and destructive of earnestness and gravity. But no less mischievous is it to fix our attention exclusively, or even mainly, on the vices and other follies of mankind. Such contemplations, unless counteracted by wholesomer thoughts, harden or rot the heart, deaden the moral principle, and make us hopeless and reckless. The objects toward which we should turn our minds habitually, are those which are great and good and pure, the throne of Virtue, and she who sits upon it, the majesty of Truth, the beauty of Holiness. This is the spiritual sky through which we should strive to mount, "springing from crystal step to crystal step," and bathing our souls in its living, life-giving ether. These are the thoughts by which we should whet and polish our swords for the warfare against evil, that the vapours of the earth may not rust them. But in a warfare against evil, under one or other of its forms, we are all of us called to engage: and it is a childish dream to fancy that we can walk about among mankind without perpetual necessity of remarking that the world is full of many worse incongruities, beside those which make us laugh.

Nor do I deny that a laughter may often be a scoffer and a scorner. Some jesters are fools of a worse breed than those who used to wear the cap. Sneering is commonly found along with a bitter, splenetic misanthropy: or it may be a man's mockery at his own hollow heart, venting itself in mockery at others. Cruelty will try to season, or to palliate its atrocities



by derision. The hyena grins in its den; most wild beasts over their prey. But, though a certain kind of wit, like other intellectual gifts, may coexist with moral depravity, there has often been a playfulness in the best and greatest men, — in Phocion, in Socrates, in Luther, in Sir Thomas More, — which, as it were, adds a bloom to the severer graces of their character, shining forth with amaranthine brightness when storms assail them, and springing up in fresh blossoms under the axe of the executioner. How much is our affection for Hector increased by his tossing his boy in his arms, and laughing at his childish fears! Smiles are the language of love: they betoken the complacency and delight of the heart in the object of its contemplation. Why are we to assume that there must needs be bitterness or contempt in them, when they enforce a truth, or reprove an error? On the contrary, some of those who have been richest in wit and humour, have been among the simplest and kindest-hearted of men. I will only instance Fuller, Bishop Earle, Lafontaine, Matthes Claudius, Charles Lamb. “*Le méchant n'est jamais comique,*” is wisely remarkt by De Maitre, when canvassing the pretensions of Voltaire (*Soirées*, i. 273): and the converse is equally true: *le comique, le vrai comique, n'est jamais méchant*. A laugh, to be joyous, must flow from a joyous heart; but without kindness there can be no true joy. And what a dull, plodding, tramping, clanking would the ordinary intercourse of society be, without wit to enliven and brighten it! When two men meet, they seem to be kept at bay through the estranging effects of absence, until some sportive sally opens their hearts to each other. Nor does anything spread cheerfulness so rapidly over a whole party, or an assembly of people, however large. Reason expands the soul of the philosopher; Imagination glorifies the poet, and breathes a breath of spring through the young and genial: but, if we take into account the numberless glances and gleams whereby Wit lightens our everyday life, I hardly know what power ministers so bountifully to the innocent pleasures of mankind.

Surely too it cannot be requisite to a man's being in earnest, that he should wear a perpetual frown. Or is there less of sin-



cerity in Nature during her gambols in spring, than during the stiffness and harshness of her wintry gloom? Does not the bird's blithe caroling come from the heart, quite as much as the quadruped's monotonous cry? And is it then altogether impossible to take up one's abode with Truth, and to let all sweet homely feelings grow about it and cluster around it, and to smile upon it as on a kind father or mother, and to sport with it and hold light and merry talk with it as with a loved brother or sister, and to fondle it and play with it as with a child? In this wise did Socrates and Plato commune with Truth; in this wise Cervantes and Shakspeare. This playfulness of Truth is beautifully represented by Landor, in the Conversation between Marcus Cicero and his brother, in an allegory which has the voice and the spirit of Plato. On the other hand the outcries of those who exclaim against every sound more lively than a bray or a bleat, as derogatory to Truth, are often prompted, not so much by their deep feeling of the dignity of the truth in question, as of the dignity of the person by whom that truth is asserted. It is our vanity, our self-conceit, that makes us so sore and irritable. To a grave argument we may reply gravely, and fancy that we have the best of it: but he who is too dull or too angry to smile, cannot answer a smile except by fretting and fuming? Olivia lets us into the secret of Malvolio's distaste for the Clown.

For the full expansion of the intellect moreover, to preserve it from that narrowness and partial warp, which our proneness to give ourselves up to the sway of the moment is apt to produce, its various faculties, however opposite, should grow and be trained up side by side, should twine their arms together, and strengthen each other by love-wrestles. Thus will it be best fitted for discerning and acting upon the multiplicity of things which the world sets before it. Thus too will something like a balance and order be upheld, and our minds be preserved from that exaggeration on the one side, and depreciation on the other side, which are the sure results of exclusiveness. A poet for instance should have much of the philosopher in him; not indeed thrusting itself forward at the surface, — this would only



make a monster of his work, like the Siamese twins, neither one thing, nor two, — but latent within: the spindle should be out of sight; but the web should be spun by the Fates. A philosopher on the other hand should have much of the poet in him. A historian cannot be great, without combining the elements of the two minds. A statesman ought to unite those of all the three. A great religious teacher, such as Socrates, Bernard, Luther, Schleiermacher, needs the statesman's practical power of dealing with men and things, as well as the historian's insight into their growth and purpose: he needs the philosopher's ideas, impregnated and impersonated by the imagination of the poet. In like manner our graver faculties and thoughts are much chastened and bettered by a blending and interfusion of the lighter, so that "the sable cloud" may "turn forth her silver lining on the night:" while our lighter thoughts require the graver to substantiate them and keep them from evaporating. Thus Socrates is said in Plato's *Banquet* to have maintained that a great tragic poet ought likewise to be a great comic poet: an observation the more remarkable, because the tendency of the Greek mind, as at once manifested in their Polytheism, and fostered by it, was to insulate all its ideas, and as it were to split up the intellectual world into a cluster of Cyclades; whereas the appetite for union and fusion, often leading to confusion, is the characteristic of modern times. The combination however was realized in himself, and in his great pupil, and may perhaps have been so to a certain extent in Eschylus, if we may judge from the fame of his satyric dramas. At all events the assertion, as has been remarkt more than once, — for instance by Coleridge (*Remains* ii. 12), — is a wonderful prophetic intuition, which has received its fulfilment in Shakspeare. No heart would have been strong enough to hold the woe of Lear and Othello, except that which had the unquenchable elasticity of Falstaff and the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. He too is an example that the perception of the ridiculous does not necessarily imply bitterness and scorn. Along with his intense humour, and his equally intense, piercing insight into the darkest, most fearful depths of human nature,



there is still a spirit of universal kindness, as well as universal justice, pervading his works: and Ben Jonson has left us a precious memorial of him, where he calls him "*My gentle Shakspeare.*" This one epithet sheds a beautiful light on his character: its truth is attested by his wisdom; which could never have been so perfect, unless it had been harmonized by the gentleness of the dove. A similar union of the graver and lighter powers is found in several of Shakspeare's contemporaries, and in many others among the greatest poets of the modern world; in Boccaccio, in Cervantes, in Chaucer, in Goethe, in Tieck: so was it in Walter Scott.

But He who came to set us an example how we ought to walk, never indulged in wit or ridicule, and thereby shewed that such levities are not becoming in those who profess to follow Him.

I have heard this argument alledged, but could never feel its force. Jesus did indeed set us an example, which it behoves us to follow in all things: we cannot follow it too closely, too constantly. It is the spirit of His example however, that we are to follow, not the letter. We are to endeavour that the principles of our actions may be the same which He manifested in His, but not to cleave servilely to the outward form. For, as He did many things, which we cannot do, — as He had a power and a wisdom, which lie altogether beyond our reach, — so are there many things which beseem us in our human, earthly relations, but which it did not enter into His purpose to sanction by His express example. Else on the selfsame grounds it might be contended, that it does not befit a Christian to be a husband or a father, seeing that Jesus has set us no example of these two sacred relations. It might be contended with equal justice, that there ought to be no statesmen, no soldiers, no lawyers, no merchants, — that no one should write a book, — that poetry, history, philosophy, science, ought all to be thrown overboard, and banisht for ever from the field of lawful human occupations. As rationally might it be argued, that, because there are no trees or houses in the sky, it is therefore profane and sinful to plant trees and build houses on the earth.



Jeremy Taylor, in his *Exhortation to the Imitation of the Life of Christ*, when speaking of the things which Christ did, but which are not "imitable by us," touches on this very point (Vol. ii. p. LXVII). "We never read (he says) that Jesus laught, and but once that He rejoiced in spirit: but the declensions of our natures cannot bear the weight of a perpetual grave deportment, without the intervals of refreshment and free alacrity."

In fact the aim and end of all our Lord's teaching, — to draw men away from sin to the knowledge and love of God, — was such, that wit and ridicule, even had they been compatible with the pure heavenliness of His spirit, could have found no place in it. For the dealings of Wit are with incongruities, regarded intellectually, rather than morally, — with absurdities and follies, rather than with vices and sins: and when it attacks the latter, it tries chiefly to point out their absurdity and folly, the moral feeling being for the time kept half in abeyance. But though there is no recorded instance of our Lord's making use of any of the weapons of wit, — nor is it conceivable that He ever did so, — a severe, taunting irony is sanctioned by the example of the Hebrew Prophets, — as in Isaiah's sublime invective against idolatry, and in Elijah's controversy with the priests of Baal, — and by that of St. Paul, especially in the fourth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians. Surely too one may say with Milton, in his *Animadversions on the Remonstrant*, that "this vein of laughing hath oftentimes a strong and sinewy force in teaching and confuting;" and that, "if it be harmful to be angry, and withal to cast a lowering smile, when the properest object calls for both, it will be long enough ere any be able to say, why those two most rational faculties of human intellect, anger and laughter, were first seated in the breast of man." In like manner Schleiermacher, who was gifted with the keenest wit, and who was the greatest master of irony since Plato, deemed it justifiable and right to make use of these powers, as Pascal also did, in his polemical writings. Yet all who knew him well declare that the basis of his character, the keynote of his whole being, was love; — and so, when I had



the happiness of seeing him, I felt it to be;—a love which delighted in pouring out the boundless riches of his spirit for the edifying of such as came near him, and strove with unwearyable zeal to make them partakers of all that he had. Hereby was his heart kept fresh through the unceasing and often turbulent activity of his life, so that the subtilty of his understanding had no power to corrode it; but when he died, he was still, as one of his friends said of him, *ein fünf-und-sechzigjähriger Jüngling*. To complain of his wit and irony, as some do, is like complaining of a sword for being sharp. So long as error and evil passions lift up their heads in literature, the soldiers of Truth must go forth against them: and seldom will it be practicable to fulfil the task imposed upon Shylock, and cut out a noxious opinion, especially where there is an inflammable habit, without shedding a drop of blood. In fact, would it not be something like a mockery, when we deem it our duty to wage battle, were we to shrink from using the weapons which God has placed in our hands? Only we must use them fairly, lawfully, for our cause, not for display, still less in mangling or wantonly wounding our adversaries.

After all however I allow that the feeling of the ridiculous can only belong to the imperfect conditions and relations of humanity. Hence I have always felt a shock of pain, almost of disgust, at reading that passage in *Paradise Lost*, where, in reply to Adam's questions about the stars, Raphael says,

The Great Architect

Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge  
His secrets, to be scanned by them who ought  
Rather admire; or, if they list to try  
Conjecture, He His fabric of the heavens  
Hath left to their disputes, *perhaps to move*  
*His laughter at their quaint opinions wide*  
*Hereafter*. When they come to model heaven,  
And calculate the stars, how they will wield  
The mighty frame, how build, unbuild, contrive  
To save appearances, how gird the sphere  
With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,  
Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb, —  
Already by thy reasoning this I guess.



Milton might indeed appeal to certain passages in the Old Testament, such as *Psaln* ii. 4, *Prov.* i. 26: but the bold and terrible anthropopathy of those passages can nowise justify a Christian in attributing such a feeling to God; least of all as excited by a matter of purely speculative science, without any moral pravity. For in the sight of God the only folly is wickedness. The errors of His creatures, so far as they are merely errors of the understanding, are nothing else than the refraction of the light, from the atmosphere in which He has placed them. Even we can perceive and acknowledge how the aberrations of Science are necessary stages in her progress: and an astronomer nowadays would only shew his own ignorance, and his incapacity of looking beyond what he sees around him, if he were to mock at the Ptolemaic system, or could not discern how in its main principles it was the indispensable prelude to the Copernican. While the battle is pending, we may attack an inveterate error with the missiles of ridicule, as well as in close fight, reason to reason: but, when the battle is won, we are bound to do justice to the truth which lay at its heart, and which was the source of its power. In either case it is a sort of blasphemy to attribute our puny feelings to Him, before whom the difference between the most ignorant man and the least ignorant is only that the latter has learnt a few more letters in the alphabet of knowledge. Above all is it offensive to represent the Creator as purposely throwing an appearance of confusion over His works, that He may enjoy the amusement of laughing at the impotent attempts of His creatures to understand them. U.

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Nobody who is afraid of laughing, and heartily too, at his friend, can be said to have a true and thorough love for him: and on the other hand it would betray a sorry want of faith, to distrust a friend because he laughs at you. Few men, I believe, are much worth loving, in whom there is not something well worth laughing at. That frailty, without some symptoms of which man has never been found, and which in the bad forms the gangrene for their vices to rankle and fester in, shews itself



also in the best men, and attaches itself even to their virtues. Only in them it appears mainly in occasional awkwardnesses and waywardnesses, in their falling short or stepping aside now and then, rather than in their absolute abandonment of the path of duty. It is the earthly particle which tints the colourless ray, and without which that ray is no object of human vision. It gives them their determinate features and characteristic expression, constituting them real persons, instead of mere personified ideas. This too is the very thing that enables us to sympathize with them as with our brethren, under deeper and gentler feelings than those of a stargazing wonder. Now this incongruity and incompleteness, this contrast between the pure, spiritual principle and the manner and form of its actual manifestation, contain the essence of the ridiculous. The discord, coming athwart the tune, and blending with it, when not harsh enough to be painful, is ludicrous.

At times too the very majesty of a principle will make, what in another case would scarcely have attracted notice, appear extravagant. The higher a tree rises, the wider is the range of its oscillations : and thus it comes to pass that there is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous. Nor is it merely that the effect is deepened by the contrast. There is ever a Socratic playfulness in true magnanimity ; so that, feeling the inadequateness of all earthly raiment, — finding too that, even when it comes to its home, it must come as a stranger and an alien, — it is not unwilling to clothe itself, like the godlike Ulysses, in rags. At nothing else can one laugh with such goodwill, and at the same time with such innocence and good-humour. Nor can any laugh be freer from that contempt, which has so erroneously been supposed to be involved in the feeling of the ridiculous. The steadfast assurance and unshakable loyalty of love are evinced, not in blinking and looking aside from the object we profess to regard, and leering on some imaginary counterfeit, some puppet of our own fancies, trickt out in such excellences as our gracious caprice may bestow on it ; but in gazing fixedly at our friend such as he is, admiring what is great in him, approving what is good, delighting in what is amiable, and



retaining our admiration and approbation and delight unsullied and unimpaired, at the very moment when we are vividly conscious that he is still but a man, and has something in him of human weakness, something of whimsical peculiarity, or something of disproportionate enthusiasm.

U.

Every age has its besetting sins; every condition its attendant evils; every state of society its diseases, that it is especially liable to be attackt by. One of the pests which dog Civilization, the more so the further it advances, is the fear of ridicule: and seldom has the contagion been so noxious as in England at this day. Is there anybody living, among the upper classes at least, who has not often been laught out of what he ought to have done, and laught into what he ought not to have done? Who has not sinned? who has not been a runagate from duty? who has not stifled his best feelings? who has not mortified his noblest desires? solely to escape being laught at? and not once merely; but time after time; until that which has so often been checkt, becomes stunted, and no longer dares lift up its head. And then, after having been laught down ourselves, we too join the pack who go about laughing down others.

The robbers and monsters of the olden time no longer infest the world: but the race of scoffers have jump't into their shoes. Your silver and gold you may carry about you securely: of your genius and virtue the best part must be lockt up out of sight. For the man of the world is the Procrustes, who lays down his bed across the highroad, and binds all passers-by to it. To fall short of it indeed is scarcely possible; and so none need fear being pulled out; but whatever transgresses its limits is cut off without mercy. One of these beds, of a newly invented kind, set up mainly for authors, has blue curtains with yellow trimmings; the drapery of a second is of a dingy, watery mud-colour: for in this respect Procrustes has grown more refined with the age: his bed has got curtains. Unfortunately there is no Theseus to rid us of him: and the hearts of the rabble are with him, and lift up a shout as every new victim falls into his clutches. Nor do the direct outrages committed



by such men make up the whole of their mischief. Their baneful influence spreads far more widely. Doing no good to those whom they attack, but merely maiming or irritating them, they at the same time check and frighten others; and delude and warp the judgement, while they pamper the malignant passions of the multitude.

But do not these evils amply justify a sentence of transportation for life against jesting and ridicule? and would it not be well if we could banish our wits to grin amuck with savages and monkeys?

By no means. If people would discern and distinguish, instead of confusing and confounding, they would see that the best way of putting down the abuse of a thing, is to make it useful. Would you lop off every body's hands, because they might be turned to picking and stealing? Neither is the intellect to be shorn of any of its members; seeing that, though they may all be perverted, they may all minister to good. The busy have no time to be fidgety. He who is following his plough, will not be breaking windows with the mob. Little is gained by overthrowing and sweeping away an idol, unless you restore the idea, of which it is the shell and sediment. Nor will you find any plan so effective for keeping folks from doing harm, as teaching them to employ their faculties in doing good, and giving them plenty of good work to do. U.

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No one stumbles so readily as the blind: no one is so easily scandalized as the ignorant; or at least as the half-knowing, as those who have just taken a bite at the apple of knowledge, and got a smattering of evil, without an inkling of good.

But are we not to beware lest we *offend any of these little ones*?

Assuredly: we are to beware of it from love; or, if love cannot constrain us, from fear. No wise man, as was remarked above (p. 167), will offend the weak, in that which pertains to their faith. For this is a portion of the offense condemned in the Gospel: it is offending *the little ones who believe in Christ*. In the whole too of his direct intercourse with others, the wise man's principle will be the same: for he will be desirous of



instructing, not of imposing, and, that he may be able to teach, will try to conciliate. Thus will he act, after the example of him, in whom, above all men, we behold the conscious self-abasement and reasonable self-sacrifice of the loftiest and mightiest intellect, the Apostle Paul. Like St Paul, every wise man will to the weak become as weak, that he may gain the weak: like him he will be made all things to all men;—not in that worldly spirit which is made all things to all men for its own ends,—but in order that he may by whatsoever means benefit some. He who wishes to edify, does not erect a column, as it were a gigantic I, a huge mark of admiration at himself, within which none can find shelter, and which contains nothing beyond a stair to mount through it. He will build the lowly cottage for the lowly, as well as the lordly castle for the lordly, and the princely palace for the princely, and the holy church for the holy. Or, if to effect all this surpass the feebleness of a single individual, he will do what he can. He will lay out and garnish such a banquet as his means enable him to provide; taking care indeed that no dish, which in itself is poisonous or unwholesome, be set on his table: and so long as he does not invite those who are likely to be disgusted or made sick, he is nowise to blame, if they choose to intrude among his guests, and to disgust themselves. When they find themselves out of their places, let them withdraw: the meek will. A man's servants complained of his feeding them on salmon and venison: the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego did not like bread or wine: reason enough for not forcing what they disliked down their throats: but no reason at all for not giving bread and wine to a European, or for not placing salmon and venison before such as relish them.

They who would have no milk for babes, are in the wrong. They who would have no strong meat for strong men, are not in the right.

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U.

Neither the ascetics, nor the intolerant antiascetics, seem to be aware that the austere Baptist and the social Jesus are merely opposite sides of the same tapestry.

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It is a strange way of shewing our humble reverence and love for the Creator, to be perpetually condemning and reviling everything that He has created. Were you to tell a poet that his poems are detestable, would he thank you for the compliment? The evil on which it behoves us to fix our eyes, is that within ourselves, of our own begetting; the good, without. The half religious are apt just to reverse this. U.

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If the Bible be, what it professes, a published code of duty, conventional morality at best consists only of man's conjectural emendations. Generally they are mere fingermarks.

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The difference between man's law and God's law is, that, whereas we may reach the highest standard set before us by the former, the more we advance in striving to fulfill the latter, the higher it keeps on rising above us. a.

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When a man is told that the whole of Religion and Morality is summed up in the two commandments, to love God, and to love our neighbour, he is ready to cry, like Charoba in Gebir, at the first sight of the sea, *Is this the mighty ocean? is this all?* Yes! all: but how small a part of it do your eyes survey! Only trust yourself to it; lanch out upon it; sail abroad over it: you will find it has no end: it will carry you round the world. U.

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He who looks upon religion as an antidote, may soon grow to deem it an anodyne: and then he will not have far to sink, before he takes to swallowing it as an opiate, or, it may be, to swilling it as a dram. U.

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The only way of setting the Will free is to deliver it from wilfulness. U.

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Nothing in the world is lawless, except a slave.

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What hypocrites we seem to be, whenever we talk of our-



selves! Our words sound so humble, while our hearts are so proud.

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a.

Many men are fond of displaying their fortitude in bearing pain. But I never saw any one courting blame, to shew how well he can stand it. They who do speak ill of themselves, do so mostly as the surest way of shewing how modest and candid they are.

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u.

There are persons who would lie prostrate on the ground, if their vanity or their pride did not hold them up.

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u.

How coarse is our use of words! of such at least as belong to spiritual matters. *Pride* and *Vanity* are for ever spoken of side by side; and many suppose that they are merely different shades of the same feeling. Yet so far are they from being akin, they can hardly find room in the same breast. A proud man will not stoop to be vain: a vain man is so busy in bowing and wriggling to catch fair words from others, that he can never lift up his head into pride.

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u.

Pride in former ages may have been held in too good repute: Vanity is so now. Pride, which is the fault of greatness and strength, is sneered at and abhorred: to Vanity, the froth and consummation of weakness, every indulgence is shewn. For Pride stands aloof by itself; and that we are too mob-like to bear: Vanity is unable to stand, except by leaning on others, and is careful therefore of giving offense; nay, is ready to fawn on those by whom it hopes to be fed. This is one of the main errors in Miss Edgeworth's views on education, that she is not only indulgent to Vanity, but almost encourages and fosters it: and this error renders her books for children mischievous, notwithstanding her strong sense, and her familiarity with their habits and thoughts. Indeed this is the tendency of all our modern education. Of old it was deemed the first business of education to inculcate humility and obedience: nowadays its effect, and not seldom its avowed object, is to inspire selfconceit and selfwill. — 1836.

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u.



In the Bible the body is said to be more than raiment. But many people still read the Bible Hebrew-wise, backward: and thus the general conviction now is that raiment is more than the body. There is so much to gaze and stare at in the dress, one's eyes are quite dazzled and weary, and can hardly pierce through to that which is clothed upon. So too is it with the mind and heart, scarcely less than with the body. a.

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A newborn child may be like a person carried into a foreign land, where everything is strange to him; manners, customs, sentiments, language. Such a person, however old, would have all these things to learn, just like a child.

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The religious are often charged with judging uncharitably of others: and perhaps the charge may at times be deserved. With our narrow, partial views, it is very difficult to feel the evil of an error strongly, and yet to think kindly of him in whom we see it. a.

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Man's first word is *Yes*; his second, *No*; his third and last, *Yes*. Most stop short at the first: very few get to the last. u.

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Who are the most godlike of men? The question might be a puzzling one, unless our language answered it for us: the godliest. u.

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What is the use of the lower orders?

To plough . . and to dig in one's garden . . and to rub down one's horses . . and to feed one's pigs . . and to black one's shoes . . and to wait upon one.

Nothing else?

O yes! to be laughed at in a novel, or in a droll Dutch picture . . and to be cried at in Wilkie, or in a sentimental story.

Is that all?

Why! yes . . no . . what else can they be good for? except to go to church.



Ay! that is well thought of. That must be the meaning of the words, *Blessed are the poor: for theirs is the Kingdom of God.* U.

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At first sight there seems to be a discrepancy between the two statements of the first beatitude given by St Matthew and by St Luke (v. 3. vi. 20). But the experience of missionaries in all ages and countries has reconciled them, and has shewn that the Kingdom of Heaven is indeed the Kingdom both of the poor in spirit and of the poor. U.

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Religion presents few difficulties to the humble, many to the proud, insuperable ones to the vain. A.

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There are two worlds, that of the telescope, and that of the microscope; neither of which can we see with the unassisted natural eye. O. L.

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Surely Shakspeare must have had a prophetic vision of the nineteenth century, when he threw off that exquisite description of "purbblind Argus, all eyes, and no sight." U.

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Some people seem to look upon priests as smugglers, who bring in contraband goods from heaven: and so a company, who call themselves philosophers, go out on the preventive service. U.

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Ajax ought to be the hero of all philosophers. His prayer should be theirs: 'Εν δὲ φάει καὶ ὄλεσσαν. U.

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It has been a matter of argument, whether Poetry or History is the truer.

Has it? Who could ever feel a doubt on the point? History tells us everything that has really happened: whereas Poetry deals only with fictions, as they are called; that is, in plain English, with lies.

Gently! gently! Very few histories tell us what has really



happened. They tell us what somebody or other once conceived to have happened, somebody liable to all the infirmities, physical, intellectual, and moral, by which man's judgement is distorted. Even this seldom comes to us except at third or fourth, or, it may be, at twentieth hand; and a tale, we know, is sure to get a new coat of paint from every successive tenant. Often too they merely tell us what the writer is pleased to think about such a tale, or about half a dozen or a dozen of them that pull each other to pieces.

Then all histories must be good for nothing.

Softly again! There is no better sport than jumping at a conclusion: but it is prudent to look a while before you leap; for the ground has a trick of giving way. Many histories, or, if you like a bigger word, we will say most, are worth very little. Some are only fagots of dry sticks, chopt from trees of divers kinds, and bundled up together. Others are baskets of fruit, over-ripe and half-ripe, chiefly windfalls, crammed in without a leaf to part them, and pressing against and mashing one another. Others again are mere bags of soot swept down from the chimney through which the fire of human action once blazed. Still there are histories the worth of which is beyond estimation. Almost all autobiographies have a value scarcely inferior to their interest; not only where the author has Stilling's simple naivety, or Goethe's clear-sighted, Socratic irony, and power of representing every object with the hues and spirit of life; but even where his vanity stings him to make himself out a prodigy of talents, like Cellini, or a prodigy of worthlessness, like Rousseau. Other biographies, in proportion as they approach to the character of autobiography, when they are written by those who loved and were familiar with their subjects, who had an eye for the tokens of individual character, and could pick up the words as they dropt from living lips, are wholesome and nourishing reading. There is much that is beautiful in Walton's *Lives*, though mixt with a good deal of gossip; and few books so refresh and lift up one's heart, as the *Life of Oberlin*, *Lucy Hutchinson's* of her husband, and *Roper's* of Sir Thomas More. *Memoirs* too, such as *Xenophon's* and *Cesar's*, those of *Frederic*



the Great, of Sir William Temple, and many others, in which the author relates the part he himself took in public life, and the affairs he was directly concerned in, contain much instructive information, more especially for those who follow a like calling. The richness of the French in memoirs, arising from their social spirit, has tended much to foster and cultivate that spirit, and schooled and trained them to that diplomatic skill, for which they have so long been celebrated. Still more precious is the story of his own time recorded by a statesman, who has trod the field of political action, and has stood near the source of events, and looked into it, when he has indeed a statesman's discernment, and knows how men act, and why. Such are the great works of Clarendon, of Tacitus, of Polybius, above all, of Thucydides. The latter has hitherto been, and is likely to continue unequalled. For the sphere of History since his time has been so manifoldly enlarged, it is scarcely possible now for any one mind to circumnavigate it. Besides the more fastidious nicety of modern manners shrinks from that naked exposure of the character as well as of the limbs, which the ruder ancients took no offense at: and machinery is scarcely doing less towards superseding personal energy in politics and war, than in our manufactures; so that history may come ere long to be written without mention of a name. In Thucydides too, and in him alone, there is that union of the poet with the philosopher, which is essential to form a perfect historian. He has the imaginative plastic power, which makes events pass in living array before us, combined with a profound reflective insight into their causes and laws; and all his other faculties are under the dominion of the most penetrative practical understanding.

Well then! good history after all is truer than that lying . . .

I must again stop you, recommending you in future, when the wind changes, to tack like a skilful seaman, not to veer round like a weathercock. The latter is too commonly the practice of those who are beginning to generalize. They are determined to point at something, and care little at what. When you have more experience, you will find out that general propositions, like the wind, are very useful to those who trim their sails by them,



but of no use at all to those who point at them: the former go on; the latter go round. Thucydides, true and profound as he is, cannot be truer or profounder than his contemporary, Sophocles; whom, as well in these qualities, as in the whole tone of his genius and even of his style, he strongly resembles: he cannot be truer or more profound than Shakspeare. So Herodotus is not more true than Homer, and scarcely less: nor would Froissart yield the palm to Chaucer; nor take it from him. You might fairly match Euripides against Xenophon, barring his *Anabasis*: and Livy, like Virgil, would be distanced, were truth to be the winning-post: at least, if he came in first, it would be as the greater poet. To draw nearer home, Goldsmith's poems, even without reckoning the best of them, his inimitable *Vicar*, are truer than his Histories: so, beyond comparison, are Smollett's novels than his; and Walter Scott's than his; and Voltaire's tales than his. Nothing, I grant, can well be truer than Defoe's *History of the Plague*; unless it be his *Robinson Crusoe*. Machiavel indeed found better play for his serpentine wisdom in the intrigues of public than of private life; just as one would rather see a boa coil round a tiger than round a cat. But while Schiller's *Wallenstein* carries us amid the real struggles of the Thirty Years War, in his History it is more like a shamfight at a review. As to your favorite, Hume, he wrote no novels or tales that I know of, except his *Essays*; and full of fiction and truthless as they are, they are hardly more so than his History.

What do you mean? History, good history at least, Thucydides, if you choose, tells us facts; and nothing can be so true as a fact.

Did you never hear a story told two ways?

Yes, a score of ways.

Were they all true?

Probably not one of them.

There may be accounts of facts then, which are not true.

To be sure, when people tell lies.

Often, very often, without. There is not half the falsehood in the world that the falsehearted fancy; much as there may



be ; and greatly as the quantity is increast by suspicion, scratching, as it always does, round every sore place. Three fourths of the misstatements and misrepresentations that we hear, have a different origin. In a number, perhaps the majority of instances, the feelings of the relater give a tinge to what he sees, which his understanding is not free and selfpossest enough to rub off. Manifold discrepancies will arise from differences in the perceptive powers of the organs by which the object was observed ; whether those differences be natural, or result from cultivation, or from peculiar habits of thought. Very often people cannot help seeing diversely, because they are not looking from the same point of view. One man may see a full face ; another, a profile ; another, merely the back of the head. Let each describe what he has seen : the accounts will differ entirely : are they therefore false ? The cloud, which Hamlet, in bitter mockery at his own weakness and vacillation, points out to Polonius, is at one moment a camel, the next a weasel, the third a whale : just so is it with those vapoury, cloudlike, changeface things, which we call facts. The selfsame action may to one man's eyes appear patient and beneficent, to another man crafty and selfish, to a third stupid and porpoise-like. Nay, the same man may often find his view of it alter, as he beholds it in a fainter or fuller light, displaying less or more of its motives and character. But would you not like to take another turn round ? Every fact, you say, if correctly stated, is a truth.

Of course : it is only another word for the same thing.

Rather would I assert that a fact cannot be a truth.

You will not easily persuade me of that.

I do not want to persuade you of anything, except to follow the legitimate dictates of your own reason. I would convince you, or rather help you to convince yourself, that a fact is merely the outward form and sign of a truth, its visible image and body ; and that, of itself and by itself, it can no more be a truth, than a body by itself is a man : although common opinion in the former case, and common parlance in the latter, has trodden down the distinction.



I will not dispute this. But in the account of a fact or an action I include a full exposition of its causes and motives.

It has been said of some books richly garnisht with notes, that the sauce is worth more than the fish : which with regard to the *Pursuits of Literature* may be true, yet the sauce be insipid enough. In like manner would your stuffing seem to be worth a good deal more than your bird. This is the very point where I wish to see you. A historian then has something else to do, beside relating naked facts : a file of newspapers would not be a history. He has to unfold the origin of events, and their connexion, to shew how they hook and are linkt into the "never-ending, still-beginning" chain of causes and consequences, and to carry them home to their birthplace among the ever-multiplying family of Fate. It was the consciousness of this that led the Father of History to preface his account of the wars between the Greeks and Persians with the fables of the reciprocal outrages committed by the Asiatics and Europeans in the mythical ages, and to begin his continuous narrative with the attack of the Lydians on the Ionians. Moreover, as the theme of History is human actions ; for physical occurrences, except so far as they exercise an influence on man, belong to Natural History or to Science ;—the events, I say, which a historian has to relate, being brought about by the agency of man, he has not merely to represent them in their maturity and completion, as actually taking place, but as growing in great measure out of the character of the actors, and having their form and complexion determined thereby. So that human character, as modifying and modified by circumstances, man controlling and controlled by events, must be the historian's ultimate object. Having to represent the actions of men, he can only do this effectively, and so as to awaken an interest and fellowfeeling, by representing men in action. Now this is the first object of the poet : he starts, where the historian ends.

But the historian's facts are true ; the poet's are acknowledgedly fictitious. When I have read Herodotus, I know for certain that Xerxes invaded Greece : after reading Homer, I am left in doubt whether Agamemnon ever sailed against Troy.



And what are you the wiser for being certain of the former fact? or what the less wise for being left in doubt as to the latter? Your mind may be more or less complete as a chronological table: but that is all. The human, the truly philosophical interest in the two stories is much the same, whether the swords were actually drawn, and the blood shed, or no. Or do you think you should be wiser still, could you tell who forged the swords, and from what mine the metal came, and who dug it up? and then again, who made the spades used in the digging, and so on? or how many ounces of blood were shed, and how many corpses were strewn on the plain, and what crops they fattened, and by what birds they were devoured, and by what winds their bones were bleacht! Much information at all events you learn from Homer, of the most trustworthy and valuable kind, the knowledge of his age, of its manners, arts, institutions, habits, its feelings, its spirit, and its faith. Indeed with few ages are we equally familiar: where we are, we must draw our familiarity from other sources beside history. Nay, assume that the facts of the Iliad never took place, that Agamemnon and Achilles and Ajax and Ulysses and Diomedes and Helen were never born of woman, nor ever lived a life of flesh and blood, yet assuredly they did live a higher and more enduring and mightier life in the hearts and minds of their countrymen. So it has been questioned of late years whether William Tell actually did shoot the apple on his boy's head; because a similar story is found among the fables of other countries. I cannot now examine the grounds on which that doubt has been raised: but be they what they may, travel through Switzerland, and you will see that the story of Tell is true; for it lives in the heart of every Swiss, high and low, young and old, learned and simple. A representation of it is to be found, or was so till lately, in every marketplace, almost in every house: and many a boy has had the love of his country; and the resolution to live and die for her freedom, kindled in him by the thought of Tell's boy; many a father, when his eyes were resting on his own children, has blest him who delivered them from the yoke of the stranger, and from the possibility of



being exposed to such a fearful trial, and has said to himself, *Yes . . I too would do as he did.* The true knowledge to be learnt, whether from Poetry or from History, the knowledge of real importance to man for the study of his own nature, — the knowledge which may give him an insight into the sources of his weakness and of his strength, and which may teach him how to act upon himself and upon others, — is the knowledge of the principles and the passions by which men in various ages have been agitated and swayed, and by which events have been brought about ; or by which they might have been brought about, if they were not. Thus in other sciences it matters little whether any particular phenomena were witnessed on such a day at such a place ; provided we have made out the principles they result from, and the laws which regulate them.

Yet how can a poet teach us this with anything like the same certainty as a historian ?

Just as a chemist may illustrate the operations of Nature by an experiment of his own devising, with greater clearness and precision than any outward appearances will allow of. The poet has his principles of human nature, which he is to embody and impersonate ; for to deny his having a mind stored with such principles, is to deny his being a poet. The historian on the other hand has his facts, which he is to set in order and to animate. The first has the foot to measure and make a shoe for : the latter has a ready-made shoe, and must hunt for a foot to put into it. Which shoe is the likeliest to fit well ?

That made on purpose for the foot, if the fellow knows anything of his craft.

Doubtless. But in so saying you have yielded the very point we have been arguing ? You have even admitted more than the equality I pleaded for : you say, the poet is more likely to bring his works into harmony with the principles of human nature than the historian. I believe you are right. An illustration from a kindred art may throw some light on our path. A portrait-painter has all the advantages a historian can have, with a task incomparably less arduous ; his subject being so definite, and of such narrow compass : whereas a poet is in



much the same condition with a person drawing a head for what is not very aptly termed a *historical picture*: the adjective *ideal*, or *imaginative*, or *poetical*, would more fitly describe it. In the former case the artist has the features set before him, and is to breathe life and characteristic expression into them; a life which shall have the calm of permanence, not the fitful flush of the moment; an expression which shall exhibit the entire and enduring character, not the casual predominance of any one temporary feeling. Hereby, as well as by the absence of that complacency with which people are wont to contemplate their own features, and of the effort to put on their sweetest faces, which is not unnatural when their own eyes are to feast on them, ought a portrait to be distinguished from an image in a glass. Yet, notwithstanding the facilities which the portrait-painter has, when compared with a historian, or even a biographer, how few have accomplished anything like what I have been speaking of! in how few of their works have the very best painters come quite up to it! Raphael indeed has always; Holbein, Titian, Velasquez, Rubens, Rembrandt, often; and a few others of the greatest painters now and then. But a head, which is at once an ideal and a real head, that is, in which the features, while they have the vividness and distinctness of actual life, are at the same time correct exponents and symbols of character, will more frequently be met with in a poetical picture. As to a *historical picture*, rightly deserving of that name, — a picture representing a historical event, with the persons who actually took part in it, — such a work seems almost to have been regarded as hopeless. When anything of the sort has been attempted, it has been rather as a historical document, than for any purpose of art: and the result has been little else than a collection of portraits; which is no more a historical picture, than a biographical dictionary is a history.

Is it not notorious however, that historical, or poetical painters, as you call them, are for ever introducing living persons?

Yes: the greatest have done so. Raphael whose heart was the home of every gentle affection, has left many records of his



love for his master, and for his friend Pinturicchio, by painting himself along with them among the subordinate characters or lookers-on. The Fornarina too seems to have furnished the type for the head of the mother in *the Transfiguration*, and perhaps for other heads in other pictures. When he makes use of a living head however, in representing one of his dramatical or poetical personages, he does not set it on the canvas, as Rubens through poverty of imagination is wont to do, in its bare outward reality, but idealizes it. He takes its general form and outlines, and animates it with the character and feelings which he wishes to express, purifying it from whatever is at variance with them. Or rather perhaps, when he was embodying his idea, he almost unconsciously drew a likeness of the features on which he loved to gaze. In fact no painter, however great his genius or inventive power may be, will neglect the study of living subjects, and content himself with poring over the phantoms of his imagination, or the puppets of his theory; any more than a poet will turn away from the world of history and of actual life. For the painter's business is not to produce a new creature of his own, but to reproduce that which Nature produces now and then in her happiest moments, to give permanence to the rapture of transient inspiration, and unity and entireness to what in real life is always more or less disturbed by marks of earthly frailty, and by the intrusion of extraneous, if not uncongenial and contradictory elements. You know the story of Leonardo, — who himself wrote a theoretical treatise on Painting, — how he is said to have sat in the market-place at Milan, looking out for heads to bring into his picture of *the Last Supper*. Hence, as Goethe observes (Vol. xxxix. p. 124), we may understand how he might be sixteen years at his work, yet neither finish the Saviour nor the Traitor. For it is a difficulty which presses on all such as have ever made a venture into the higher regions of thought, to discover anything like answerable realities, — to atone their ideas with their perceptions: and the difficulty is much enhanced, when we are not allowed to deal freely with such materials as our senses supply, but have to bring down our thoughts to a kind of forced wedlock



with some one thing just as it is. This is the meaning of what Raphael says with such delightful simplicity in his letter to Castiglione: *Essendo carestia di belle donne, io mi servo di certa idea che mi viene alla mente.*

There is something too in the immediate presence of an outward reality, which in a manner overawes the mind, so as to hinder the free play of its speculative and imaginative powers. We cannot at such a moment separate that which is essential in an object, from that which is merely accidental, the permanent from the transitory: nor, as we were made for action far more than for contemplation, is it desirable that we should do so. That which strikes us at sight must needs be that which comes forward the most prominently. This however can by no means be relied on as characteristic; least of all in the actions of men, who have learnt the arts of clothing and masking their souls as well as their bodies. Besides we may easily be too near a thing to see it in its unity and totality: and unless we see it as a whole, we cannot discern the proportion and importance and purpose of its parts. Yet there before us the object stands: the spell of reality is upon us: it is, we know not what: we only know that it is, and that there is something in it which to us is a mystery. We cannot enter into it, to look what is stirring and working at its heart: we cannot unfold and anatomize it: our senses like leadingstrings, half uphold and guide, half check and pull in our understandings. If what we see were only different from what it is, then we could understand it. But it is obstinate, stubborn, changeless, and will not bend to our will. So we are fain to let it remain as it is, half felt, half understood, with roots diving down out of sight, and branches losing themselves among the tops of the neighboring trees. Thus, whenever reality comes athwart our minds, they are sure to suffer more or less of an eclipse. We must get out of the shadow of an object to see it: we must recede from it, to comprehend it: we must compare the present with all our past impressions, to make out the truth common to them all. When one calls to mind how hard it is, to think oneself into a thing, and to think its central thought out of it, one is little surprised that Lavater,



who on such a point must be allowed to have a voice, should say in a letter to Jacobi, "I hold it to be quite impossible for any man of originality to be painted. I am a lover of portraits; and yet there is nothing I hate so much as portraits."

You cannot need that I should point out to you how all these difficulties are magnified and multiplied in history. The field of operation is so vast and unsurveyable; so much of it lies wrapt up in thick, impenetrable darkness, while other portions are obscured by the mists which the passions of men have spread over them, and a spot here and there shines out dazzlingly, throwing the adjacent parts into shade; the events are so inextricably intertwined and conglomerated, sometimes thrown together in a heap, — often rushing onward and spreading out like the Rhine, until they lose themselves in a morass, — and now and then, after having disappeared, rising up again, as was fabled of the Alpheus, in a distant region, which they reach through an unseen channel; the peaks, which first meet our eyes, are mostly so barren, while the fertilizing waters flow secretly through the vallies; the statements of events, as we have already seen, are so perpetually at variance, and not seldom irreconcilably contradictory; the actors on the ever-shifting stage are so numerous and promiscuous; so many indistinguishable passions, so many tangled opinions, so many mazy prejudices, are ever at work, rolling and tossing to and fro in a sleepless conflict, in which every man's hand and heart seem to be against his neighbour, and often against himself; it is so impossible to discern and separate the effects brought about by man's will and energy, from those which are the result of outward causes, of circumstances, of conjunctures, of all the mysterious agencies summed up under the name of chance; and it requires so much faith, as well as wisdom, to trace anything like a pervading, overruling law through the chaos of human affairs, and to perceive how the banner which God has set up, is still borne pauselessly onward, even while the multitudinous host seems to be straggling waywardly, busied in petty bickerings and personal squabbles; that a perfect, consummate history of the world may not unreasonably be deemed the loftiest achievement



that the mind of man can contemplate ; although no one able to take the measure of his own spiritual stature will dream that it could ever be accomplisht, except by an intellect far more penetrative and comprehensive than man's. No mortal eye can embrace the whole earth, or more than a very small part of it.

Indeed how could it be otherwise? Seeing that the history of the world is one of God's own great poems, how can any man aspire to do more than recite a few brief passages from it? This is what man's poems are, the best of them. The same principles and laws, which sway the destinies of nations, and of the whole human race, are exhibited in them on a lower scale, and within a narrower sphere ; where their influence is more easily discernible, and may be brought out more singly and palpably. This too is what man's histories would be, could other men write history in the same vivid, speaking characters, in which Shakspeare has placed so many of our kings in imperishable individuality before us. Only look at his *King John* : look at any historian's. Which gives you the liveliest, faithfulest representation of that prince, and of his age? the poet? or the historians? Which most powerfully exposes his vices, and awakens the greatest horror at them? Yet in Shakspeare he is still a man, and, as such, comes within the range of our sympathy : we can pity, even while we shudder at him : and our horror moves us to look inward, into the awful depths of the nature which we share with him, instead of curdling into dead hatred and disgust. In the historians he is a sheer monster, the object of cold, contemptuous loathing, a poisonous reptile, whom we could crush to death with as little remorse as a viper. Or do you wish to gain an insight into the state and spirit of society in the latter half of the last century, during that period of bloated torpour out of which Europe was startled by the fever-fit of the Revolution? I hardly know in what historian you will find more than a register of dates and a bulletin of facts. There are a number of Memoirs indeed, which shew us what a swarm of malignant passions were gathered round the heart of society, and how out of that heart did in truth proceed *evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness,*



*malice, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.* Nay, as our Lord's words have often been misinterpreted, many of those Memoirs might tempt us to fancy, that these are the only fruits which the heart of man can bring forth. Would you understand the true character of that age however, its better side as well as its worse, its craving for good as well as its voracity for evil? would you watch the powers in their living fermentation, instead of dabbling in their dregs? In Goethe's novels, and in some of his dramas, will you most clearly perceive how homeless and anchorless and restless mankind had become, from the decay of every ancestral feeling, and the undermining of every positive institution; how they drifted about before the winds, and prided themselves on their drifting, and mockt at the rocks for standing so fast. In them you will see how the heart, when it had cast out faith, was mere emptiness, a yawning gulf, sucking in all things, yet never the fuller; how Love, when the sanctity of Marriage had faded away, was fain to seek a sanctity in itself, and threw itself into the arms of Nature, and could not tear itself from her grasp save by death; how men, when the bonds of society and law had lost their force, were still led by their social instinct to enter into secret unions, and nominally for good purposes, but such as flattered and fostered personal vanity, disburthening them from that yoke, which we are always eager to cast off, in the delusive imagination of asserting our freedom, but which alone can make us truly free, as it alone can make us truly happy, when we bear it readily and willingly,—the yoke of Duty. Here, as in so many other cases, while the historians give you the body, and often no more than the carcass, of history, it is in the poet that you must seek for its spirit.

But surely it is part of a historian's office to explain by what principles and passions the persons in his history were actuated.

Undoubtedly: so far as he can. Sundry difficulties however impede him in doing this, which do not stand in the way of the poet. A historian has to confine himself to certain individuals, not such as he himself would have selected to exemplify the



character of the age, but those who from their station happened to act the most prominent parts in it. Now these in monarchical states will often be insignificant. Hence modern historians are under a great disadvantage, when compared with those of Greece and Rome; where the foremost men could hardly be without some personal claims to distinction. Even Cleon and Clodius were not so: they belong to the picture of their age, as Thersites does to that of the *Iliad*; and they are important as samples of the spirit that was hastening the ruin of their country. Nor can a historian place his persons in such situations, and make them so speak and act, as to set off their characters. He must keep to those circumstances and actions which have chanced to gain the most notoriety, and for which he can produce the best evidence. This is one of the reasons which led Aristotle to declare that Poetry is a more excellent and philosophical thing than History; because, as he says, the business of Poetry is with general truth, that of History with particulars. Or, if you will take up that volume, you will find the same thing well expressed by Davenant in the Preface to *Gondibert*. There is the passage: "Truth narrative and past is the idol of historians, who worship a dead thing: and Truth operative, and by effects continually alive, is the mistress of poets, who hath not her existence in matter, but in reason." That is, the poet may choose such characters, and may bring them forward in such situations, as shall be typical of the truths which he wishes to embody: whereas the historian is tied down to particular actions, most of them performed officially, and rarely such as display much of character, unless in moments of exaggerated vehemence. Indeed many histories give you little else than a narrative of military affairs, marches and countermarches, skirmishes and battles: which, except during some great crisis of a truly national war, afford about as complete a picture of a nation's life, as an account of the doses of physic a man may have taken, and the surgical operations he may have undergone, would of the life of an individual. Moreover a historian has to proceed analytically, in detecting the motives and impulses of the persons whose actions he has to relate. He is



to make out what they were, from what they are recorded to have done. Afterward, it is true, he ought to invert the process, and to give a synthetical unity to the features he has made out in detail. But very few historians have had this twofold power. This may be one of the reasons why, among the hundreds of characters in Walter Scott's novels, hardly one has not more life and reality than his portrait of Buonaparte. The former spring freshly from his genius: the latter is put together, like a huge mammoth, of fragments pickt up here and there, many of which ill fit into the others, and is scarcely more than a skeleton with a gaudy chintz dressing-gown thrown round him. As historians have themselves had to go behind the scenes to examine what was doing there, they are fond of taking and keeping us behind them also, and bid us mark how the actors are rouged, and what tawdry tinsel they wear, and by what pullies the machinery is workt. Poets on the other hand would have you watch and listen to the performance. Suppose it were a drama by any human poet, from which position would you best understand its meaning and purpose?

From the latter: there cannot be a doubt.

The same position will best enable you to discern the meaning and purpose of the Almighty Poet; in other words, to know truth. Were you to live inside of a watch, you could neither use it, nor know its use. Were our sight fixt on the inner workings of our bodies, as that of persons in a magnetic trance is said to be, we should have no conception what a man is, or does, or was made for. Sorry too would be the notion of the earth pickt up at the bottom of a mine. In like manner, to understand men's characters, one must contemplate them as living wholes, in their energy of action or of suffering, not creep maggotlike into them, and crawl about from one rotten motive to another, turning that rotten with our touch, which is not so already.

Yet in this respect you surely cannot deny that History is much truer than Poetry. For, when reading poetry, you may at times be beguiled into fancying that there are people who will act nobly and generously and disinterestedly: whereas



from history we learn to look askance upon every man with prudent suspicion and jealousy. Almost all the historians I ever read concur in shewing that the world is wholly swayed by the love of money and of power; and that nobody ever did a good deed, unless it slipt from him by mistake, except because he could not just then do a bad deed, or wanted to gain a purchase for doing a bad deed with less risk and more profit at some future time.

Did you never act rightly yourself, purposing so to act, without any evil design, or any thought of what you were to gain?

Do you mean to insult me? I hope I do so always.

Are all your friends a pack of heartless, worthless knaves.

Good morning, sir! I have no friend who is not an honest man; and civility and courtesy are among their estimable qualities.

Wait a few moments. I congratulate you on your good fortune, and only wish you not to suppose that you stand alone in it. I would have you judge of others, as you would have them judge of you. I would have you believe that there are other honest men in the world, beside yourself and your friends.

But how can I believe it, when every historian teaches me the contrary?

How can you believe that you and your friends are so totally different from the rest of mankind?

I don't know. This used to puzzle me; but, as I could not clear it up, I left off troubling my head about it.

Let me give you a piece of advice. When your feelings tell you anything, and your understanding contradicts them, more especially should your understanding be merely echoing the verdict of another man's — be not hasty in sacrificing what you feel, to what you fancy you understand. You cannot do it in real life, as you proved just now: a running stream is not to be gagged with paper. But beware also of doing it in speculation: for, though erroneous opinions do not exercise an absolute sway over the heart and conduct, any more than the knowledge of truth does, still each has no slight influence, and error the most; inasmuch as it stifles all efforts and aspirations after



anything better, which truth would kindle and foster. Endeavour to reconcile the disputants where you can. As the speediest and surest means of effecting this, try to get to the bottom of the difference, to make out its origin and extent. Try not only to understand your feelings, but your understanding: for the latter is every whit as likely to stray, and to lead you astray. You have just been touching on the very point in common history which is the falsest. On this ground above all would I assert that, on whichever side the preponderance of truth may lie, with regard to untruth and falsehood there is no sort of comparison.

To be sure, none. History is all true; and poetry is all false.

Alack! this is just the usual course of an argument. After an hour's discussion, carried on under the notion that some progress has been made, and some convictions established, we find we have only been running round a ring, and must start anew: the original position is reasserted as stoutly as ever. Well! you remember the old way of settling a dispute, by throwing a sword into the scale: let me throw in Frederic the Great's pen, which is almost as trenchant, and to which his sword lends some of its power. Look at the words with which he opens his History: "*La plupart des histoires que nous avons sont des compilations de mensonges mêlés de quelques vérités.*" I do not mean to stand up for the strict justice of this censure. But he is a historian of your own school, an asserter and exposé of the profligacy of mankind. Thus much too is most certain, that circumstantial accuracy with regard to facts is a very ticklish matter; as will be acknowledged by every one who has tried to investigate an occurrence even of yesterday, and in his own neighbourhood, when interests and passions have been pulling opposite ways. In this sense too may we say, as Raleigh says in a different sense, that, "if we follow Truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out our eyes." Therefore, on comparing the truthfulness of History and Poetry, it appears that History will inevitably have to record many facts as true, which are not true; while the facts in Poetry,



being avowedly fictitious, are not false. On the other hand, in the representation of character, Poetry portrays men in their composite individuality, mixt up of evil and good, as they are in real life : whereas historians too often anatomize men ; and then, being unable to descry the workings of life, which has past away, busy themselves in tracing the more perceptible operations of disease. Hence it comes that they give us such false representations of human character : one of their chief defects is, that they have seldom enough of the poet in them.

You would have them conjure away all the persons who have really existed, and call up a fantasmagoria of imaginary ideals in their stead.

I would have them animate the dry bones of history, that they may rise up as living beings. Goethe calls the Memoirs of his life *Dichtung und Wahrheit, Imagination and Truth* ; not meaning thereby that any of the events narrated are fictitious, but that they are related imaginatively, as seen by a poet's eye, and felt by a poet's heart. Indeed so far are they from being fictions, that through this very process they come forward in their highest, completest reality : so that Jacobi, in a letter to Dohm, when speaking of this very book, says : " I was a party to many of the events related, and can bear witness that the accounts of them are truer than the truth itself."

How is that possible ? how can anything be truer than the truth itself ?

Did you never hear of Coleridge's remark on Chantrey's admirable bust of Wordsworth, — " that it is more like Wordsworth than Wordsworth himself is " ? This, we found just now, a portrait or bust ought always to be. It ought to represent a man in his permanent character, in his true self ; not, as we mostly see people, with that self encumbered and obscured by trivial, momentary feelings, and other frippery and rubbish. Now, as it requires a poet's imagination to draw forth a man's character from its lurking-place, and to bring out the central principle in which all his faculties and feelings unite ; so is the same power needed to seize and arrange the crowd of incidents that go to the making up of an event, and to exhibit



them vividly and distinctly, yet in such wise that each shall only take its due station, according to its dramatic importance, as member of a greater whole. Even for the representation of events, as well as of characters, a historian ought to be much of a poet: else his narrative will be flat, fragmentary, and confused. Look at a landscape on a chill, cloudy day: it seems dotted or patcht with objects: the parts do not blend, but stand sulkily or frowningly alone. Look at the same landscape under a clear, bright sunshine: the hills, rocks, woods, cornfields, meadows, will be just the same: and yet how different will they be! When bathed in light, their latent beauties come out: each separate object too becomes more distinct: and at the same time a harmonizing smile spreads over them all. This exactly illustrates the workings of the Imagination, which are in like manner at once individualizing and atoning; and which, like the sunshine, brings out the real, essential truth of its objects more palpably than it would be perceptible by the sunless, unimaginative eye. The sunshine does indeed give much to the landscape; yet what it gives belongs to the objects themselves; just as joy and love awaken the dormant energies of a man's heart, and make him feel he has much within him that he never dreamt of before. Sunshine, poetry, love, joy, enrich us infinitely: but what makes their riches so precious is, that what they give us is our own: it is our own spirit that they free from its bondage, that they rouse out of its torpour. They give us ourselves. Hence, because the true nature both of events and characters cannot even be discerned, much less portrayed, without a poet's eye, is it of such importance that a historian should be not scantily endowed with imaginative power; not indeed with an imagination like Walter Scott's, which would lead him to represent the whole pantomime of life; but with an imagination more akin to Shakespeare's, so that he may perceive and embody the powers which have striven and struggled in the drama of life. If historians had oftener been gifted with this truthseeing faculty, we should find many more characters in history to admire and love, and fewer to hate and despise. Often too, when forced to condemn, we should still see much to move our pity.



After all, what you say amounts to this, that a historian wants imagination to varnish over men's vices.

He wants imagination to conceive a man's character, without which it is impossible to comprehend his conduct. We are all prone, you know, to accuse or excuse one another, — a proneness which is so far valuable, as it is a witness of our moral nature: but unhappily we shew it much oftener by accusing than by excusing. From our tendency to generalize all our conclusions, — a tendency which also is valuable, as a witness that we are made for the discernment of law, — we are wont to try every one that ever lived by our own standard of right and wrong. Now that standard is an exceedingly proper one to try the only persons we never try by it . . ourselves. But to others it cannot justly be applied, without being modified more or less by a reference to their outward circumstances and condition, to their education and habits, — nay, to the inward bent and force of their feelings and passions. No reasonable man will demand the same virtues from a Heathen as from a Christian, or quarrel with Marcus Aurelius because he was not St. Louis. Nor will he look for the same qualities in Alcibiades as in Socrates, or for the same in Alexander as in Aristotle. Nor again would it be fair to condemn Themistocles, because he did not act like Aristides, — or Luther, because he differed from Melancthon. Only when we have caught sight of the central principle of a man's character, — when we have ascertained the purpose he set himself, — when we have carefully weighed the difficulties he had to contend against, within his own heart as well as without, — can we be qualified for passing judgement on his conduct: and they who are thus qualified will mostly refrain from pronouncing a peremptory sentence. To attain to such an insight however requires imagination; it requires candour; it requires charity: it requires a mind in which the main ingredients of wisdom are duly combined and balanced. On this point you will find some excellent remarks in Coleridge's *Notes on Hacket's Life of Bishop Williams* (*Remains* iii. 185). "In the history of the morality of a people, prudence, yea cunning, is the earliest form of virtue. This



is exprest in Jacob and in Ulysses, and all the most ancient fables. It will require the true philosophic calm and serenity to distinguish and appreciate the character of the morality of our great men from Henry VIII. to the close of James I.,—*nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia*,—and of those of Charles I. to the Restoration. The difference almost amounts to contrast." And again (p. 194): "I can scarcely conceive a greater difficulty, than for an honest, warmhearted man of principle of the present day so to discipline his mind by reflexion on the circumstances and received moral system of the Stuarts age (from Elizabeth to the death of Charles I.), and its proper place in the spiral line of ascension, as to be able to regard the Duke of Buckingham as not a villain, and to resolve many of the acts of those Princes into passions, conscience-warpt and hardened by half-truths, and the secular creed of prudence, as being itself virtue, instead of one of her handmaids, when interpreted by minds constitutionally and by their accidental circumstances imprudent and rash, yet fearful and suspicious, and with casuists and codes of casuistry as their conscience-leaders."

On the other hand historians are apt to write mainly from the Understanding, and therefore presumptuously and narrow-mindedly. Dwelling amid abstractions, the Understanding has no eye for the rich varieties of real life, but only sees its own forms and fictions. Hence no faculty is so monotonous; a Jew's harp itself is scarcely more so; while the Imagination embraces and comprehends the full, perfect, magnificent diapason of Nature. The Understanding draws a circle around itself, and fences itself in with rules; and every other circle it pronounces to be awry; whatever lies without those rules, it declares to be wrong. Above all is it perverse and delusive in its chase after motives. Beholding all things under the category of cause and effect, it lays down, as its prime axiom, that every action must have a motive. Then, as its dealings are almost wholly with outward things, it determines that the motive of every action must lie in something external. Now, since all actions, inasmuch as they manifest themselves in time



and space, must needs come under the category of causation, there is little difficulty in tracing them to such a motive, and none in insisting that it must be the only one. But the outward motive of an action, when it stands alone, must always be imperfect: it can only receive a higher sanction from an inward, spiritual principle: very often too it will be corrupt. So that this source will mostly be impure: or, if it be too pure and clear, nothing is easier than to trouble it: you have only to tear up a flower from the brink, and to throw it in. Every good deed does good even to the doer: this is God's law. It does him good, not merely by confirming and strengthening the better principle within him, by purifying and refreshing his spirit, and unsealing the fountains of joy and peace: it is also fraught more or less, according to the laws of the universe, with outward blessings, — with health, security, honour, esteem, confidence, and at times even with some of the lower elements of worldly prosperity. Every doer of good is worthy of admiration and praise and trust: this is man's instinctive way of realizing and fulfilling God's law. No good deed is done, except for the sake of the good the doer is to get from it: this is man's intelligent way of blaspheming, and, so far as in him lies, annulling God's law. This is the lesson which the school of selfish philosophers have learnt from their father and prototype, who prided himself on his craft, when he asked that searching question, *Does Job fear God for nought?*

You, my young friend, know that it is otherwise with you. Your conscience, enlightened by your reason, commands you to uphold that no action can be good, except such as you perform without a thought of any benefit accruing to yourself from it. You conceive, and rightly, I doubt not, that you sometimes act thus yourself. You are confident that your friends do. Hold fast that confidence: cleave to it: preserve and cherish it, as you would your honour, that sacred palladium of your soul. Do more: extend it to all: enlarge it, until, as the rainbow embraces the earth, it embraces all those whom God has made in His image. Cast away that dastardly, prudential maxim, that you are to trust no one until you have tried him. Let this be



your comfortable and hopeful watchword, never to distrust any one, until you have tried him, and found him fail. Nay, after he has failed, trust him again, even until seven times, even until seventy times seven : so peradventure may your good thoughts of him win him to entertain better thoughts of himself. And be assured that in this respect, above all others, Poetry knows far more of God's world ; with whatever justice History may brag of knowing the most about the Devil's world.\* U.

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\* I cannot deny myself the pleasure of confirming what is here said by the authority of one of those great soldiers and statesmen whom our Indian Empire breeds, and who has exemplified the power of these principles by his own wonderful achievements, both pacific and military, on the banks of the Indus. Major Edwardes, in his very interesting *Journal of a Year in the Punjab* (vol. i. p. 57), after speaking of an expedition he undertook into the country of the savage Vizeeree tribes, relying on the honour of one of their chiefs, adds: "I pause upon this apparently trifling incident, for no foolish vanity of my own, but for the benefit of others: for hoping, as I earnestly do, that many a young soldier, glancing over these pages, will gather heart and encouragement for the stormy lot before him, I desire above all things to put into his hand the staff of confidence in his fellow-men.

‘ Candid, and generous, and just,  
Boys care but little whom they trust, —  
An error soon corrected:  
For who but learns in riper years  
That man, when smoothest he appears,  
Is most to be suspected — ’

is a verse very pointed and clever, but quite unworthy of the *Ode to Friendship*, and inculcating a creed which would make a sharper or a monk of whoever should adopt it. The man who cannot trust others, is, by his own shewing, untrustworthy himself. Suspicious of all, depending on himself for everything, from the conception to the deed, the groundplan to the chimney-pot, he will fail for want of the heads of Hydra, and the hands of Briareus. If there is any lesson that I have learnt from life, it is, that human nature, black or white, is better than we think it: and he who reads these pages to a close, will see how much faith I have had occasion to place in the rudest and wildest of their species, how nobly it was deserved, and how useless I should have been without it."



## SECOND SERIES.

Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth; and with labour do we find the things that are before us: but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out? — *Wisdom of Solomon, ix. 16.*

Vasta ut plurimum solent esse quae inania: solida contrahuntur maxime, et in parvo sita sunt. — *Bacon, Inst. Magn. Praef.*



## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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This volume is called a second Edition ; for a portion of it was contained in the former : but more than three fourths are new. The first eight sheets were printed off ten years ago : hence, in the discussion on the Progress of mankind, no notice is taken of the views concerning Development in reference to religious truth, which have recently been exciting so much agitation and confusion. Indeed almost all the new matter inserted in this Volume was written above ten years since, though, in transcribing it for the press, I have often modified and enlarged it to bring it into conformity with my present convictions. A succession of other works has hitherto interrupted the prosecution of this ; and several are now calling me away from it. But, as soon as I can get my hands free, I hope, God willing, to publish a second Edition of the original Second Volume. This second Series only goes down to the end of the original First Volume.

J. C. H.

ROCKEND, *May 10th*, 1848.



## GUESSES AT TRUTH.

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IN the wars of the middle ages, when the armies were lying in their camps, single knights would often sally forth to disport themselves in breaking a lance. In modern warfare too the stillness of a night before a battle is ever and anon interrupted by a solitary cannon-shot; which does not always fall without effect. Ahab was slain by an arrow let off at a venture: nor are his the only *spolia opima* that Chance has borne away to adorn her triumphs.

Detacht thoughts in literature, under whatsoever name they may be cast forth into the world, — Maxims, Aphorisms, Essays, Resolves, Hints, Meditations, Aids to Reflexion, Guesses, — may be regarded as similar sallies and disportings of those who are loth to lie rusting in inaction, though they do not feel themselves called to act more regularly and in mass. And these too are not wholly without worth and power; which is not uniformly in proportion to bulk. One of the lessons of the late wars has been, that large disciplined bodies are not the only effective force; Cossacks and Guerillas, we have seen, may render good service in place and season. A curious and entertaining treatise might be written *de vi quae residet in minimis*. Even important historical events have been kindled by the spark of an epigram or a jest.

In some cases, as in Novalis, we see youthful genius gushing



in radiant freshness, and sparkling and bringing out some bright hue on every object around, until it has found or made itself a more continuous channel. And as Spring sheds its blossoms, so does Autumn its golden fruit. Mature and sedate wisdom has been fond of summing up the results of its experience in weighty sentences. Solomon did so: the wise men of India and of Greece did so: Bacon did so: Goethe in his old age took delight in doing so. The sea throws up shells and pebbles that it has smoothed by rolling them in its bosom: and what though children alone should play with them? "Cheered by their merry shouts, old Ocean smiles."

A dinner of fragments is said often to be the best dinner. So are there few minds but might furnish some instruction and entertainment out of their scraps, their odds and ends of thought. They who cannot weave a uniform web, may at least produce a piece of patchwork; which may be useful, and not without a charm of its own. The very sharpness and abruptness with which truths must be asserted, when they are to stand singly, is not ill fitted to startle and rouse sluggish and drowsy minds. Nor is the present shattered and disjointed state of the intellectual world unaptly represented by a collection of fragments. When the waters are calm, they reflect an image in its unity and completeness; but when they are tossing restlessly, it splits into bits. So too, when the central fires are raging, they shake the mainland, and strew it with ruins, but now and then cast up islands. And if we look through history, the age of Asia seems to have passed away; and we are approaching to that of Polynesia.

Only whatsoever may be brought together in these pages, though but a small part be laid within the courts of the temple itself, may we never stray so far as to lose it out of sight; and along with the wood and hay and stubble, may there be here and there a grain of silver, if not of gold. U.

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Poetry is the key to the hieroglyphics of Nature.

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On the outside of things seek for differences; on the inside for likenesses.

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Notions may be imported by books from abroad ; ideas must be grown at home by thought.

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If the Imagination be banisht from the garden of Eden, she will take up her abode in the island of Armida ; and that soon changes into Circe's.

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Why have oracles ceast ? Among other reasons, because we have the books of the wise in their stead. But these too will not answer aright, unless the right question be put to them. Nay, when the answer has been uttered, he who hears it must know how to interpret and to apply it. U.

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One may develope an idea : it is what God has taught us to do in His successive revelations. But one cannot add to it, least of all in another age.

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Congruity is not beauty : but it is essential to beauty. In every well-bred mind the perception of incongruity impedes and interrupts the perception of beauty. Hence the recent opening of the view upon St. Martin's church has marred the beauty of the portico : the heavy steeple presses down on it and crushes it. The combination is as monstrous, as it would be to tack on the last act of Addison's *Cato* to the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles.

In truth steeples, which belong to the upward-looking principle of Christian architecture, never harmonize well with the horizontal, earthly character of the Greek temple. To understand the beauty of the latter, one must see it free from this extraneous and incompatible incumbrance. One should see it too with a southern sky to crown it and look through it. U.

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Homer calls words *winged* ; and the epithet is peculiarly appropriate to his ; which do indeed seem to fly, — so rapid and light is their motion ; and which have been flying ever since over the whole of the peopled earth, and still hover and brood over many an awakening soul. Latin marches ; Italian



floats ; French hops ; English walks ; German rumbles along : the music of Klopstock's hexameter is not unlike the tune with which a broad-wheel waggon tries to solace itself, when crawling down a hill. But Greek flies, especially in Homer.

His meaning, or rather the meaning of his age, in assigning that attribute to words, was probably to express their power of giving wings to thoughts, whereby they fly from one breast to another. For a like reason may letters be called *winged*, as speeding the flight of thoughts far beyond the reach of sounds, and prolonging it for ages after the sounds have died away ; so that the thoughts entrusted to them are wafted to those who are far off both in space and in time. Above all does the epithet belong to printing : for, by means of its leaden types, that which has been bred in the secret caverns of the mind, no sooner comes forth, than thousands of wings are given to it at once, and it roams abroad in a thousand bodies ; each several body moreover being the exact counterpart of all the others, to a degree scarcely attained by any other process of nature or of art.

Τῶν ὥστ' ὀρνίθων πετεηνῶν ἔθνεα πολλὰ,  
 χηνῶν ἢ γεράνων ἢ κύκνων δουλιχοδείρων,  
 ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ποτῶνται ἀγαλλόμεναι πτερύγεσσιν,  
 κλαγγῆδὸν προκαθίζόντων, σμαραγεῖ δέ τε λειμών.

U.

The Schoolmen have been accused of syllogizing without facts. Their accusers, those I mean who sophisticate and explain away the dictates of their consciousness, do worse. They syllogize against facts, facts not doubtful and obscure, but manifest and certain ; seeing that "to feel a thing in oneself is the surest way of knowing it." South, Vol. ii. p. 236.

They who profess to give the essence of things, in most cases merely give the extract ; or rather an extract, or, it may be, several, pickt out at chance or will. They repeat the blunder of the Greek dunce, who brought a brick as a sample of a house : and how many such dunces do we still find calling on



us to judge of books by like samples! At best they just tap the cask, and offer you a cup of its contents, having previously half filled the cup with water, or some other less innocent diluent.

U.

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When a man cannot walk without crutches, he would fain make believe they are stilts. Like most impostors too, he gives ear to his own lie; till, lifting up one of them in a fit of passion, to knock down a person who doubts him, he falls to the ground. And there he has to remain sprawling: the crutch, by help of which he contrived to stand, will not enable him to rise.

U.

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*What do you mean by the lords spiritual?* askt Madame de Stael: *are they so called because they are so spirituels?* How exactly do *esprit* and *spirituel* express what the French deem the highest power and glory of the human mind! A large part of their literature is *mousseux*: and whatever is so soon grows flat.

Our national word and quality is *sense*; which may perhaps betray a tendency to materialism; but which at all events comprehends a greater body of thought, thought that has settled down and become substantiated in maxims.

U.

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Hardly any period of afterlife is so rich in vivid and rapturous enjoyment, as that when Knowledge is first unfolding its magical prospects to a genial and ardent youth; when his eyes open to discern the golden network of thought wherein man has robed the naked limbs of the world, and to see all that he feels teeming and glowing within his breast, embodied in glorified and deathless forms in the living gallery of Poetry. So long as we continue under magisterial discipline and guidance, we are apt to regard our studies as a mechanical and often irksome taskwork. Our growing presumption is loth to acknowledge that we are unable to walk alone, that our minds need leadingstrings so much longer than our bodies. But when the impatient scholar finds himself set free, with the blooming para-



dise of imagination and thought spread out before him, his mind, like the butterfly, by which the Greeks so aptly and characteristically typified their spirit, exulting in the beauty which it everywhere perceives, both without itself and within, and delighting to prove and exercise its newly developed faculty of admiring and loving, will hover from flower to flower, from charm to charm; and now, seeming chiefly to rejoice in its motion, and in the glancing of its bright and many-coloured wings, merely snatches a passing kiss from each, now sinks down on some chosen favorite, and loses all consciousness of sense or life in the ecstasy of its devotion.

In more advanced years, the student rather resembles the honey-seeking, honey-gathering, honey-storing bee. He estimates: he balances: he compares. He picks out what seems best to him from the banquet lying before him: and even this he has to season to his own palate. But at first everything attracts, everything pleases him. The simple sense, whether of action or of feeling, whatever may be their object, is sufficient. The mind roams from fancy to fancy, from truth to truth, from one world of thought to another world of thought, with an ease, rapidity, and elastic power, like that with which it has been imagined that the soul, when freed from the body, will wander from star to star. Nay, even after the wild landscape, through which youth strayed at will, has been laid out into fields and gardens, and enclosed with fences and hedges, after the footsteps, which had bounded over the flower-strewn grass, have been circumscribed within trim gravel walks, the vision of its former happiness will still at times float before the mind in its dreams. Unless it has been bent down and hardened by the opposition it has had to struggle with, it will still retain a dim, vivifying hope, although it may not venture to shape that hope into words, that it may again one day behold a similar harmonious universe bursting forth from the jarring and fragmentary chaos of hollow realities, — that in its own place and station it may, as Frederic Schlegel expresses it,

Build for all arts one temple of communion,  
Itself a new example of their union; —



and that it may at least witness the prelude to that final consummation, when, as in the beginning, all things will again be one. u.

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Set a company of beginners in archery shooting at a mark. Their arrows will all fly wide of it, some on one side, some on the opposite: and while they are all thus far off, many a dispute will arise as to which of them has come the nearest. But in proportion as they improve in skill, their arrows will fall nearer to the mark, and to each other: and when they are fixt in the target, there is much less controversy about them. Now suppose them to attain to such a pitch of mastery, that every arrow shall go straight to the bull's eye: they will all coincide. This may help us to understand how the differences of the wise and good, which are often so perplexing and distracting now, will be reconciled hereafter; when the film of mortality is drawn away from their eyes, and their faculties are strengthened to see truth, and to strive after it, and to reach it. a.

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Only, if we would hit the truth, we must indeed aim at it. Else the more we improve in handling the bow, the further away from it shall we send our arrows. As for that numerous class, who, instead of aiming at truth, have merely aimed at glorifying themselves, their arrows will be found to have recoiled, like that of Adrastus in Statius, and to be sticking their deadly, barbed points into their own souls. Alas! there are many such pseudo-Sebastians walking about, bristled with suicidal darts, living martyrs to their own vain-glory. u.

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Heroism is active genius; genius, contemplative heroism. Heroism is the self-devotion of genius manifesting itself in action; ἡ θείας τινος φύσεως ἐνέργεια, as a Greek would more closely have defined it.

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These are the men to employ, in peace as well as in war, the men who are afraid of no fire except hell-fire.

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How few, how easily to be counted up, are the cardinal names in the history of the human mind! Thousands and tens of thousands spend their days in the preparations which are to speed the predestined change, in gathering and amassing the materials which are to kindle and give light and warmth, when the fire from heaven has descended on them. But when that flame has once blazed up, its very intensity often shortens its duration. Many, yea, without number, are the sutlers and pioneers, the engineers and artisans, who attend the march of intellect. Many are busied in building and fitting up and painting and emblazoning the chariot; others in lessening the friction of the wheels: others move forward in detachments, and level the way it is to pass over, and cut down the obstacles which would impede its progress. And these too have their reward. If so be they labour diligently in their calling, not only will they enjoy that calm contentment which diligence in the lowliest task never fails to win; not only will the sweat of their brows be sweet, and the sweetener of the rest that follows; but, when the victory is at last achieved, they come in for a share of the glory; even as the meanest soldier who fought at Marathon or at Leipsic, became a sharer in the glory of those saving days; and within his own household circle, the approbation of which approaches the nearest to that of an approving conscience, was looked upon as the representative of all his brother heroes, and could tell such tales as made the tear glisten on the cheek of his wife, and lit up his boy's eyes with an unwonted, sparkling eagerness.

At length however, when the appointed hour is arrived, and everything is ready, the master-mind leaps into the seat that is awaiting him, and fixes his eye on heaven; and the selfmoving wheels roll onward; and the road prepared for them is soon past over; and the pioneers and sutlers are left behind; and the chariot advances further and further, until it has reached its goal, and stands as an inviting beacon on the top of some distant mountain.

Hereupon the same labours recur. Thousands after thousands must toil to attain on foot to the spot, to which genius



had been borne in an instant ; and much time is spent in clearing and paving the road, so that the multitude may be able to go along it, — in securing for all by reflexion and analysis, what the prophetic glance of intuition had descried at once. And then again the like preparations are to be made for the advent of a second seer, of another epoch-making master-mind. Thus, when standing on the beach, you may see the *τρικυμία*, as the Greeks called it, outrunning, not only the waves that went before, but those that come after it : and you may sometimes have to wait long, ere any reaches the mark, which some mighty, over-arching, onrushing billow, some *fluctus decumanus* has left.

That there have been such third and tenth waves among men, will be apparent to those who call to mind how far the main herd of metaphysicians are still lagging behind Plato ; and how, for near two thousand years, they were almost all content to feed on the crumbs dropt from Aristotle's table. It is proved by the fact, that, even in physical science, the progress of which, it is now thought, nothing can check or retard, — and in which, more than in any other province of human activity, whatever knowledge is once gained forms a lasting fund for afterages to inherit and trade with, — not a single step was taken, not a single discovery made, as Whewell observes, either in mechanics or hydrostatics, between the time of Archimedes and of Galileo. Indeed the whole of Whewell's *History of Science* so strikingly illustrates the foregoing remarks, that, had they not been written long before, they might be supposed to be drawn immediately from it. The very plan of his work, which his subject forces upon him, divides itself in like manner into *preludes*, or periods of preparation, *inductive epochs*, when the great discoveries are made, and *sequels*, during which those discoveries are more fully established and developed, and more generally diffused.

Or, if we look to poetry, — to which the law of progression no way applies, any more than to beauty, but which, like beauty, is mostly in its prime during the youth of a nation, and then is wont to decline, — so entirely do great poets soar beyond the



reach, and almost beyond the ken of their own age, that we have only lately begun to have a right understanding of Shakspeare, or of the masters of the Greek drama, — to discern the principles which actuated them, the purposes they had in view, the laws they acknowledged, and the ideas they wisht to impersonate.

And is the case different in the arts? What do we see in architecture, but two ideas shining upon us out of the depth of bygone ages, that of the Greek temple, and that of the Gothic minster? Each of these was a living idea, and, as such, capable of manifold development, expansion, and modification. Nor were they unwilling to descend from their sacred throne, and to adapt themselves to the various wants of civil life. But what architectural idea has sprung up since? These are both the offspring of dark ages: what have we given birth to, since we dreamt we had a sun within us? One might almost suppose that, as Dryden says, in his stupid epigram on Milton, "The force of Nature could no further go;" so that, "To make a third, we joined the other two." If of late years there has been any improvement, it consists solely in this, that we have separated the incongruous elements, and have tried to imitate each style in a manner more in accord with its original principle; although both of them are ill suited for divers reasons to the needs of modern society. Yet nothing like a new idea has arisen, unless it be that of the factory, or the gashouse, or the gaol.

In sculpture, it is acknowledged, the Greeks still stand alone: and among the Greeks themselves the art declined after the age of Phidias and Praxiteles. In painting too who has there been for the last century worthy to hold Raphael's palette? Even in what might be deemed a mechanical excellence, colouring, we are put to shame, when we presume to shew our faces by the side of our greater ancestors.

U.

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From what has just been said, we may perceive how baseless and delusive is the vulgar notion of the march of mind, as necessarily exhibiting a steady, regular advance, within the same nation, in all things. Even in the mechanical arts, —



which depend so little on individual eminence, and which seem to require nothing more than the talents ordinarily forthcoming, according as there is a demand for them, in every people, — although the progress in them is more continuous, and outlasts that in higher things, yet, when the intellectual and moral energy of a nation has declined, that decline becomes perceptible after a while in the very lowest branches of trade and manufacture. Civilization will indeed outlive that energy, and keep company for a long time with luxury. But if luxury extinguishes the energy of a people, so that it cannot revive, its civilization too will at length sink into barbarism. The decay of the Roman mind under the empire manifests itself not merely in its buildings, its statues, its language, but even in the coins, in the shape and workmanship of the commonest utensils.

In fact it is only when applied on the widest scale to the whole human race, that there is the slightest truth in the doctrine of the perfectibility, or rather of the progressiveness of man. Nay, even when regarded in this light, if we take nothing further into account, than what man can do and will do for himself, the notion of his perfectibility is as purely visionary, as the search after an elixir of life, or any other means of evading the pains and frailties of our earthly nature. The elixir of life we have: the doctrine and means of perfectibility we have: and we know them to be true and sure. But they are not of our own making. They do not lie within the compass of our own being. They come to us from without, from above. The only view of human nature, as left to itself, which is not incompatible with all experience, is not its perfectibility, but its corruptibility.

This is the view to which we are led by the history of the antediluvian world. This is the view represented in the primeval fable of the four ages; the view exprest in those lines of the Roman poet:

*Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit  
Nos nequiores, mox daturos  
Progeniem vitiosiore.*

Indeed it is the view which man has in all ages taken of his



own nature ; whether his judgment was determined by what he saw within himself, or in the world around him. It is the view to which he is prompted when his thoughts fall back on the innocence of his own childhood, when he compares it with his present debasement, and thinks of the struggles he has had to maintain against himself, and against others, in order to save himself from a still more abject degradation. The same lesson is taught him by the destinies of nations ; which, when they have left their wild mountain-sources, will mostly meander playfully for a while amid hills of beauty, and then flow majestically through plains of luxuriant richness, until at last they lose themselves in morasses, and choke themselves up with their own alluvion.

Of a like kind is the main theme and subject of poetry. Its scroll, as well as that of history, is like the roll which is spread out before the prophet, *written within and without* ; and the matter of the writing is the same, *lamentations, and mourning, and woe*. When we have swallowed it submissively indeed, it turns to sweetness ; but not till then : in the words of the Greek philosopher, it is through terrour and pity that poetry purifies our feelings. Hence the name of the highest branch of poetry is become a synonym for every disaster : tragedy is but another term for lamentations and mourning and woe : while epic poetry delights chiefly to dwell on the glories and fall of a nobler bygone generation. With such an unerring instinct does man's spirit recoil from the thought of an earthly elysium, as attainable by his own powers, however great and admirable they may be. What though his strength may seem vast enough to snatch the cup of bliss ! what though his intellect appear subtile enough to compass or steal it ! what though he send his armies and fleets round the globe, and his thoughts among the stars, and beyond them ! he knows that the disease of his will is sure to undermine both his strength and his intellect ; and that, the higher they mount for the moment, the more terrible will their ruin be, and the more certain. He knows that Sisyphus is no less sure than Typhoeus of being cast into hell through his own perversity ; and that only through the flames of the funeral pile can Hercules rise into glory. It was reserved for a feeble-

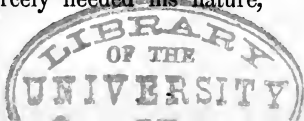


minded, earth-worshipping, self-idolizing age to find out that a tragedy should end happily.

Nor will the boasted discovery of modern times, the division of labour, — which the senters-out of allegories will suppose to be the truth veiled in the myth of Kehama's self-multiplication, when he is marching against Padalon to seize a throne among the gods, — avail to alter this. The Roman fable warns us what is sure to ensue, when the members split and set up singly: and the state of England at this day affords sad confirmation to the lesson, that, unless they work together under the sway of a constraining higher spirit, they jar and clash and cumber and thwart and maim each other.

The notion entertained by some of the ancients, that, when a person has soared to an inordinate pitch of prosperity, the envy of the gods is provoked to cast him down, is merely a perversion of the true idea. Man's wont has ever been to throw off blame upon anything except himself; even upon the powers of heaven, when he can find no earthly scapegoat. At the same time this very notion bears witness of the pervading conviction that a state of earthly perfection is an impossibility. The fundamental idea both of the tragic *ἄτη* and of the historic *νέμεσις* is, that calamities are the inevitable consequences of sins; that the chain which binds them together, though it may be hidden and mysterious, is indissoluble; and that, as man is sure to sin, more especially when puffed up by prosperity, he is also sure to perish. The sins of the fathers are indeed regarded by both as often visited upon the children, even to the third and fourth generation; not however without their becoming in some measure accessory to the guilt. Were they not so, the calamities would be as harmless as the wounds of Milton's angels.

This however, which is the essential point in the whole argument, — the concatenation of moral and physical evil, and the everlasting necessity by which sin must bring forth death, — has mostly been left out of thought by the broachers and teachers of perfectibility. Perceiving that man's outward relations appeared to be perfectible, they fancied that his nature was so likewise: or rather they scarcely heeded his nature,





and lookt solely at his outward relations. They saw that his dominion over the external world seemed to admit of an indefinite extension. They saw that his knowledge of outward things had long been progressive; that vast stores had been piled up, which were sure to increase, and could scarcely be diminisht. So, by a not unnatural confusion, they assumed that the greater amount of knowledge implied a proportionate improvement in the faculties by which the knowledge is acquired; although a large empire can merely attest the valour of those who won it, without affording evidence either way with regard to those who inherit it. All the while too it was forgotten that a man's clothes are not himself, and that, if the spark of life in him goes out, his clothes, however gorgeous, must sink and crumble upon his crumbling body.

The strange inconsistency is, that the very persons who have indulged in the most splendid visions about the perfectibility of mankind, have mostly rejected the only principle of perfectibility which has ever found place in man, the only principle by which man's natural corruptibility has even been checkt, the only principle by which nations or individuals have ever been regenerated. The natural life of nations, as well as of individuals, has its fixt course and term. It springs forth, grows up, reaches its maturity, decays, perishes. Only through Christianity has a nation ever risen again: and it is solely on the operation of Christianity that we can ground anything like a reasonable hope of the perfectibility of mankind; a hope that what has often been wrought in individuals, may also in the fullness of time be wrought by the same power in the race. U.

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I met this morning with the following sentences.

"An upholsterer nowadays makes much handsomer furniture than they made three hundred years ago. The march of mind is discernible in everything. Shall religion then be the only thing that continues wholly unimproved?"

What? Does the march of mind improve the oaks of the forest? does it make them follow its banners to Dunsinane, or dance, as Orpheus did of old? does it improve the mountains?



does it improve the waves of the sea? does it improve the sun? The passage is silly enough: I merely quote it, because it gives plain utterance to a delusion, which is floating about in thousands, I might say in millions of minds. Some things we improve; and so we assume that we can improve, and are to improve all things; as though it followed that, because we can mend a pen, we can with the same ease mend an eagle's wing; as though, because nibbing the pen strengthens it, paring the eagle's wings must strengthen them also. People forget what things are progressive, and what improgressive. Of those too which are progressive, they forget that some are borne along according to laws independent of human control, while others may be shoved or driven on by the industry and intelligence of man. Nay, even among those things with which the will and wit of man might seem to have the power of dealing freely, are there none which have not kept on advancing at full speed along with the march of mind? Where are the churches built in our days, which are so much grander and more beautiful than those of York and Salisbury, of Amiens and Cologne, as to warrant a presumption that they who can raise a worthier house for God, are also likely to know God, and to know how to worship him better?

In one point of view indeed we do improve both the oaks and the mountains, both the sea and even the sun; not in themselves absolutely, but in their relations to us. We make them minister more and more to our purposes; and we derive greater benefits from them, which increase with the increase of civilization. In this sense too may we, and ought we to improve religion; not in itself, but in its relations to us; so that it may do us more and more good, or, in other words, may exercise a greater and still greater power over us. That is to say, we are to improve ourselves, in the only way of doing so effectually: we are to increase the power of religion over us, by obeying it, by submitting our wills to it, by receiving it into our hearts with more entire devotion and love.

U.

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Every idea, when brought down into the region of the em-



pirical understanding, and contemplated under the relations of time and space, involves a union of opposites, which are bound together and harmonized in it: or rather, being one and simple in its own primordial fulness, it splits, when it enters into the prismatic atmosphere of human nature. Thus too is it with Christianity, from whatever point of view we regard it. If we look at it historically, it is at once unchangeable and changeable, at once constant and progressive. Were it not unchangeable and constant, it could not be the manifestation of Him who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Were it not changeable and progressive, it would not be suited to him with whom today is never like yesterday, nor tomorrow like today. Therefore it is both at once; one in its essence and changeless, as coming from God; manifold and variable in its workings, as designed to pervade and hallow every phase and element of man's being, his thoughts, his words, his deeds, his imagination, his reason, his affections, his duties. For it is not an outward form: it is not merely a law, manifesting itself by its own light, cast like a sky around man, and guiding him by its polar constellations: its light comes down to him, and dwells with him, and enters into him, and, mingling with and strengthening his productive powers, issues forth again in blossoms and fruits. Accordingly, as those powers are various, so must the blossoms and fruits be that spring from them.

If we compare our religious writers, ascetical or doctrinal, with those of France or Germany, we can hardly fail to perceive that, in turning from one nation to another, we are opening a new vein of thought: so remarkably and characteristically do they differ. I am not referring to the errors, Romanist or rationalist, with which many of our continental neighbours are tainted: independently of these, each picks out certain portions of the truth, such as are most congenial to the temper of his own heart and mind. Nor is he wrong in doing so: for the aim of Christianity is not to stifle the germs of individual character, and to bring down all mankind to a dead level. On the contrary, it fosters and develops the central principle of individuality in every man, and frees it from the crushing burthen with



which the lusts of the flesh and the vanities of life overlay it; as we may observe from the very first in the strongly marked characters of Peter and James and John and Paul.

So too, if we compare the religious writers of the present day with those who lived a hundred years ago, — or these with the great divines of the seventeenth century, — or these with the Reformers, — or these with the Schoolmen and the mystics of the middle ages, — or these with the Latin Fathers, or with the Greek, — we must needs be struck by a number of peculiarities in the views and feelings of each age. The forms, the colouring, the vegetation change, as we pass from one zone of time to another: nor would it require a very nice discrimination to distinguish, on reading any theological work, to what age of Christianity it belongs. Doctrines are differently brought forward, differently mated: some become more prominent than they have hitherto been, while others fall into the background. New chains of logical connexion are drawn between them. New wants are felt; new thoughts and feelings arise; and these too need to be hallowed. The most powerful and living preachers and writers have ever been those, who, full of the spirit of their own age, have felt a calling and a yearning to bring that spirit into subjection, and to set it at one with the spirit of Christ.

In this manner Christianity also becomes subject to the law of change, to which Time and all its births bow down. In a certain sense too the change is a progress; that is to say, in extent. Christianity is ever conquering some new province of human nature, some fresh national variety of mankind, some hitherto untenanted, unexplored region of thought or feeling. The star-led wisdom of the East came to worship the Lord of Truth, as soon as he appeared upon earth: and already in Paul and John do we see how the reason of man is transfigured by the incarnation of the Eternal Word. At Alexandria it was attempted to shew what system of truths would arise from this union of the human reason with the divine: and ever since, from Origen down to Schleiermacher and Hegel and Schelling, the highest endeavour of the greatest philosophers has been to



Christianize their philosophy ; although in doing so they have often been deluded into substituting a fiction of their own, some phantom of logical abstractions, or some idol of a deified Nature, for the living God of the Gospel. Errours of all kinds have indeed beguiled Philosophy by the way : yet the inmost desire of her soul has ever been to celebrate her atonement with Religion : and often, when she has gone astray after the lusts of the world, this has been in the bitterness of her heart, because the misjudging sentinels of Religion, instead of inviting and welcoming her and cheering her on, reviled her and drove her away. Hence too, in those ages when she has been too fast bound in scholastic chains, she has been wont to utter her plaint in the broken sighs of the mystics.

“Throughout the history of the Church (says Neander, in the introduction to his great work), we see how Christianity is the leaven that is destined to pervade the whole lump of human nature.” The workings of this leaven he traces out with admirable skill and beauty, and in a spirit combining knowledge with faith and love in a rare and exquisite union. Indeed the setting forth of this twofold manifestation of Christianity, in its constancy and in its progressiveness, is the great business of its historian. For such a history precious hints are to be found in the Letters recently publisht on *the Kingdom of Christ*, one of the wisest and noblest works that our Church has produced since *the Ecclesiastical Polity*. Whereas the common run of Church-historians are wont to disregard one of the two elements ; either caring solely for that which is permanent in Christianity, without attending to its progressiveness ; or else degrading it into a mere human invention, which man is to mould and fashion according to the dictates of his own mind.

After all it must never be forgotten that an increase in extent is very different from an increase in intensity. Like every other power, Religion too, in widening her empire, may impair her sway. It has been seen too often, both in philosophy and elsewhere, that, when people have fancied that the world was becoming Christian, Christianity was in fact becoming worldly.



The tendency of man, we have seen, is much rather to believe in the corruptibility, than in the perfectibility of his nature. The former is the idea embodied in almost every mythology. It is the idea to which Poetry is led by the contrast between her visions and the realities of life. It is the idea prompted by man's consciousness of his own helplessness, of his own caducity and mortality, of his own sinfulness, and of his utter inability to contend against the powers of nature, against time, against death, and against sin. Perhaps too, as in looking back on the past we are fonder of dwelling, whether with thankfulness or regret, on the good than on the evil that has befallen us, so conversely in our anticipations of the future fear may be stronger than hope. At least it is so with persons of mature years: and only of late have the young usurpt the right of determining public opinion. Even in those ages when men had the best grounds for knowing that in sundry things they surpass their ancestors, they were still disposed of old to look rather at the qualities in which they conceived themselves to have degenerated; and they deemed that the accessions in wealth or knowledge were more than counterbalanced by the decay of the integrity, simplicity, and energy, which adorned the *ἄνδρες Μαρθωνόμαχοι*. In this there may have been much exaggeration, and no little delusion; but at all events it is a unanimous protest lifted up from every quarter of the earth, by all nations and languages, against the notion of the perfectibility of mankind.

The opposite belief, that there is any point of view from which mankind can be regarded as progressive, so that the regular advances already made may warrant a hope that after-ages will go on advancing in the same direction, seems to have been originally excited by the progress of science, and to have been confined thereto. Perhaps it may have been by the Romans, — on whom such a vast influx of knowledge poured in, as if to make amends for the downfall of everything else, in the latter ages of the republic, and the earlier of the empire, — that such a notion was first distinctly entertained. Thucydides was indeed well aware that Greece had been increasing for centuries



in power and wealth and civilization; and he strongly urges that the events of his own time are superior in importance to any former ones. More than once too he explicitly asserts the law, which is tacitly and practically recognized by all men, that, according to the constitution of human nature, we may count that the future will resemble the past. But the calamities of which he was a witness, seemed rather to forebode the destruction of Greece, than its attaining to any higher eminence; and the Greek mind had not learnt to digest the thought that barbarians could become civilized. It was not till the age of Polybius that this confession was extorted by the spreading power of Rome. Nor was it possible for the Greeks to conceive, how the various elements of their nationality, which were so beautiful in their distinctness, would be fused together, like the Corinthian brass in the legend, by their destroyers, to become the material of a bulkier and massier, though less graceful and finely proportioned state. Their philosophers speculated about the origin and growth of civil society, the primary institution of governments, and the natural order in which one form passes into another: but they too saw nothing in the world before their eyes, to breed hope with regard to the future; and Plato avows that, through the frailty of man, even his perfect commonwealth must contain the seeds of its own dissolution.

The theory of a cycle in which the various forms of government succeed one another, is adopted by Polybius; who feels such confidence in it as to declare (vi. 9), that by its help a man, judging dispassionately, may with tolerable certainty prognosticate what fortunes and changes await any existing constitution. He goes no further however than to lay down (vi. 51), that in the life of a state, as in that of an individual, there is a natural order of growth, maturity, and decay. Men were still very far from the idea that, while particular states and empires rise and fall, the race is slowly but steadily advancing along its predestined course. Indeed near two thousand years were to pass away, before this idea could be contemplated in its proper light. It was necessary that the human race should be distinctly regarded as a unit, as one great family scattered over the world.



It was necessary that the belief in particular national gods should be superseded by the faith in the one true God, the Father of heaven and earth. It was necessary that we should be enabled to take a wide, discriminating, catholic survey of all the nations that have ever risen above the historical horizon; and that we should have learnt not to look upon any of them as wholly outcast from the scheme of God's providence; that we should be convinced how each in its station has had a part to act, a destiny to fulfill.

Even Science as yet could hardly be said to exhibit a growing body of determinate results: nor was there anything like a regular progress in it anterior to the Alexandrian school. Among the Roman men of letters, on the other hand, we find the progressiveness of science asserted as a law. *Ne quis desperet saecula proficere semper*, says Pliny (ii. 13). The same assurance is declared by Seneca in the well-known conclusion of his *Natural Questions*. *Veniet tempus, quo ista quae nunc latent, in lucem dies extrahat, et longioris aevi diligentia.*—*Veniet tempus, quo posteri nostri tam aperta nos nescisse mirentur.*—*Multu saeculis tunc futuris cum memoria nostri exoleverit, reservantur.*—*Non semel quaedam sacra traduntur: Eleusis servat quod ostendat revisentibus.* *Rerum natura, sacra sua non simul tradit. Initiatos nos credimus: in vestibulo ejus haeremus.* These sentences, even after deducting what must always be deducted on account of the panting and puffing of Seneca's short-breathed broken-winded style, still shew a confidence of the increase of knowledge, which was hardly to be found in earlier times. It is worth noting that this confidence, both in him and in Pliny, is inspired by the discoveries in astronomy; which Whewell remarks (*Hist. of the Ind. Sci.* i. 90), was "the only progressive science produced by the ancient world." With regard to maritime discovery a like confidence is express in those lines of the chorus in the *Medea*:

Venient annis saecula seris,  
Quibus Oceanus vincula rerum  
Laxet, et ingens pateat tellus;  
Tethysque novos detegat orbes;  
Nec sit terris ultima Thule:



lines evidently belonging to a later age than that of Ovid, to whom the *Medea* has without sufficient warrant been ascribed. It must have afforded some consolation to those who lived when the old world was sinking so fast into its grave, and when its heart and soul and mind all bore tokens of the deadly plague that was consuming it, to see even this brighter gleam in the distance. *Even this*, I say: for the prospect of the progress of science was not connected with that of any general improvement of mankind. On the contrary Seneca combines it in strange contrast with the increase of every corruption. *Tarde magna proveniunt. Id quod unum toto agimus animo, nondum perfecimus, ut pessimi essemus. Adhuc in processu vitia sunt.* He was not so intoxicated with the fruit of the tree of knowledge, as to fancy, like the sophists of later times, that it was the fruit of the tree of life. On the contrary he pronounces that the earth will be overflowed by another deluge, and that every living creature will be swallowed up; and that then, on the retreat of the waters, every animal will be produced anew, *dabiturque terris homo inscius scelerum. Sed illis quoque innocentia non durabit, nisi dum novi sunt. Cito nequitia subrepat: virtus difficilis inventu est, rectorem ducemque desiderat. Etiam sine magistro vitia discuntur: (Nat. Quaest. iii. 30).*

Nor could the perfectibility of mankind gain a place among the dreams of the middle ages. The recollections of the ancient world had not so entirely past away: the fragments of its wreck were too apparent: men could not but be aware that they were treading among the ruins of a much more splendid state of civilization. It is true, human nature was not at a standstill during that millenary. A new era was preparing. Mighty births were teeming in the womb; but they were as yet unseen. Men were laying the foundations of a grander and loftier edifice: but this is a work which goes on underground, which makes no show; and the labourers themselves little knew what they were doing. Even in respect of that which raised them above former ages, their purer faith, while the spirit of that faith casts down every proud thought, and stifles every vain boast, they were perpetually looking back, with shame and sor-



row for their own falling off, to the holiness and zeal of the primitive Christians. Indeed, as by our bodily constitution pain, however local, pierces through the whole frame, and almost disables us for receiving any pleasurable sensations through our other members, thereby warning us to seek for an immediate remedy; so have we a moral instinct, which renders us acutely sensitive to the evils of the present time, far more than to those of the past; thus rousing us to strive against that which is our only rightful foe. Our imagination, on the other hand, recalling and enhancing the good of the past, shews us that there is something to strive after, something to regain. It shews us that men may be exempt from the evil which is galling us, seeing that they have been so. Moreover that which survives of the past is chiefly the good, evil from its nature being akin to death; and this good is in divers ways brought continually before us, in all that is precious of the inheritance bequeathed to us by our ancestors. Every son, with the heart of a son, is thankful for what his father has done for him and left to him: nor will any but an unnatural one, uncover his father's nakedness, even for his own eyes to look upon it. So far indeed were men in the middle ages from deeming themselves better than their forefathers, or expecting anything like a progressive improvement, an opinion often got abroad that the last days were at hand, and that the universal unprecedented corruption was a sign and prelude of their approach.

The great discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which opened one world after another to men's eyes, and taught them at length to know the nature and compass of the earth and of the heavens, might indeed have awakened presumptuous thoughts. But Luther at the same time threw open the Bible to them. He opened their eyes to look into the moral and the spiritual world, and to see more clearly than before, how the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint. The revival of letters too, while it opened the ancient world to them, almost compelled them to acknowledge that in intellectual culture they were mere barbarians in comparison with the Greeks and Romans: and for a long time men's judgements



were spellbound, as Dante's was by Virgil, so that they veiled their heads, as before their masters, even when their genius was mounting above them. Hence the belief that mankind had degenerated became so prevalent, that Hakewill, in the first half of the seventeenth century, deemed it necessary to establish by a long and elaborate induction that it was without any substantial ground.

As he wrote early in Charles the First's reign, before the close of the most powerful and brilliant age in the history of the human mind, one might have thought he would have found no difficulty in convincing the contemporaries of Shakspeare and Bacon, that men's wits had not shrunk or weakened. But a genial age, like a genial individual, is unconscious of its own excellence. For the element and life-blood of genius is admiration and love. This is the source and spring of its power, its magic, beautifying wand: and it finds so much to admire and love in the various worlds which compass it around, it cannot narrow its thoughts or shrivel up its feelings to a paralytic worship of itself. Hakewill begins his *Apology* with declaring, that, "the opinion of the world's decay is so generally received, not only among the vulgar, but by the learned, both divines and others, that its very commonness makes it current with many, without any further examination." In his Preface he speaks of himself as "walking in an untrodden path, where he cannot trace the prints of any footsteps that have gone before him;" and, to excuse the length of his book, he pleads his having "to grapple with such a giant-like monster." Nor does even he venture beyond denying the decay of mankind. He is far from asserting that there is any improvement; only that there is "a vicissitude, an alternation and revolution" (p. 332), that, "what is lost to one part is gained to another; and what is lost at one time, is recovered at another; and so the balance, by the divine providence overruling all, is kept upright." "As the heavens remain unchangeable (he says in his Preface), so doth the Church triumphant in heaven: and as all things under the cope of heaven vary and change, so doth the militant here on earth. It hath its times and turns, sometimes flowing, and



again ebbing with the sea, — sometimes waxing, and again waning with the moon; which great light, it seems, the Almighty therefore set the lowest in the heavens, and nearest the earth, that it might daily put us in mind of the constancy of the one, and the inconstancy of the other; herself in some sort partaking of both, though in a different manner, — of the one in her substance, of the other in the copy of her visage." He also acknowledges the important truth, that, if there be any deterioration, it has a moral cause. But the conception of a melioration, of an advance, seems never to have entered his head.

It is sometimes worth while to shew how recent is the origin of opinions, which are now regarded as incontestable and almost self-evident truths. The writer of a letter published by Coleridge in *the Friend* says (Vol. iii. p. 13): "The faith in the perpetual progression of human nature toward perfection — will, in some shape, always be the creed of virtue." Wordsworth too, in the beautiful answer in which he prunes off some of the excrescences of this notion, still gives his sanction to the general assertion: "Let us allow and believe that there is a progress in the species toward unattainable perfection; or, whether this be so or not, that it is a necessity of a good and greatly gifted nature to believe it." A necessity it is indeed for a good and highly gifted nature to believe that something may be done for the bettering of mankind, and for the removal of the evils weighing upon them. Else enterprise would flag and faint; which is never vigorous and strenuous, unless it breathe the mountain-air of hope. It must have something to aim at, some prize to press forward to. But when we look on the state of the world around us, there is so much to depress and to breed despondence, — so much of the good of former times has past away, so much fresh evil has rushed in, — that no thoughtful man will hastily pronounce his own age to be on the whole better than foregoing ones. Rather, as almost every example shews, from meditating on the evils he has to contend against, — on their number, their diffusion, their tenacity, and their power, — will he incline to deem it worse. And so far is the perfectibility of man from forming an essential article of his



creed, that I doubt whether such a notion was ever entertained, as a thing to be realized here on earth, till about the middle of the last century.

Even Bacon, the great prophet of Science, who among all the sons of men seems to have lived the most in the future, who acknowledged that his words required an age, *saeculum forte integrum ad probandum, complura autem saecula ad perficiendum*, and who was so imprest with this belief, that in his will he left "his name and memory to forein nations and to the next ages,"—even he, in his anticipations of the increase of knowledge, which was to ensue upon the adoption of his new method, hardly goes beyond the declaration in the book of Daniel, that *many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increast*. Let me quote the noble passage, in which, just before the close of his *Advancement of Learning*, he gives utterance to his hopes. "Being now at some pause, looking back into that I have past through, this writing seemeth to me, as far as a man can judge of his own work, not much better than that noise or sound which musicians make while they are tuning their instruments; which is nothing pleasant to hear, yet is a cause why the music is sweeter afterward: so have I been content to tune the instruments of the muses, that they may play who have better hands. And surely, when I set before me the condition of these times, in which Learning hath made her third visitation or circuit, in all the qualities thereof,—as the excellency and vivacity of the wits of this age,—the noble helps and lights which we have by the travails of ancient writers,—the art of printing, which communiceth books to men of all fortunes,—the openness of the world by navigation, which hath disclosed multitudes of experiments and a mass of natural history,—the leisure wherewith these times abound, not employing men so generally in civil business, as the states of Greece did in respect of their popularity, and the state of Rome in respect of the greatness of her monarchy,—the present disposition of these times to peace,—and the inseparable propriety of time, which is ever more and more to disclose truth;—I cannot but be raised to this persuasion, that this third period



of time will far surpass that of the Grecian and Roman learning." And in the *Novum Organum* (I. cxxix.), where he enumerates the benefits likely to accrue to mankind from the increase of knowledge, he wisely adds, with regard to its moral influence: "Si quis depravationem scientiarum ad malitiam et luxuriam et similia objecerit, id neminem moveat. Illud enim de omnibus mundanis bonis dici potest, ingenio, fortitudine, viribus, forma, divitiis, luce ipsa, et reliquis. Recuperet modo genus humanum jus suum in naturam, quod ei ex dotatione divina competit; et detur ei copia: usum vero recta ratio et sana religio gubernabit."

Thus far all is sound and sure. Bacon's prophecies of the advance of science have been fulfilled far beyond what even he could have anticipated. For knowledge partakes of infinity: it widens with our capacities: the higher we mount in it, the vaster and more magnificent are the prospects it stretches out before us. Nor are we in these days, as men are ever apt to imagine of their own times, approaching to the end of them: nor shall we be nearer the end a thousand years hence than we are now. The family of Science has multiplied: new sciences, hitherto unnamed, unthought of, have arisen. The seed which Bacon sowed sprang up, and grew to be a mighty tree; and the thoughts of thousands of men came and lodged in its branches: and those branches spread "so broad and long, that in the ground The bended twigs took root, and daughters grew About the mother tree, a pillared shade High overarcht . . . and echoing walks between" . . . walks where Poetry may wander, and wreath her blossoms around the massy stems, and where Religion may hymn the praises of that Wisdom, of which Science erects the hundred-aisled temple.

But Bacon likewise saw and acknowledged that Science of itself could not perfect mankind, and that right reason and pure religion were wanting to prevent its breeding evil. Although he had crost the stormbeaten Atlantic, over which men had for ages been sailing to and fro almost improgressively, and though in the confidence of his prophetic intuition he gave the name of Good Hope to the headland he had reacht, yet, when he cast



his eyes on the boundless expanse of waters beyond, he did not venture, like Magellan, to call it the Pacific. Once indeed a voice was heard to announce the rising of peace on earth: but that peace man marred: the bringer of it he slew: and, as if to shew how vain such a dream is, Magellan also was slain soon after he lancht out upon the sea, which in the magnanimous enthusiasm of his joy he named the Pacific. Calm too as the Pacific appeared at first, it was soon found to have no exemption from the tempests of earth, which have been raging over it ever since with no less fury than they displayed on the Atlantic before. If Bacon's hopes were too sanguine in any respect, it was in trusting that reason and religion would guide and direct science. He did not sufficiently foresee how the old idolatries would revive, — how men would still worship the creature, under the form of abstractions and laws, instead of the living, lawgiving Creator.

Every age of the world has had its peculiar phase of this idolatry, its peculiar form and aspect, under which it has conceived that the powers of earth would effect what can only be effected by the powers of heaven. Every age has its peculiar interests and excellences, which it tries to render paramount and absolute. The delusion of the last century has been, that Science will lead mankind to perfection. In looking at the history of Science, it must strike every eye, that, while the growth of poetry and philosophy is organic and individual, the increase of science is rather mechanical and cumulative. Every poet, every philosopher must begin from the beginning. Whatever he brings forth must spring out of the depths of his own nature, must have a living root in his heart. Pindar did not start where Homer left off, and engage in improving upon him: the very attempt would have been a proof of feebleness. And what must be the madness of a man who would undertake to improve upon Shakspeare! As reasonably might one set out to tack a pair of leaders before the chariot of the sun. The whole race of the giants would never pile an Ossa on this Olympus: their missiles would roll back on their heads from the feet of the gods that dwell there. Even Goethe and Schil-



ler, when they meddled with Shakspeare, and would fain have mended him, have only proved, what Voltaire, and Dryden himself, had proved before, that "Within his circle none can walk but he." Nor, when Shakspeare's genius past away from the earth, did any one akin to him reign in his stead. Indeed, according to that law of alternation, which is so conspicuous in the whole history of literature, it mostly happens that a period of extraordinary fertility is followed by a period of dearth. After the seven plenteous years come seven barren years, which devour the produce of the plenteous ones, yet continue as barren and illfavoured as ever.

Nor may a philosopher, any more than a poet, be a mere link in a chain: he must be a staple firmly and deeply fixt in the adamantine walls of Truth. If he rightly deserves the name, his mind must be impregnated with some of the primordial ideas, of life and being, man and nature, fate and freedom, order and law, thought and will, power and God. He may have received them from others; but he must receive them as seeds: they must teem and germinate within him, and mingle with the essence of his spirit, and must shape themselves into a new, original growth. He who merely takes a string of propositions from former writers, and busies himself in drawing fresh inferences from them, may be a skilful logician or psychologist, but has no claim to the high title of a philosopher. For in this too does philosophy resemble poetry, that it is not a bare act of the intellect, but requires the energy of the whole man, of his moral nature and will and affections, no less than of his understanding. It is the ideal pole, to which poetry is the real antithesis; and it bears the same relation to science, as poetry does to history. Hence those dissensions among philosophers, which are so often held up as the great scandal of philosophy, and the like of which are hardly found in science. They may, no doubt, be carried on in a reprehensible temper; that, however, belongs to the individuals, not to philosophy: so far as they are merely diversities, they may and ought to exist harmoniously side by side, as different incarnations of Truth. A great philosopher will indeed find pupils, who will be content



to be nothing more; who will work out and fill up his system, and follow it in its remoter applications; who will be satraps under him, and go forth under his command to push on his frontier. But if any among them have a philosophical genius of their own, they will set up after a while for themselves; as we see in the history of philosophy in the only two countries where it has flourished, Greece and Germany. They who have light in themselves, will not revolve as satellites. They do not continue the servants and agents of their master's mind, but, like the successors of Alexander, establish independent thrones, and found new empires in the regions of thought. Hence too the other great scandal of philosophy, its improgressiveness, may easily be accounted for. The essence of philosophy being, not an acquaintance with empirical results, but the possession of the seminal idea,—the possessing it, and the being possessed by it, in a spiritual union and identification,—it may easily happen that philosophers in early ages should be greater and wiser than in later ones; greater, not merely subjectively, as being endowed with a mightier genius, but as having received a higher initiation into the mysteries of Truth, as having dwelt more familiarly with her, and gazed on her unveiled beauty, and laid their heads in her bosom, and caught more of the inspiration ever flowing from the eternal wellhead ἐπ' ἀκροτάτης κορυφῆς πολυπίδακος Ἰδης. In fact they have no slight advantage over their successors, in that there are fewer extraneous, terrene influences to rise and disturb the serenity of their vision.

Science, on the other hand, is little subject to similar vicissitudes: at least it has not been so since the days of Bacon. Neither in science itself, nor in that lower class of the arts which arise out of its practical application, has any individual work an enduring ultimate value, unless from its execution: and this would be altogether independent of its scientific value, and would belong to it solely as a work of art. In science its main worth is temporary, as a stepping-stone to something beyond. Even the *Principia*, as Newton with characteristic modesty entitled his great work, is truly but *the beginning* of a



natural philosophy, and no more an ultimate work, than Watt's steam-engine, or Arkwright's spinning-machine. It may have a lasting interest from its execution, or from accidental circumstances, over and above its scientific value ; but, as a scientific treatise, it was sure to be superseded ; just as the mechanical inventions of one generation, whatever ingenuity they may betoken at the time, are superseded and thrown into the background by those of another. Thus in science there is a continual progress, a pushing onward : no ground is lost ; and the lines keep on advancing. We know all that our ancestors knew, and more : the gain is clear, palpable, indisputable. The discoveries made by former ages have become a permanent portion of human knowledge, and serve as a stable groundwork to build fresh discoveries atop of them ; as these in their turn will build up another story, and this again another. Thus it came to pass that, as the multitudes in the plain of Shinar fancied they could erect a tower, the summit of which should reach to heaven, in like manner the men of science in the last century conceived that the continued augmentations of science would in time raise them up above all the frailties of humanity. Confounding human nature with this particular exertion of its faculties, they assumed that the increase of the latter involved an equivalent improvement of the whole. And this mistake was the easier, inasmuch as scientific talents have little direct connexion with our moral nature, and may exist in no low degree without support from it.

At all events the advance of science afforded a kind of sanction to the belief in a continually progressive improvement. Along with it came the rapid growth of wealth, and of the arts which minister to wealth, whether by feeding or by pampering it : and these naturally tend to enervate and epicureanize men's minds, to "incarnate and imbrute" the soul, "till she quite loses The divine property of her first being," to lower the dignity of thought, and to relax the severe purity of feeling ; so that people learn to account happiness the one legitimate object of all aim, and that too a happiness derived from nothing higher than the temperate, harmless indulgence of our pleasurable



appetites. Moreover the chief intellectual exploits of the eighteenth century consisted, not in the discovery and establishment of new truths, but in the exposure and rejection of certain prejudices and superstitions, or of opinions deemed to be such. Now self-conceit, like every other evil spirit, delights in negativity, far more than in anything positive and real. So the boasters went on ringing the changes on their own enlightenment, and on the darkness and ignorance of their ancestors, and cried exultingly, *We are awake! we are awake!* not from any consciousness of active energy and vision, but because they had ceased to dream.

In this manner a belief in the perfectibility of man got into vogue, more especially in France; although the fearful depuration of morals merely bespoke his corruptibility, and might rather have been thought to portend that he was degenerating into a brute. Rousseau indeed was seduced, partly by the fascination of a dazzling paradox, and partly by the nervous antipathies of his morbid genius, to maintain the deleteriousness of the arts and sciences, and that the only effect of civilization had been to debase man from the type of his aboriginal perfection. And this notion was not without speciousness, if the state of French society in his days was to be taken as exhibiting the necessary effects of civilization. Thus, as one extreme is ever sure to call forth the opposite, the deification of civilized man led to the setting up of an altar on mount Gerizim in honour of savage man; and the age reeled to and fro between them, passing from the bloody rites of the one to the lascivious rites of the other, till the two were mingled together, and Murder and Lust solemnized their unhallowed nuptials in the kennel of the Revolution.

Among the apostles of perfectibility, several tried to combine this twofold worship. They mixt up the idea of progressiveness, derived from the condition of civilized man, with a vague phantom of perfection, placed by the imagination in a supposititious state of nature, a new-fangled golden age, anterior to all social institutions. Although every plausible argument for anticipating the future progressiveness of mankind must rest on



the fact, that such a hope is justified on the whole by the lessons of the past, they maintained that everything had hitherto been vicious and corrupt, that man hitherto had only gone further and further astray, but that nevertheless, by a sudden turn to the right about, he would soon reach the islands of the blessed. Now a thoughtful survey of the past will indeed force us to acknowledge that the progress hitherto has not been uniform, nor always equally apparent. We must not overlook the numerous examples which history furnishes in proof that, according to the French proverb, *il faut reculer pour mieux sauter*. We are to recognize the necessity that the former things, beautiful and excellent as they may have been after their kind, should pass away, in order that the ground might be prepared for a more widely diffused and more spiritual culture. But unless we discern how, through all the revolutions of history, life has still been triumphing over death, good over evil, we have nothing to warrant an expectation that this will be so hereafter. Moreover, though a great and momentous truth is involved in the saying, that, *when need is highest, then aid is nighest*, this comfort belongs only to such as acknowledge that man's waywardness is ever crost and overruled by a higher power. Whereas those who were most sanguine about the future, spurned the notion of superhuman control; while they only found matter for loathing in the present or the past. To their minds "old things all were over-old;" and they purposed to begin altogether anew, and "to frame a world of other stuff."

Nor did this purpose lie idle. In the work of destruction too they prospered: not so in that of reconstruction. As the spirit of the age was wholly negative, as men could find nothing to love or revere in earth or in heaven, in time or in eternity, it was not to be wondered at that they set up their own understanding on the throne of a degraded, godless, chance-ridden universe. But having no love or reverence, they wrought in the dark, and dashed their heads against the laws and sanctities, to which they would not bow. It may be regarded as one of those instances of irony so frequent in history, that the moment



chosen by man to assert his perfectibility should have been the very moment when all the powers of evil were about to be let loose, and to run riot over the earth. Happiness was the idol; and lo! the idol burst; and the spectral form of Misery rose out of it, and stretcht out its gaunt hand over the heads of the nations; and millions of hearts shrank and were frozen by its touch. Liberty was the watchword, liberty and equality: and an iron despotism strode from north to south, and from east to west; and all men cowered at its approach, and croucht beneath its feet, and were trampled on, and found the equality they coveted in universal prostration. Peace was the promise; and the fulfilment was more than twenty years of fierce desolating war.

The whirlblast came; the desert sands rose up,  
And shaped themselves: from earth to heaven they stood,  
As though they were the pillars of a temple  
Built by Omnipotence in its own honour.  
But the blast pauses, and their shaping spirit  
Is fled: the mighty columns were but sand;  
And lazy snakes trail o'er the level ruins.

Yet Condorcet, as is well known, even during the Reign of Terrou, when himself doomed to the guillotine, employed the time of his imprisonment in drawing up a record of his speculations on the perfectibility of mankind: and full of error as his views are, one cannot withhold all admiration from a dauntlessness which could thus persevere in hoping against hope.

Speculations of this sort are so remote from the practical common-sense and the narrowminded empiricism, which were the chief characteristics inherited by English philosophy from its master, Locke, that the doctrine of perfectibility hardly found any strenuous advocate amongst us, until it was taken up by Godwin. The good and pious saw that wealth and luxury had not come without their usual train of moral evils; and they foreboded the judgements which those evils must call down. Berkeley, for instance, in one of his letters, quotes the above-cited lines of Horace, as about to be verified in the increasing depravation of the English people. In his *Essay toward preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*, occasioned by the failure of



the Southsea scheme, he says: "Little can be hoped, if we consider the corrupt degenerate age we live in. Our symptoms are so bad, that, notwithstanding all the care and vigilance of the legislature, it is to be feared the final period of our state approaches." And in his *Verses on the Prospect of planting Arts and Learning in America*, after speaking of the decay of Europe, he adds:

Westward the course of empire takes its way:  
The first four acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day:  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Westward  
○

Hartley too, who, in spite of his material fantasmagoria, ranks high among the few men of a finer and more genial intellect during that dreary period, repeatedly speaks of the world as hastening to its end, and as doomed to perish on account of its excessive corruption; and he enumerates six causes, "which seem more especially to threaten ruin and dissolution to the present states of Christendom." "Christendom (thus he closes his work) seems ready to assume the place and lot of the Jews, after they had rejected their Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Let no one deceive himself or others. The present circumstances of the world are extraordinary and critical beyond what has ever yet happened. If we refuse to let Christ reign over us as our Redeemer and Saviour, we must be slain before his face as enemies, at his second coming." Hartley does indeed look forward to "the restoration of the Jews, and the universal establishment of Christianity, as the causes of great happiness, which will change the face of this world much for the better" (Prop. 85): but this is a change to be wrought by a super-human power, though not without human means (Prop. 84), and so does not lie within the range of our present inquiry; any more than Henry More's beautiful visions, or those of others, concerning the millennium.

Hume, than whom few men have been more poorly endowed with the historical spirit, or less capable of understanding or sympathizing with any unseen form of human nature, lays down in his *Essay on the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences*,



“that, when the arts and sciences come to perfection in any state, from that moment they naturally, or rather necessarily decline, and seldom or never revive;” a proposition which implies a sheer confusion of thought, as though the course and term of the arts and sciences were the same, and which he tries to support by the feeblest and shallowest arguments. In his *Essay on Refinement in the Arts*, he declares that “such a transformation of mankind, as would endow them with every virtue, and free them from every vice,” being impossible, “concerns not the magistrate, *who very often can only cure one vice by another.*” Such is the paltry morality, the miserable self-abandonment, to which utilitarianism leads. Recognizing nothing as good or evil in itself, it will foster one vice, to counteract what it deems a more hurtful one. He too has what he calls an *Idea of a perfect Commonwealth*: but it deals merely with the form of the government, being drawn up with the purpose of avoiding the errors into which Plato and Sir Thomas More, he says, fell, in making an improvement in the moral character of the people an essential part of their Utopias. Yet what would be the worth of a perfect commonwealth without such an improvement? or what its stability? Hume’s name still excites so much terror, that it might be well if some able thinker and reasoner were to collect a century of blunders from his *Essays*: nor would it be difficult to do so, even without touching upon those which refer to questions of taste.

The belief in perfectibility would indeed have chimed in with many of the prevailing opinions on other subjects; with that, for instance, which stript the idea of God of his moral attributes, or resolved them into partial expressions of infinite benevolence; as well as with the corresponding opinion which regards evil as a mere defect, and entirely discards the sinfulness of sin. For, were evil nothing but an accident in our nature, removable by human means, it would argue a cowardly distrust, not to believe that the mind, which is achieving such wonders in spreading man’s empire, intellectual and material, over the outward world, will be able to devise some plan for subduing his inward foe. Yet the *Essay on Political Justice*



does not seem to have produced much effect even at the time, in the way of conviction, except on a few youthful enthusiasts; though it added no little to the consternation among the retainers of the existing order of things. So deplorable however was the dearth of thought in England after the death of Burke, that, while Godwin's deeper fallacies were scarcely toucht by his opponents, they buoyed themselves up with the notion that he had been overthrown by the bulkiest instance of an *ignoratio elenchi* in the whole history of pseudo-philosophy, — the *Essay on Population*; a work which may have merits in other respects, but which, with reference to its primary object, the refutation of Condorcet and Godwin, is utterly impotent; all its arguments proceeding on a hypothesis totally different from that which it undertakes to impugn; as has been convincingly shewn by the great logician of our times in one of the *Notes from the Pocketbook of an English Opium-eater*. Indeed I hardly know whether the success of the *Essay on Population*, in dispelling the bright visions of a better state of things, be not a stronger argument against the perfectibility of man, than any contained in its pages; evincing as that success does such a readiness to adopt any fallacy which flatters our prejudices, and bolsters up our imaginary interests.

It was in Germany that the idea of the progressiveness of mankind first revealed itself under a form more nearly approaching to the truth: which indeed might have been expected from the peculiar character of the nation. As the Germans surpass other nations in the power of discerning and understanding the spirits of other climes and times, they have been the first to perceive the true idea of the history of the world in its living fulness and richness: and, here, as in other departments of knowledge, it is only by meditating on the laws observable in the past, that we can at all prognosticate the future.

What then is the true idea of the history of the world? That question may now be answered briefly and plainly. For though it may take thousands of years to catch sight of an idea, yet, when it has once been clearly apprehended, it is wont to manifest itself by its own light. The generic distinction be-



tween man and the lower orders of animals, if we look at them historically, — the distinction out of which it arises that mankind alone have, properly speaking, a history, or become the agents and subjects in a series of diverse events, — is, that, while each individual animal in a manner fulfills the whole purpose of its existence, nothing of the sort can be predicated of any man that ever lived, but only of the race. All the organs and faculties with which the animal is endowed, are called into action: all the tendencies discoverable in its nature are realized. Whereas every man has a number of dormant powers, a number of latent tendencies, the purpose of which can never be accomplished, except in the historical development of the race; not in the race as existing at any one time, nor even in the whole of time past, but of the race as diffused through the whole period of time allotted to it, past, present, and to come. For thus much we can easily see, that there are many purposes of man's being, many tendencies in his nature, which have never yet been adequately fulfilled; though we are quite unable to make out when that fulfilment will take place, or whither it will lead us. Moreover there is a universal law, of which we have a twofold assurance, — both from observation of all the works of nature, and from the wisdom of their author, — that no tendency has been implanted in any created thing, but sooner or later shall receive its accomplishment, — that God's purposes cannot be baffled, and that his word can never return to him empty. Hence it follows that all those tendencies in man's nature, which cannot be fulfilled immediately and contemporaneously, will be fulfilled gradually and successively in the course which mankind are to run. Accordingly the philosophical idea of the history of the world will be, that it is to exhibit the gradual unfolding of all the faculties of man's intellectual and moral being, — those which he has in common with the brute animals, may be brought to perfection at once in him, as they are in them, — under every shade of circumstance, and in every variety of combination. This development in the species will proceed in the same order as it is wont to follow in those individuals whose souls have been drawn



out into the light of consciousness. In its earlier stages the lower faculties will exercise a sway only disturbed now and then by the awakening of some moral instinct; and then by degrees will be superseded and brought into subjection by those of a higher order, coming forward first singly, and then conjointly; with a perpetual striving after the period when the whole man shall be called forth in perfect harmony and symmetry, according to Aristotle's definition of happiness, as *ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατ' ἀρετὴν τελείαν*. In a word, the purpose and end of the history of the world is to realize the idea of humanity. All the while too, as in the outward world there is a mutual adaptation and correspondence between the course of the seasons, and the fruits they are to mature, so may we feel assured that, at every stage in the progress of history, such light and warmth will be vouchsafed to mankind from above, as they may be able to bear, and as their temporary needs may require.

I know not whether this idea was ever fully and explicitly enunciated by any writer anterior to Hegel. Indeed it presupposes a complete delineation of the process by which the human mind itself is developed, such as is hardly to be found prior to his *Phenomenology*. Even by Hegel the historical process is regarded too much as a mere natural evolution, without due account of that fostering superintendence by which alone any real good is elicited. But the idea was already rising into the sphere of vision above half a century ago, and has been contemplated since then under a variety of particular aspects. Lessing, in one of his latest, most precious, and profoundest works, — a little treatise written in 1780, in which, after having with much labour purged himself from the naturalism and empiricism of his contemporaries, he reaches the very borders of a Christian philosophy, — speaks of revelation in its several stages as the gradual education of the human race. His prophecy, that the time of a new everlasting Gospel will come, may indeed startle those who are unacquainted with the deplorably effete decrepit state of the German church in his days: and had he not lived in an unbelieving age, he would have recognized, like Luther, that the Gospel which we have



already, is at once everlasting and ever-new: else the spirit of his prophecy has been in great measure accomplit of late years, by the revival of religion, and the restoration of the old Gospel to much of its former power and majesty.

Herder, who treated the philosophy of history in his greatest work, and who made it the central object of all his studies, yet, owing to the superficialness of his metaphysical knowledge, had but vague conceptions with regard to the progress of mankind. He had discerned no principle of unity determining its course and its end. His genius was much happier in seizing and describing the peculiarities of the various tribes of mankind, more especially in their less cultivated state, when almost entirely dependent on the circumstances of time and place: and such contemplations were better suited to the sentimental pantheism, into which the spirit of the eighteenth century recoiled from the formal monotheism it had inherited, which had found its main utterance in Rousseau, and with which Herder was much tainted, like many of the more genial minds of his age, and of those since.

Kant on the other hand, looking at history in its ordinary political sense, lays down, in a brief but masterly essay publisht in 1784, that the history of the human race, as a whole, may be regarded as the fulfilling of a secret purpose of nature to work out a perfect constitution; this being the only condition in which all the tendencies implanted in man can be brought to perfection. In a later essay, in 1798, he remarks, with his characteristic subtilty, that, even if we assume the human race to have been constantly advancing or receding hitherto, this will not warrant a conclusion that it must necessarily continue to move in the same direction hereafter; for that it may have just reacht a tropical point, and may be verging on its perihelion, or its aphelion, from which its course would be reverst. Hence he looks about for some fact, which may afford him a surer ground to argue on: and such a fact he finds in the enthusiastic sympathy excited throughout Europe by the outbreak of the French Revolution. This gives him a satisfactory assurance that the human race will not only be progressive here-

dependent on a particular  
place

Vico: corso / ricorso



after, but has always been so hitherto. Perhaps a subtilty far inferior to Kant's might shew that this argument is not so very much sounder than every other which may be drawn from the history of the world. But his writings in his later years betray that the vigour of his faculties was declining: and one of the ways in which the great destroyer was at times pleased to display his power, was by building a house on the sand, after razing that on the rock. It was thus that, having swept away every antecedent system of ethics, he spun a new one out of his categorical imperative.

During the last fifty years, the idea of history as an organic whole, regulated by certain laws inherent in the constitution of man, — as a macrocosm analogous to the microcosm contained in every breast, — has been a favourite subject of speculation with the Germans. There are few among their eminent writers who have not occasionally thrown out thoughts on the subject: many have treated it, either partially or in its totality, in distinct works: and it has been applied with more or less ability and intelligence to the history of religion, of philosophy, of poetry, and of the arts. In each it has been attempted to arrange and exhibit the various phenomena which are the subjects of history, not in a mere accidental sequence, after the practice of former times and of other countries, but as connected parts of a great whole, — to trace what may be called the metamorphoses of history, in their genesis and orderly succession. Of late too these theories have been imported into France, especially by the Saint-Simonians, but have mostly been frenchified during the journey, and turned into stiff coarse abstractions: added to which the national incapacity to contemplate an idea, makes the French always impatient to realize it under some determinate form; instead of acknowledging that it can only be realized, when it realizes itself, and that it may do this under any form, if it be duly instilled into the mind as a living principle of thought.

From what has been said, we may perceive that the progress of mankind is not in a straight line, uniform and unbroken. On the contrary it is subject to manifold vicissitudes, interrup-



tions, and delays; ever advancing on the whole indeed, but often receding in one quarter, while it pushes forward in another; and sometimes even retreating altogether for a while, that it may start afresh with greater and more irresistible force. Wordsworth compares it to "the progress of a river, which both in its smaller reaches and larger turnings is frequently forced back toward its fountains by objects which cannot otherwise be eluded or overcome: yet with an accompanying impulse, that will ensure its advancement hereafter, it is either gaining strength every hour, or secretly conquering some difficulty, by a labour that contributes as effectually to further it in its course, as when it moves forward uninterrupted in a direct line." It is like the motion of the earth, which, beside its yearly course round the sun, has a daily revolution through successive periods of light and darkness. It is like the progress of the year, in which, after the blossoms of spring have dropt off, a long interval elapses before the autumnal fruits come forward conspicuously in their stead: and these too anon decay; and the foliage and herbage of one year mixes up with the mould for the enriching of another. It is like the life of an individual, in which every day adds something, and every day takes away something: but it by no means follows that what is added must be more valuable than what is taken away.

U.

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When coupled with a right understanding of its object, the belief in the progressiveness of mankind has no tendency to foster presumption; which in its ordinary acceptation it is apt to do. For the narrowminded and ignorant, being unable to project their thoughts beyond their own immediate circle, or to discriminate between what is really essential and valuable in any state of society, and what is accidental and derives its importance solely from habit, are prone to assume that no condition can well be endurable except their own, and to despise those who are unfortunate enough to differ from them, even in the cut of their coats, as so many Goths or Hottentots. In fact, this is the usual, as well as the original, meaning of the



word *barbarian*: a barbarian is a person who does not talk as we talk, or dress as we dress, or eat as we eat; in short, who is so audacious as not to follow our practice in all the trivialities of manners. No doubt too there are people to whom it is quite incomprehensible, how all the world did not die of weariness and intellectual starvation in the days when there were no newspapers, or stagecoaches, or circulating libraries, or penny encyclopedias. Now such persons grow very proud and loud, when they fancy they have a philosophical proposition to back their pretensions: forthwith they enlist as drummers, to beat the march of mind. And beat it they do deafeningly, at every corner of a street, in an age of a superficial character, like the present, the advantages of which strike every eye, while they keep us from looking at anything beyond, — from observing the poisonous vermin that swarm amid the luxuriant rank vegetation, the morass it grows out of, and the *malaria* it breeds.

It is true, this results in part from that instinctive power by which habit attaches us to whatever we are accustomed to; thus, by a wise and beneficent ordinance, adapting our nature to the endless varieties of our condition and circumstances, and enabling us to find happiness wheresoever we may be placed. Here, as in so many other cases, it is by “overleaping itself, and falling on the other side,” by passing out of its own positive region into that of negativeness, that a feeling, in itself sound and wholesome, becomes erroneous and mischievous. At the same time, in so doing it perverts and belies itself. For it is no way necessary that a fondness for any one object should so turn the current of our affections, as to draw them away from all others; still less that it should sour them against others. On the contrary, love, when true and deep, opens and expands the heart, and fills it with universal goodwill. Whereas exclusiveness, of whatsoever kind, arises from the monopolizing spirit of selfishness. They who look contemptuously upon other things, in comparison with the chosen objects of their regard, do so not from any transcendent affection for those objects in themselves, but merely as the objects which they vouchsafe to honour; and because they think it ministers to



their glory to sip the cream of the whole earth, while the rest of mankind are fain to swallow the skim-milk. In such a temper of mind there is no pure, hearty satisfaction, no pure, hearty delight even in the very objects thus extolled. If a person is really at ease, and thoroughly contented with his own state, he will be glad that his neighbours should feel a like contentment in theirs. Thus patriotism becomes the ground, and indeed is the only sure ground, of cosmopolitism.

When we call to remembrance however, that the course of time is markt, not by the rectilinear flight, but by the oscillations and pulsations of life, — that life does not flow in a straight, conspicuous stream into its ocean-home, but sinks sooner or later into the subterraneous caverns of death, — that light does not keep on brightening into a more intense effulgence, but, in compassion to the infirmity of our organs, allows them to bathe ever and anon and seek refreshment in darkness, — that the moral year, like the natural, is not one continued spring and summer, but has its seasons of decay, during which new growths are preparing, — that the ways of Providence in this world, as crost and interrupted by the self-will of man, are not solely from good to better, but often, in a merciful condescension to our frailty, through evil to good, — we shall understand that a more advanced stage of civilization does not necessarily imply a better state of society, least of all in any one particular country ; which, it is possible, may already have played out its part, and be doomed to fall, while others rise up in its stead. Indeed so far is our superiority to our ancestors from being a self-evident, notorious truth, the best of all proofs of our being superior to them would be our not thinking ourselves so.

Nay, even if the progress were uniform and continuous, what plea should we have for boasting ? or how can we dare pride ourselves on a superiority to our ancestors, which we owe, not to our own exertions, but to theirs ? how can we allow that superiority to awaken any feeling, except of the awful responsibility it imposes on us, and of reverent gratitude to those through whose labours and endurance we have been raised to our present elevation ?



That an acknowledgement of the inferiority of our own times is no way inconsistent with the firmest assurance as to the general progressiveness of mankind, may be seen in the Lectures on the Character of the Age delivered by Fichte at Berlin in 1804. After laying down, as the scheme of the history of our world, that mankind are to be trained to render that entire obedience to the law of reason as a freewill-offering, which in their primitive state they rendered unconsciously to the instinct of reason,—he divides the life of the human race into five distinct periods, and describes the present or third period, as “the epoch of man’s emancipation immediately from all binding authority, and mediately from all subjection to the rational instinct, and to reason altogether under every shape,—the age of absolute indifference to all truth, and of utter unrestraint without any guidance,—the state of complete sinfulness.” At the same time he declared that this dismal transition-period,—for drawing the features of which he found abundant materials in the political, moral, and religious debasement of Germany at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century,—was verging on its close; and that mankind would shortly emerge from this lowest deep into the state of incipient justification. With all his perversities he was a noble, heroic patriot, great as a philosopher, and still greater as a man: and one rejoices that he lived long enough to see, what he would deem a sign that his hopes were about to be fulfilled, the enthusiastic spirit which animated regenerate Germany in 1813.

Thus, while a right understanding of the course and purpose of history must needs check our bragging of the advantages of our own age, neither will it allow us to murmur on account of its defects. What though the blossoms have dropt off? the fruit will not ripen without. What though the fruit have fallen or been consumed? so it must,—seeing that it cannot keep its freshness and flavour for ever,—in order that a new crop may be produced. Surely it is idle to repine that a tree does not stand through the year with a load of rotten apples. Precious as may have been the qualities or the institutions which have past away, we shall recognize that their subsistence was incom-



patible with the new order of things ; that the locks which curl so gracefully round the downy, glowing cheeks of the child, would ill become the man's furrowed brow, and must grow white in time ; but that then too they will have a beauty of their own, if the face express that sobriety and calmness and purity which accord with them ; and that every age in the life of a nation, as of an individual, has its advantages and its benefits, if we call them forth, and make a right use of them. For here too, unless we thwart or pervert the order of Nature, a principle of compensation is ever working. It is in this thought that Tacitus finds consolation (*Annal.* iii. 55) : *Nisi forte rebus cunctis inest quidam velut orbis, ut quemadmodum temporum vices, ita morum vertantur : nec omnia apud priores meliora ; sed nostra quoque aetas multa laudis et artium imitanda posteris tulit.*

Above all, he who has observed how throughout history, while man is continually misusing good, and turning it into evil, the overruling sway of God's Providence out of evil is ever bringing forth good, will never be cast down, or led to despond, or to slacken his efforts, however untoward the immediate aspect of things may appear. For he will know that, whenever he is labouring in the cause of heaven, the powers of heaven are working with him ; that, though the good he is aiming at may not be attainable in the very form he has in view, the ultimate result will assuredly be good ; that were man diligent in fulfilling his part, this result would be immediate ; and that no one, who is thus diligent, shall lose his precious reward, of seeing that every good deed is a part of the life of the world.

U.

Another advantage attending the true idea of the progress of mankind is, that it alone enables us to estimate former ages justly. In looking back on the past, we are apt to fall into one of two errors. One class of historians treat the several moments of history as distinct, insulated wholes, existing solely by themselves and for themselves, apart from all connexion with the general destinies of mankind. Another class regard them



as so many steps in the ladder by which man had to mount to his present station. Now both these views are fallacious, the last the most so. For the former may coexist with a lively conception of individual reality, and contains nothing necessarily disparaging to the men of bygone generations; though it will not aid us to discern their relative bearings and purposes. Whereas, in ascending a ladder, we think the steps were merely made to get up by, not to rest on; we seldom pause to contemplate the varying prospects which spread out successively before each; and by a scarcely avoidable delusion, everything above us being hidden in mist, we mistake our own landing-place for the summit, and fancy the ladder was set up mainly for us, in order that we might climb it. Yet our post may be less commanding than several lower ones: some fresh obstacle may have come across us, to narrow our field of view: or our highth itself may render the objects indistinct. At all events, when we are looking down on them, we are unable to make out their proportions, and only perceive how they are connected with each other, not what they are in themselves. Indeed the other unphilosophical class of historians are also liable to a similar mistake. Not having a right insight into the necessary distinctions of ages and nations, they too measure others by their own standard, and so misunderstand and misjudge them.

In this, as in every idea, there is a union of opposites. Man, whether in his individual, or in his corporate capacity, is neither to be regarded solely as the end of his own being, nor solely as a mean and instrument employed for the well-being of others, — nor again as partly one and partly the other, — but as both at once, and each wholly. Nay, so inseparable is this twofold office, and indivisible, that he cannot rightly fulfill either, except by fulfilling the other. He has a positive and significant part to act in the great drama of the world's life: and that part derives a double importance from not being designed to pass away like a dream, but to leave a lasting impression on the destinies and character of the race. Moreover it is by diligently performing the part assigned to him, by topping it, as the phrase is, that he does his utmost to forward the



general action of the drama. So that, to understand any past age, we should consider it in a twofold light; first gain the fullest and most definite conception of its peculiar features and character; and then contemplate it with reference to the place it holds in the history of the world. What was it? and what did it accomplish? These are the first questions: but others follow them. How came it to be what it was? how did it arise out of what went before? and what did it leave to that which came after? What phase of human nature did it express? what distinctive idea did it embody? what power did it realize? of what truths was it the exponent? and what portion of these its attributes has past away with it? what portion has been taken up and incorporated with the living spirit of the race?

Let me exemplify these remarks by the manner in which the history of philosophy has been treated. A number of writers, of whom Brucker may stand as the representative, have aimed at little else than giving a naked abstract or summary of the successive systems which have prevailed; translating the terminology into that of their own days; but with scarcely a conception that every system of philosophy, deserving the name, has an organic inward, as well as a logical and outward unity, and springs from a seminal idea; or that there is an orderly genesis by which one system issues from another. Yet, seeing that philosophy is the reflexion of the human mind upon itself, on its own nature and faculties, and on those supersensuous ideas and forms which it discovers within itself, the laws and mould of its being, the history of philosophy, it is plain, must be the history of the human mind, must follow the same regular progression, and go through the same transmigrations. Viewed in this light, the history of philosophy has a pervading unity, and a deep interest, and is intimately connected with the life of the race. But in its usual form it merely exhibits a series of logical diagrams, which seem to be no way concerned with the travails and throes of human nature, — which are nothing more than the images of Narcissus looking dotingly at himself ever and anon in the stream of Time, — and which “come like



shadows, so depart," until we are wearied by the dull, ghastly procession, and cry, with Macbeth, *We 'll see no more.*

Inadequate however and tantalizing as such a history is, it does at least furnish an outline of the forms under which Philosophy has manifested itself: it shews us how multifarious those forms are, and supplies us with some of the materials for discerning the law of their succession. We perceive in it how the appetite of unity has ever been the great characteristic of the Philosophical mind, and how that mind has ever been drawn by an irrepressible instinct to bring all things to one, and to seek the central One in all. Hence these histories are of greater value, or at least come nearer to fulfilling the idea of a history, than such detached observations as Dugald Stewart has strung together for the sake of exhibiting a view of the progress of metaphysical philosophy. From the latter no one would be able to frame any conception of the systems enumerated, unless he were already acquainted with them. Indeed one should hardly make out, except from the objections urged every now and then against the love of system, that there is anything like a desire of unity in the philosophical spirit, any aim beyond certain more or less wide generalizations from the phenomena of the intellectual and material world. Instead of trying to give a faithful representation of former systems in their individuality, and their reciprocal connexion, pointing out the wants they were successively designed to satisfy, shewing how those wants arose, and how they could not but arise, and then tracing the evolution of each pervading idea, he has mostly contented himself with picking out a few incidental remarks, and these often no way pertaining to the general scheme of systematic thought, but such reflexions as are suggested to an acute and intelligent mind by observation of the world. The object which guides him in the selection of these remarks, is, to shew how the philosophers of former times caught glimpses of certain propositions, which he deems to be the great truths of his own age: and he almost seems to have fancied that the human mind had been heaving and panting and toiling from the beginning, and ransacking the quarries of Nature, and building up



the mighty pyramid of thought, in order that Reid should lay on the headstone, and take his stand on the summit. Hereby a method, which is solely applicable to the history of science, is transferred to that of philosophy. Whereas the worth of a philosophical system is only to be appreciated in its unity and integrity, not from two or three casual remarks; which are a still more fallacious criterion, than detached passages are of the merit of a poem. For the power of drawing inferences from observation is totally distinct from that of discerning elementary ideas, and is often found without a particle of it; for instance in those who by way of eminence are termed men of practical minds.

U.

I have been trying to shew that the belief in the perfectibility, or even in the progressiveness of mankind, is a late growth in the world of thought, — to explain how and under what form it originated, and how much of error has been mixt up with it. Are we then to cast away the idea of perfectibility, as an idle, baseless, delusive, vainglorious phantom? God forbid! And in truth He has forbidden it. He forbade it, when He set His own absolute perfection as the aim of our endeavour before us, by that blessed command — *Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

To deny the perfectibility of mankind is to charge these words with pompous inanity. They declare that the perfect renewal of God's image in man is not a presumptuous vision, not like a madman's attempt to clutch a handful of stars, but an object of righteous enterprise, which we may and ought to long for and to strive after. And as God's commands always imply the possibility of their fulfilment, and impart the power of fulfilling them to those who seek it, this, which was designed for all mankind, was accompanied by another, providing that all mankind should be called to aspire to that sublime perfection, should be taught by what steps they are to mount to it, and should receive help mighty enough to nerve their souls for the work. A body of men was instituted for the express purpose of teaching all nations to do all the things that Christ had com-



manded, and of baptizing them in the name of Him who alone can give man the power of subduing whatever there is of evil in his nature, and of ~~maturing~~ whatever there is of good.

*Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.* This is the angel-trumpet which summons man to the warfare of Duty. This, and nothing less than this, is the glorious prize set before him. Do our hearts swell with pride at the thought that this is what we ought to be, what we might be? A single glance at the state of the world, at what we ourselves are, must quench that pride, and turn it into shame. U.

When quoting Dryden's epigram on Milton (p. 298), I called it stupid. Is this an indecorous expression to apply to anything that comes from so renowned a writer? I would not willingly fail in due respect to any man of genius, who has exercised his genius worthily: but I cannot feel much respect for the author of *Limberham*, who turned Milton's Eve into a vulgar coquette, and who defiled Shakspeare's *State of Innocence* by introducing the rottenhearted carnalities of Charles the Second's age into the *Tempest*. As to his epigram on Milton, it seems to me nearly impossible to pack a greater number of blundering thoughts into so small a space, than are crowded into its last four lines. Does the reader remember it?

Three poets, in three distant ages born,  
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.  
The first in loftiness of thought surpast;  
The next in majesty: in both the last.  
The force of Nature could no further go:  
To make a third, she joined the former two.

As these lines are on the author of *Paradise Lost*, we know who must be the other poets spoken of: else we should hardly divine it from the descriptions given of them; which would fit any other writers nearly as well. For what feature of the Homeric poems is designated by "loftiness of thought"? what feature of Virgil by "majesty," — *majesty* contradistinguisht from *loftiness of thought*? What is loftiness of thought in a poet as existing without majesty? what majesty, without loftiness of thought? unless it be the majesty of Louis the Fourteenth's full-bottomed



wig, or of one of Dryden's own stage-kings. For, if there be not something incongruous in these two qualities, if they had already coexisted in Homer and Virgil, what is the prodigy of their union in Milton? How totally are the characters of the two poets mist in these words! They give no notion, or a most erroneous one, of Homer; and a very inadequate one of Virgil. Milton however is so highly favoured, that he unites both qualities. His "majesty" is not, like Virgil's, without "loftiness of thought;" nor his "loftiness of thought," like Homer's, without "majesty."

And the combination of these two elements, which are almost identical, exhausts the powers of Nature! This is one of the blustering pieces of bombast thrown out by those who neither know nor think what they are talking of. Eschylus, and Sophocles, and Pindar; and Aristophanes, and Dante, and Cervantes, and Shakspeare had lived,—every one of them having more in common with Homer than Milton had: yet a man dares say, that the power of God has been worn out by creating Homer and Virgil! and that he could do nothing after, except by strapping them together.

Nor can there well be more complete ignorance of the characteristics of genius. Secondary men, men of talents, may be mixt up, like an apothecary's prescription, of so many grains of one quality, and so many of another. But genius is one, individual, indivisible: like a star, it dwells alone. That which is essential in a man of genius, his central spirit, shews itself once, and passes away, never to return: and in few men is this more conspicuous than in Milton, in whom there is nothing Homeric, and hardly anything Virgilian. In sooth, one might as accurately describe the elephant, as being made up of the force of the lion and the strength of the tiger.

A like inauspicious star has presided at the birth of many of the epigrams on great men. The authors of them, in their desire to say something very grand and striking, have been regardless of truth and propriety. What can be more turgid and extravagant than Pope's celebrated epitaph on Newton? in which he audaciously blots out all the knowledge of former



ages, that he may give his hero a dark ground to stand out from; forgetting that in the intellectual world also the process of Nature is not by fits and starts, but gradually, — that the highest mountains do not spring up out of the plain, but are approacht by lower ranges, — and that no sun ever rises without a preluding twilight.

The best parallel to Pope's couplet, — for it is scarcely a parody, — is Nicolai's silly one on Mendelsohn :

*Es ist ein Gott : so sagte Moses schon :*  
Doch den Beweis gab Moses Mendelsohn.

Which may be Englisht without much disparagement by the following doggerel :

*There is a God,* said Moses long ago :  
But Moses Mendelsohn first proved 't was so.

Far more ingenious than any of the preceding epigrams, — because it contains a thought, though a false one, — is Bembo's on Raphael :

*Ille hic est Raphael, timuit quo sospite vinci*  
*Rerum magna parens, et moriente mori.*

Yet, neat and clever as this may be, a true imagination would revolt from charging Nature either with jealousy or with despondency. She may be endowed with the purer elementary feelings of humanity. She may be represented as sympathizing with man, as rejoicing with him or at him, as mourning with him or over him. But surely it is absurd that she, who is here called *rerum magna parens*, she who brings forth all the beauty and glory of mountains and vallies, of lakes and rivers and seas, of winter and spring and summer, — she, who every evening showers thousands of stars over the sky, who calls the sun out of his eastern chamber, and welcomes him with bridal blushes, and leads him across the heavens, — she who has gone on for thousands of years pouring forth bright and graceful forms with inexhaustible variety and prodigality, — she who fills the immensity of space with beauty, and is ever renewing it through the immensity of time, — should be ruffled by a petty feeling of rivalry for one of her children ; or should fear that the power,



which had seen countless generations and nations, and even worlds, rise and set, was about to expire, because one of her blossoms, although it was one of the loveliest, had dropt off from the tree of humanity.

In all these eulogies we find the same trick. The authors think they cannot sufficiently exalt the persons they want to praise, except by speaking derogatorily and slightly of some other power. Nature is vilified, to magnify Milton and Raphael; all the science from Archimedes down to Kepler and Galileo, for the sake of glorifying Newton. In the same style is Johnson's couplet on Shakspeare :

Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign;  
And panting Time toiled after him in vain.

What the latter of these two monstrous lines was intended to mean, it is difficult to guess. For even Johnson's grandiloquence could hardly have taken this mode of expressing that Shakspeare violated the unities. The former line is one of the most infelicitous ever written. Not to speak of that uncouth abstraction, *Existence*, which is here turned into a person, and deckt out with eyes; what distinguishes Shakspeare above all other poets, is, that he did not "spurn Existence's bounded reign." He was too wise to dream that it was bounded, too wise to fancy that he could overleap its bounds, too wise to be ambitious of taking a *salto mortale* into Chaos. His excellence is that he never "spurns" anything. More than any other writer, he realizes his own conception of the philosophic life, —

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

People are fond of talking about the extravagances of genius, the exagérations of the imagination; and when they meet with something very extravagant and exaggerated, they regard this as a proof that the writer's imagination was so violent and uncontrollable, it quite ran away with him. One might as well deem gouty legs symptomatic of strength and agility. Exaggerations mostly arise from feebleness and torpor of imagination. It is because we feel ourselves unable to



vivify an object in its full, calm reality, that we mouthe and sputter. When Caligula was making preparations for a triumph over an enemy he had never seen, *Galliarum procerissimum quemque, et, ut ipse dicebat, ἀξιοθρίαμβετον legit, ac seposuit ad pompam* (Suetonius, c. 47): and so it is with big words that authors have been wont to celebrate their factitious triumphs. Of the writers I have been citing none was remarkable for imaginative power: even Dryden was not so: in Johnson the active, productive imagination was inert, the passive or receptive, sluggish and obtuse. His strength lay in his understanding, which was shrewd and vigorous, and at times sagacious. Yet no poet of the rankest, most ill-regulated imagination ever wrote anything more tumid than this couplet on Shakspeare.

To shew how a poet of true and mighty imagination will praise, let me wind up these remarks by quoting Milton's noble epitaph.

What needs my Shakspeare for his honoured bones  
The labour of an age in piled stones?  
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid  
Under a star-ypointed pyramid?  
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,  
What needst thou such weak witness of thy name?  
Thou in our wonder and astonishment  
Hast built thyself a live-long monument;  
And so sepulcred in such pomp dost lie,  
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

The reader may perhaps remind me, that this epitaph, as written by Milton, contained six more lines; and that these are quite unworthy of the others, and prove that the greatest poets may at times write in very bad taste. True! the epitaph was composed in Milton's youth; and a young poet of genius is always liable,—the more so on account of that lively susceptibility which is among the chief elements of all genius,—to be carried away by the vicious taste of his age. He must receive the impressions of the world around him, before he can mould them into a world of his own. In omitting the six lines in question, I have followed the example set by Wordsworth in his *Essay on Epitaphs*. Bad however as the conceit in them



may be, the fault is not one of vapid bombast, but of an unripe genius, of an over-active ingenuity. The words are not big, unmeaning sounds, as in the lines quoted from Dryden, Pope, and Johnson. Milton's epitaph, though it has a flaw in it, is a genuine diamond, and, when that flaw is cut out, shines in lasting brilliancy: while the others are bits of painted glass, gaudy and glaring, but which, if you handle them rudely, split into worthless fragments. Or rather they are swollen bladders: only prick them, and they collapse, and cannot be puffed out again.

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U.

When searching into the hidden things of God, we are forever forgetting that we only *know in part*.

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a.

Christianity has carried civilization along with it, whithersoever it has gone: and, as if to shew that the latter does not depend on physical causes, some of the countries the most civilized in the days of Augustus are now in a state of hopeless barbarism.

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Something like Judaism or Platonism, I should think, must always precede Christianity; except in those who have really received Christianity as a living power in their childhood.

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The catholic religion is the whole Bible: sects pick out a part of it. But what whole? The living whole, to be sure . . not the dead whole: the spirit, not the letter.

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A.

Mere art perverts taste; just as mere theology depraves religion.

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It is a lesson which Genius too, and Wisdom of every kind must learn, that its kingdom is not of this world. It must learn to know this, and to be content that this should be so, to be content with the thought of a kingdom in a higher, less transitory region. Then peradventure may the saying be fulfilled with regard to it, that he who is ready to lose his life shall save



it. The wisdom which aims at something nobler and more lasting than the kingdom of this world, may now and then find that the kingdom of this world will also fall into its lap. How much longer and more widely has Aristotle reigned than Alexander! with how much more power and glory Luther than Charles the Fifth! His breath still works miracles at this day. U.

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Unless a tree has borne blossoms in spring, you will vainly look for fruit on it in autumn. U.

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In character, in affection, the ideal is the only real.

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There is but one power to which all are eager to bow down, to which all take pride in paying homage; and that is the power of Beauty. U.

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Science sees signs; Poetry the thing signified. U.

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If Painting be Poetry's sister, she can only be a sister Anne, who will see nothing but a flock of sheep, while the other bodies forth a troop of horsemen with drawn sabres and white-plumed helmets. I.

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A work of genius is something like the pie in the nursery song, in which the four and twenty blackbirds are baked. When the pie is opened, the birds begin to sing. Hereupon three fourths of the company run away in a fright; and then after a time, feeling ashamed, they would fain excuse themselves by declaring, the pie stank so, they could not sit near it. Those who stay behind, the men of taste and epicures, say one to another, *We came here to eat. What business have birds, after they have been baked, to be alive and singing? This will never do. We must put a stop to so dangerous an innovation: for who will send a pie to an oven, if the birds come to life there? We must stand up to defend the rights of all the ovens in England. Let us have dead birds . . . dead birds for our money.* So each sticks his fork into a bird, and hacks and mangles it a while, and then



holds it up and cries, *Who will dare assert that there is any music in this bird's song?*

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Let your humour always be good humour, in both senses. If it comes of a bad humour, it is pretty sure not to belie its parentage.

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U.

Shakspeare's genius could adapt itself with such nicety to all the varieties of ever-varying man, that in his *Titus Andronicus* he has portrayed the very dress of mind which the people of the declining empire must have worn. I can conceive that the degenerate Romans would clothe their thoughts in just such words. The sayings of the free-garmented folks in *Julius Cesar* could not have come from the close-buttoned generation in *Othello*. Though human passions are the same in all ages, there are modifications of them dependent on the circumstances of time and place, which Shakspeare has always caught and exprest. He has thus given such a national tinge and epochal propriety to his characters, that, even when one sees Jaques in a bag-wig and sword, one may exclaim, on being told that he is a French nobleman, *This man must have lived at the time when the Italian taste was prevalent in France*. How differently does he moralize from King Henry or Hamlet! although their morality, like all morality, comes to pretty nearly the same conclusion.

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I.

He who is imprest with the truth of the foregoing remark, must needs feel somewhat perplexed, when reading *Troilus and Cressida*, at the language which is there put into the mouths of the Greek chiefs: so utterly unlike is it to the winged words of the Iliad. Hence some of the critics have had recourse to the usual makeshift, by which they try to shirk difficulties, when they cannot get over them, and have conjectured that the play was interpolated by some other poet of the age. But what other poet could have furnisht the wisdom contained in those very speeches the style of which appears the most objectionable? And what would the play be without them? Indeed



the language in question is not confined to a few speeches, but runs through almost all the graver scenes. Still it is strange that Shakspeare, who, with a humble and magnanimous trust in truth, represented everything just as it was or had been, merely bringing out the spirit which in real life had been checkt or latent, should in this instance have departed so far from his original, that he is scarcely ever so unlike Homer, as here where he comes in contact with him. To describe the style of the Greek debates by one of his own illustrations :

Knots, by the conflux of meeting sap,  
Infect the sound pine, and divert his grain  
Tortive and errant from his course of growth.

It looks just as if Shakspeare had chosen for once to let his thoughts travel by his friend Chapman's heavy wagon : such is the similarity between the language of the Greek scenes and that of *Bussy d'Ambois* and Chapman's other serious writings. And doubtless this furnishes the key to the difficulty. Shakspeare's acquaintance with Homer was through Chapman's translation ; a considerable part of which was publisht some years before *Troilus and Cressida*. Hence Agamemnon and Ulysses talk with him just as Chapman had made them talk, and just as Shakspeare would naturally suppose that they had talkt in Greek.

Perhaps this may help us toward the solution of another difficulty in this perplexing play. Coleridge, who confesses that he scarcely knows what to say of it, and that "there is no one of Shakspeare's plays harder to characterize," has seldom been less happy in his criticisms than in his remarks on the Greek chiefs. Nor is Hazlitt less wide of the mark, when he observes that "Shakspeare seems to have known them as well as if he had been a spy sent into their camp." At least his representation of them is totally different in tone and spirit from Homer's ; as indeed must needs follow from the difference in their language : for Shakspeare was always alive, in a higher degree than any other poet, to the truth of the maxim, *le style est l'homme même*. Yet I cannot think that the difference has been correctly apprehended by Coleridge, when he says that



“Shakspeare’s main object was to substantiate the distinct and graceful profiles or outlines of the Homeric Epic, into the flesh and blood of the romantic drama.” Assuredly the Homeric heroes are not mere graceful outlines : they are every whit as substantial, living flesh and blood as Shakspeare’s : only their moral nature is simpler, and flows more uniformly and continuously, without such a whirl and eddy of thoughts and feelings. Tieck, who in a note to his edition of the German Shakspeare, also observes that among all the plays *Troilus and Cressida* is unquestionably the most singular, calls it, “a heroic comedy, a tragic parody, written with the set purpose of parodying the age of chivalry, the profound political wisdom which overleaps itself, the shows of love, and even misfortune.” These words seem to express the real character of the play. But still the question recurs : how came Shakspeare thus to parody the Homeric heroes ? how came he to conceive and represent them with all this ostentation and hollowness, ever trying to cheat and outwit each other, yet only successful in cheating and outwitting themselves ? Now this, it seems to me, may not improbably be owing in a great measure to the medium through which he saw them, and by which they were so much swelled out and distorted, that his exquisite taste might well take offense at such pompous phraseology in the mouth of simple warriors : while the combination of great political sagacity, and shrewdness and depth, more especially in general reflexions, with hollowness of heart, and weakness of purpose, was what he saw frequently exemplified among the statesmen of his own age. Though Agamemnon and his peers were certainly not meant as a satire on James and his court, yet they have sundry features in common.

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U.

A poet, to be popular, ought not to be too purely and intensely poetical. He should have plenty of ordinary poetry for the multitude of ordinary readers : and perhaps it may be well that he should have some poetry better than ordinary, lest the multitude should be daunted by finding themselves entirely at variance with the intelligent few. This however is by no



means clear. He who calls to mind the popularity of the *Pleasures of Hope*, may remark that the artificial flowers in a milliner's window do not want any natural ones to set them off; and that a star looks very pale and dull, when squibs and rockets are shining it out of countenance. In truth this has just been the case with *Gertrude of Wyoming*, which has been quite thrown into the shade by its gaudier, flimsier neighbour.

I have known several persons, to whom no poem of Wordsworth's gave so much pleasure as the *Lines written while sailing in a boat at evening*; which were composed, as he has told me, on the Cam, while he was at College. *O, if he had but gone on writing in that style!* many will say, *what a charming poet he would have been!* For these are among the very few verses of Wordsworth's, which any other person might have written; that is, bating the purity and delicacy of the language, and the sweetness of the versification. The sentiment and the exercise of fancy are just raised so much above the temperature of common life, as to produce a pleasant glow: and there is nothing calling for any stretch of imagination or of thought; nothing like what we so often find in his poems, when out of Nature's heart a voice "appears to issue, *startling The blank air.*"

In like manner I have been told that, among Landor's *Conversations*, the most general favorite is that between General Kleber and some French officers. If it be so, one may easily see why. Beautiful as some touches in it are, it is not so far removed as most of its companions, from what other men have written and can write.

No doubt there is also another reason,—that this Conversation has something of a story connected with it. For in mere incidents all take an interest, through the universal fellowfeeling which binds man to man; as is proved by the fondness for gossiping, from which so few are exempt. Above all is such an interest excited by everything connected, however remotely, with the two great powers which come across the path of life,—death, which terminates it,—and love, which, to the imagination even of the least imaginative, seems to carry it for a



while out of the highway dust, into the midst of green fields and flowers. Hence it is that all tatlers delight in getting hold of anything akin to a love-story; not merely from a fondness for scandal, but because the most powerful and pleasurable of human feelings is in some measure awakened and excited thereby.

Nor is it at all requisite to the excitement of interest by incidents, that the persons they befall should have any depth of character or passion. On the contrary, such a surplusage often makes them less generally interesting. Leave out the thoughts and the characters in *Hamlet*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*: as pantomimic melodramas they might perchance run against *Pizarro* and *the Forest of Bondy*. Hence the popularity of novels; the name of which implies some novel incident; and the interest of which mostly arises from the entangling and disentangling of a love-story. Indeed this is all that the bulk of novel-readers care about; who loves whom? and by what difficulties their loves are crost? and how those difficulties are surmounted? and how the loveknot, after the tying and untying of sundry other knots, twists about at length into a marriageknot?

This too is perhaps one of the reasons why the heroes and heroines of novels have so little character. They are to be just such persons as the readers can wish and believe themselves to be, trickt out with all manner of insipid virtues, unencumbered by anything distinctive and individual. Then we may float along in a daydream, with a half-conscious persuasion that all the occurrences related are happening to ourselves. Hereby Poetry, instead of lifting us out of ourselves into an ideal world, brings down its world to us, and peoples the real world with phantoms. These delusions would be disperst by any powerful delineation of individual character. We cannot fancy ourselves *Lear*, or *Macbeth*, or *Hamlet*; although on deeper reflexion we perceive that we are heirs of a common nature.

In this sense it is very true, that, as one of our greatest modern writers once said, incident and interest are the bane of poetry. For the main subject matter of poetry being man, — the various modifications and combinations of human character



and feelings, — the facts it treats of will be primarily actions, or what men do, exhibiting and fulfilling the inward impulses of their nature, — and secondarily events, which follow one another according to an apparent law, and which shew how the outward world runs parallel or counter to the characters, calling forth their dormant energies, unfolding them, shaping them, perfecting them. Whereas incidents are mere creatures of chance, unconnected, insulated, and interesting solely from themselves, from their strangeness, not from their moral influence. Such an interest being excited with far more ease, both by the writer and in the reader, the love of incidents has commonly been among the symptoms of a declining age in poetry; as for instance in Euripides, compared with Eschylus and Sophocles, in Fletcher compared with Shakspeare.

And this is the interest which is injurious to poetry, the interest excited by strange incidents, and by keeping curiosity on the stretch. Not that good poetry is to be uninteresting: but the sources of its interest lie deeper in our inmost consciousness and primary sympathies. Hence it is permanent. While the interest awakened by curiosity fades away when the curiosity has once been gratified, true poetical interest, the interest excited by the throes and conflicts of human passion, is wont to increase as we become familiar with its object. Every time I read *King Edipus*, the interest seems to become more intense: the knowledge of the result does not prevent my sympathizing anew with the terrific struggle. So it is in *Othello*. Whereas that excited by the *Castle of Otranto*, or the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, is nearly extinct after the first reading. In truth a mystery is unworthy of the name, unless it becomes more mysterious when we have been initiated into it, than it was before.

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U.

Man cannot live without a shadow, even in poetry. Poetical dreamers forget this. They try to represent perfect characters, characters which shall be quite transparent: and so their heroes have no flesh and blood, no nerves or muscles, nothing to touch our sympathy, nothing for our affections to cling to.

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U.



People stare much more at a paper kite, than at a real one.

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Brilliant speakers and writers should remember that coach-wheels are better than Catherine wheels to travel on.

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Many are ambitious of saying grand things, that is, of being grandiloquent. Eloquence is speaking out . . . a quality few esteem, and fewer aim at.

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One's first business in writing is to say what one has to say.

Is it? Dear me! I never knew that. Yet I have written ever so many articles in the *Hypo-critical Review*, laying down the law how everybody ought to write, and scolding everybody for not writing accordingly. Surely too my articles must have been admirable; for somebody told me he admired them. U.

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The best training for style is speech; not monologues, or lectures *ex cathedra*, like those of the German professors, of whose uninterrupted didacticity their literature bears too many marks; but conversation, whence the French, and women generally, derive the graces of their style; dialectic discussion, by which Plato braced and polisht his; and the agonistic oratory of the bar, the senate, and the forum, which makes people speak home, popularly, and to the point, as we see in our own best writers, as well as in those of Greece and Rome. For when such a practice is national, its influence extends to those who do not come into immediate contact with it. The pulpit too would be a like discipline, if they who mount it would oftener think as much of the persons they are preaching to, as of the preacher. U.

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An epithet is an addition: but an addition may be an incumbrance; as even a dog finds out, when a kettle is tied to his tail. Stuff a man into a featherbed; and he will not move so lightly and nimbly. The very instruments of flying weigh us down, if not rightly adjusted, if out of place, or overthick. Yet many writers cram their thoughts into what might not inappropriately be called a featherbed of words. They accumulate



epithets, which weaken oftener than they strengthen; throwing a haze over the objects, instead of bringing out their features more distinctly. For authors too, like all the rest of mankind, take their seats among Hesiod's *νήπιοι*, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν ὅσῳ πλέον ἡμῖν παντός.

As a general maxim, no epithet should be used, which does not express something not expressed in the context, nor so implied in it as to be immediately deducible. Above all, shun abusive epithets. Leave it to those who can wield nothing more powerful, to throw offensive words. Before the fire burns strongly, it smoulders and smokes: when mightiest and most consuming, it is also brightest and clearest. A modern historian of the Cesars would hardly bridle his tongue for five lines together. In every page we should be called upon to abhor the *perfidious* Tiberius, the *ferocious* Caligula, the *bloody* Nero, the *cruel* Domitian, the *tyrant*, the *monster*, the *fiend*. Tacitus, although not feeble in indignation, either in feeling or expressing it, knew that no gentleman ever pelts eggshells, even at those who are set up in the pillory: nor would he have done so at him who was pilloried in St Helena.

If the narrative warrant a sentence of reprobation, the reader will not be slow in pronouncing it: by taking it out of his mouth you affront him. A great master and critic in style observes, that "Thucydides and Demosthenes lay it down as a rule, never to say what they have reason to suppose would occur to the auditor and reader, in consequence of anything said before; knowing that every one is more pleased, and more easily led by us, when we bring forward his thoughts indirectly and imperceptibly, than when we elbow them and outstrip them with our own." (*Imagin. Convers.* i. 129.) Perhaps, as is often the case in criticism, a practice resulting from an instinctive sense of beauty and fitness may here be spoken of as a rule, the subject of a conscious purpose: and when it becomes such, and is made a matter of elaborate study, the practice itself is apt to be carried too far, and to produce a zigzag style, instead of a smooth, winding flow. For the old saying, that *ars est celare artem*, is not only applicable to works, but in a still more im-



portant sense to authors ; whose nature will never be bettered by any art, until that art becomes nature. Still, so far as such a rule tended to make our language more temperate, it could hardly be otherwise than beneficial. This temperance too, like all temperance, would greatly foster strength. For we are ever disposed to sympathize with those who repress their passions : we even spur them on ; while we pull in those who are run away with by theirs : and something like pity rises up toward the veriest criminal, when we see him meet with hard words, as well as hanging.

There is a difference however, as to the use of epithets, between poetry and prose. The former is allowed to dwell longer on that which is circumstantial and accessory. Ornaments may become a ball-dress, which would be unseasonable of a morning. The walk of Prose is a walk of business, along a road, with an end to reach, and without leisure to do more than take a glance at the prospect : Poetry's on the other hand is a walk of pleasure, among fields and groves, where she may often loiter and gaze her fill, and even stoop now and then to cull a flower. Yet ornamental epithets are not essential to poetry : should you fancy they are, read Sophocles, and read Dante. Or if you would see how the purest and noblest poetry may be painted and rouged out of its grandeur by them, compare Pope's translations of Homer with the original, or Tate and Brady's of the Psalms with the prose version. U.

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It has been urged in behalf of the octosyllabic metre, of which modern writers are so fond, that much of our heroic verse would be improved, if you were to leave out a couple of syllables in each line. Such an argument may not betoken much logical precision ; seeing that idle words may find a way into lines of eight syllables, as well as into those of ten : nor is there any peculiar pliancy in the former, which should render them the one regimental dimension, exclusively fitted to express all manner of thoughts. Moreover such omissions must alter the character of a poem, the two metres being in totally different keys ; wherefore a change in the metre of the poem should



superinduce a proportionate change in its whole structure and composition. Sorry too must be the verses, which could benefit by such an amputation. In Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, it would be like improving a hand by chopping off a finger. If you try the experiment on Pope however, especially on his translation, you will find that line after line is the better for being thus curtailed. For you will get rid of many of the epithets, with which he was wont to eke out his couplets; and which, as he seldom exerted his imagination to reproduce the conceptions presented by his original, were mostly selected for little else than their sound, and their convenience in filling up the vacant space.

There is indeed a tendency in our heroic couplet, as it is very unaptly called, to collect idle words; that is to say, according to the mode of constructing it which has prevailed since the middle of the seventeenth century. Gibbon, in some observations on Ovid's *Fasti*, remarks that, in the elegiac metre, the necessity that "the sense must always be included in a couplet, causes the introduction of many useless words merely for the sake of the measure." The same has naturally been the case in our verse, ever since it was laid down as a rule that there must be a pause at the end of every other line. U.

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Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria* (i. 20), suggests that our vicious poetic diction "has been kept up by, if it did not wholly arise from, the custom of writing Latin verses, and the great importance attacht to these exercises, in our public schools." In this remark, too much efficacy is ascribed to what at the utmost can only have been a subordinate and secondary cause. For the very same vices of style have prevailed in other countries, where there was no such practice to generate and foster them. Nor in England have they been confined to persons educated at our public schools, but have been general among those who have set themselves to write poetry, whether for the sake of distinction, or to while away idle hours, or to gratify a literary taste, without any strong natural bent. Indeed the one great source of what is vicious in literature is the



want of truth, under all its forms: while the main source of what is excellent, in style as well as in matter, is the pure love and desire of truth, whether as the object of the reason and understanding, or of the imagination. He who writes with any other aim than that of giving full utterance to the truth which is teeming within him,—be it with the wish of writing finely, of gaining fame, or of gaining money,—is sure to write ill. He who is ambitious of becoming a poet, when Nature never meant him to be so, is sure to deck himself out with counterfeit ornaments.

Hence it is that translations are often injurious to literature. They may indeed be highly beneficial, by promoting that commerce of thought, which is the great end of the intercourse among nations, and of which the lower mercantile commerce should be the symbol and the instrument. Very often however a translator goes through his work as a job: and even when he has entered upon it spontaneously, he will mostly grow weary after a while, and continue it merely as taskwork. Whether from natural inaptitude, or from exhausted interest, he makes no steady, strenuous endeavor to realize the conceptions of his author, and to bring them out vividly and distinctly, even before his own mind. But he has put on harness, and must go on. So he writes vaguely and hazily, tries to make up for the feebleness and incorrectness of his outlines, by daubing the picture over with gaudy colours; and getting no distinct perception of his author's meaning, nor having any distinct meaning of his own, he falls into a noxious habit of using words without meaning.

For the same reason will the practice of writing in a foreign language be mischievous, and to the same extent; so far namely as it leads us to use words without a distinct, living meaning, and to have some other object paramount to that of saying what we have to say, in the plainest, most forcible manner. An author may indeed exercise himself not without profit in writing Latin; and as people learn to walk with more grace and ease by learning to dance, he may return to his own language with his perceptions of beauty and fitness in style sharpened by the



necessity of attending to the niceties of a foreign tongue, in which all composition must needs be the work of art. Our principal Latin poets have been among the best and most elegant English writers of their time, — Cowley, Addison, Sir William Jones, Cowper, Landor: and though Milton was over-ambitious of emulating powers and beauties scarcely compatible with the genius of our language, his scholarship led him to that learned mastery over it, in which he stands almost alone.

But when Latin verses are to be written as a prescribed task, — when, according to the custom of many schools, boys are prepared for this accomplishment by being set in the first instance to write what are professedly *nonsense verses*, as though stringing long and short syllables together after a certain fashion had a positive value, independent of the subject matter, — when they are trained for years to write compulsorily on a theme imposed by a master, — it is not easy to imagine any method better calculated to deaden every spark of genuine poetical feeling. In its stead boys of quickness acquire a fondness for mere diction: this is the object aimed at, the prize set before them. They ransack Virgil and Horace and Ovid for pretty expressions, and bind up as many as they can in a posy: so that a copy of some fifty lines will often be a cento of such phrases, and contain a greater number of ornamental epithets than a couple of books of the *Eneid*.

To exemplify this poetical ferrumination, as he calls it, Coleridge cites a line from a prize-poem, — *Lactea purpureos interstrepit unda lapillos*, — which, he says, is taken from a line of Politian's, — *Pura coloratos interstrepit unda lapillos*; adding that, if you look out *purus* in the *Gradus*, you find *lacteus* as its first synonym; and *purpureus* is the first synonym for *coloratus*. They who know how little Coleridge is to be relied on for a mere matter of fact, will not be surprised to learn, that *lacteus* does not occur among the synonyms for *purus* in the *Gradus*, as indeed it scarcely could, nor *purpureus* among those for *coloratus*. It is worth noticing however, as illustrating the effects of such a process, that the two epithets substituted for the original ones are both untrue. The original line is a very



pretty one, even in rhythm superior to the copy : but the water, though *pura*, is not *lactea* ; nor, if it were, could the pebbles be seen through it : and these pebbles are *colorati*, of various colours, not, or at least only a few of them, *purpurei*. U.

Most people seem to think the coat makes the gentleman ; almost all fancy the diction makes the poet. This is one of the reasons why *Paradise Regained* has been so generally slighted. In like manner many readers are unable to discover that there is any poetry in *Samson Agonistes* ; and very few have any notion that there is more, and of a higher kind, than in *Comus*. Johnson for instance, while he says, that “ a work more truly poetical (than *Comus*) is rarely found ; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets embellish almost every period with lavish decoration,” — as though these things were the essence of poetry, — complains in the *Rambler* (No. 140), that it is difficult to display the excellences of *Samson*, owing to its “ having none of those descriptions, similies, or splendid sentences, with which other tragedies are so lavishly adorned.” So that Johnson’s taste was of that savage cast, which thinks that a woman’s beauty consists in her being studded with jewels, if confluent, so much the better ; that she can have no beauty at all, unless she has a necklace and frontlet and ear-rings ; and that, if she had a nose-ring, and lip-rings, and cheek-rings, and chin-rings, she would be all the more beautiful. Even allowing that jewelry may not be always hurtful to female beauty, especially where there is little or none for it to hurt, yet there is a masculine beauty, as well as a feminine ; and the former at least does not need to be trickt out with tinsel. The oak has a beauty of its own, a beauty which would not be improved by being spangled over with blossoms. We may remark too that it is only about the horizon that the sky arrays itself in the gorgeous pageantry of sunset. The upper heavens remain pure, or at most are tinged with a slight blush.

The whole of Johnson’s elaborate criticism on *Samson Agonistes* is a specimen of his manner of taking up a flower with the tongs, and then protesting that he cannot feel any softness



in it, — of his giving it a stroke with his sledgehammer, and then crying, *Look! where is its beauty?* “This is the tragedy (he has the audacity to say), which ignorance has admired, and bigotry applauded.”

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U.

Perhaps it is when the Imagination flies the lowest, that we see the hues of her plumage. In Coleridge's *Tabletalk* (i. 160), it is stated that, having remarkt how the *Pilgrim's Progress* “is composed in the lowest style of English,” he added: “if you were to polish it, you would destroy the reality of the vision: for works of imagination should be written in very plain language: the more purely imaginative they are, the more necessary it is to be plain.” I know no better illustration of this, than the exquisite simplicity of the tales in Tieck's *Phantasmus*; the style of which produces a persuasion of their complete reality, as though the author were born and bred in fairy-land, talking of matters with which he was thoroughly familiar, so that the wonderful events related seem to be actually going on before our eyes. This was probably the reason why Coleridge, as he once said to me, considered Tieck to be the poet of the purest imagination, according to his own definition of the imagination, who had ever lived.

That the loftiest aspirations of the feelings find their appropriate utterance in a like plainness of speech, is proved by the Psalms: that it is equally fitted to express the deepest mysteries of thought by those who have received the highest initiation into them, we see in the writings of St John. On the other hand fine diction is wont to bring the author into view. We perceive the conjuration going on, and the vapours rising; which subside when the form evoked comes forth into distinct vision.

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U.

The beauty of a pale face is no beauty to the vulgar eye.

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U.

Too much is seldom enough. Pumping after your bucket is full prevents its keeping so.

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U.



Do, and have done. The former is far the easiest. U.

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How many faithful sentences are written now? that is, sentences dictated by a pure love of truth, without any wish, save that of expressing the truth fully and clearly, — sentences in which there is neither a spark of light too much, nor a shade of darkness. U.

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The great misfortune of the present age is, that one can't stand on one's feet, without calling to mind that one is not standing on one's head. U.

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The swan on still St Mary's Lake  
Floats double, swan and shadow.

A similar duplicity is perpetually found in modern poetry; though it is seldom characterized by a stillness like that of St Mary's Lake. Even in Wordsworth himself we too often see the reflexion, along with the object. Look for instance at those fine lines on the first aspect of the French Revolution:

Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth  
The beauty wore of promise, — that which sets  
(To take an image which was felt no doubt  
Among the bowers of Paradise itself)  
The budding rose above the rose full-blown.

When reading these lines, I have always wisht that the third and fourth were omitted; or rather that the whole passage were constructed anew. For there is much beauty in the thought. There is an imaginative harmony between the budding rose and the time when the world was in the bud: although the rosebud was not yet invested with that secondary interest which it derives from contrast, that interest through which the aged feel the beauty of childhood far more deeply than children can; and although the beauty of fulfilment, the beauty of the full-blown rose, is that which shines the most radiantly in the hopeful eyes of youth. Such as it is however, the thought is not duly woven into the context: we seem to be looking at the reverse side of the tapestry, with the rough ends of thread sticking out. It is brought in reflectively, rather than imaginatively.



A parenthesis, where it interrupts the continuity of a single thought, unless there be a coincident interruption of feeling, is ill-suited to poetry. You will hardly improve your pearl by splitting it in two, and sticking a pebble between the halves. The very expression, *to take an image*, is prosaic. The imagination does not *take images*. It discerns the harmonies of things, the more latent as well as the more apparent: the truths which it wishes to utter, it sees written in manifold forms by the finger of God on the mystic scroll of the universe: and what it sees it speaks of, not taking, but receiving, not feigning that which is not, but representing that which is. Nor is it quite correct to say that *an image was felt*, least of all in Paradise. The inhabitants of Paradise did not feel images, but realities: it is since our expulsion from Paradise, that we have been doomed to take up our home in a world of shadows. And though the beauty of promise may have been felt there, the imagination was not yet so enslaved by the understanding, as to depreciate one kind of beauty for the sake of exalting another.

But if Wordsworth at times has this blemish in common with his contemporaries, he has excellences peculiarly his own. If in his pages we see both swan and shadow, in them at least the waters are still;

And through her depths St Mary's Lake  
Is visibly delighted;  
For not a feature of the hills  
Is in the mirror slighted.

U.

In the two editions of Wordsworth's poems publisht since the former one of this little book, the lines just objected to have been altered; and the passage now stands thus:

Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,  
The beauty wore of promise, — that which sets  
(As at some moment might not be unfelt  
Among the bowers of Paradise itself)  
The budding rose above the rose full-blown.

By this change a part of the foregoing remarks has been obviated: still I have not thought it necessary to cancel them.



For their justice, so far at least, is confirmed by the great poet's compliance with them: and of esthetical criticism that portion is the most beneficial practically, which discusses details with precision. General views of literature, whether theoretical or historical, are valuable, as enlarging the mind, and giving it a clew to the labyrinth, which since the invention of printing has been becoming more and more complicated every year. To authors however they have mostly done harm, seducing them to write from abstract notions, or after the fashion of bygone ages, instead of the promptings of their own genius, and of the living world around them; as has been exemplified above all by numberless abortions in the recent literature of that country where such speculations have had the greatest vogue. Minuter criticism on the other hand, which was the kind most cultivated by the ancients, and which contributed to the exquisite polish of their style, has few votaries in England, except Landor, whose style bears a like witness to its advantages. Hence, by a twofold inversion of the right order, that which ought to be ideal and genial, is in modern works often merely technical; while in the objective, technical parts blind caprice disports itself.

Besides it is pleasant to find a great writer showing deference to one of low degree; not bristling up and stiffening, as men are apt to do, when any one presumes to hint the possibility of their not being infallible; but listening patiently to objections, and ready to allow them their weight. Perhaps however Wordsworth may at times allow them even more than their due weight: and this may have been the origin of many of the alterations, which readers familiar with the earlier editions of his poems have to regret in the later. Thus for instance it is "in deference to the opinion of a friend," that, in the beautiful ballad on the Blind Highland Boy, he has substituted the turtle-shell for the tub in which the boy actually did float down Loch Leven. Yet, though the description of the household tub in the original poem was perhaps needlessly minute, and too broad a defiance of the conventional decorums of poetry, the change seems to introduce an incongruous feature into the story, and to



detract from its reality and probability, giving it the air of a fiction. It militates against the great original principle of Wordsworth's poetry; which was, to shew how the germs of poetical feeling and interest are not confined to certain privileged classes and conditions of society, but are spread through every region of life; and that, where the feeling is genuine and strong, it will invest what might otherwise be deemed mean with a moral dignity and beauty. Were the incident an invention, there might be some plea for deriding the poet, whose imagination dwelt among such homely utensils: but the fact having been such as it was, the alteration is too much after the fashion of those with which the French translators of Shakspeare have thought it became them to ennoble their original; too much as if one were to change Desdemona's handkerchief into a shawl. A jester would recommend that Peter Bell's ass should in like manner be metamorphosed into a camel. Yet surely the vessel in which Diogenes lived, and Regulus died, and on which Wesley preacht, might be mentioned, even in this treble-refined age, without exciting a hysterical nausea, or setting people's ears on edge. Else the poet, who has not been wont to shew much fear of his critics, might be content to throw it out as a tub for the whale.

Even in such matters the beginning of change is as when one letteth out water: none knows where it will stop. The description of the turtle-shell, which at first was in the same tone with the rest of the poem, was not held to be sufficiently ornate. Coleridge objected to it (*Biog. Lit.* ii. 136); very unreasonably, as it seems to me, considering that the ballad is professedly a fireside tale told to children, and that this its character was studiously preserved throughout. Indeed exquisite skill was shewn in the manner in which the story was carried into the higher regions of poetry, yet without ever deviating from the most childlike simplicity and familiarity of expression. Coleridge's objections however led the author to bring in five new lines, more after the manner of ordinary poetical diction; but which are out of keeping with the rest of the poem, and would be unintelligible to its supposed audience. When the



turtle-shell was first introduced, they were told that sundry curiosities had been brought by mariners to the coast :

And one, the rarest was a shell,  
Which he, poor child, had studied well;  
The shell of a green turtle, thin  
And hollow: you might sit therein  
It was so wide and deep.

'T was e'en the largest of its kind,  
Large, thin, and light as birch-tree rind;  
So light a shell, that it would swim,  
And gaily lift its fearless rim  
Above the tossing waves.

These lines set the shell before the children's eyes, place them in it, and give life and spirit to the story. But now their childly brains are bewildered, by hearing that, among the rarities from far countries,

The rarest was a turtle-shell;  
Which he, poor child, had studied well,  
A shell of ample size, *and light*  
*As the pearly car of Amphitrite,*  
*That sportive dolphins draw.*

*And, as a coracle that braves*  
*On Vaga's breast the fretful waves,*  
This shell upon the deep would swim,  
And gaily lift its fearless brim  
Above the tossing surge.

Alas! we too often find those who have to teach children, explaining *ignotum per ignotius*; and at times one is much puzzled to do otherwise. But is this a thing desirable in itself? and can it be a judicious improvement, to give up a clear, simple, lively description, for the sake of a few fine words, which leave the hearers in a mist?

U.

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In the former volume I made some remarks on the inexpediency of substituting any other word for the first that comes into our head. The main reason for this is, that the word which comes first is likely to be the simplest, most natural expression of the thought. Where, from artificial habits of mind, this is



not so, a less plain word may be made to give place to a plainer one with advantage. But there is a further consideration. The first word will often be connected with its neighbours by certain dim associations, by which, though they may never have been brought into distinct consciousness, it was in fact suggested in the second-sighted travail of writing. These associations are afterward lost thought of. In reading over the passage, it strikes us that some other word would look better in the place, be more forcible, more precise, more elegant, more harmonious. Now there is always something tempting in a change, as in every exercise of power and will: it flatters us to display any kind of superiority, even over our own former selves: we are glad to believe that we are more intelligent than we were: and through the influence of these motives we readily assume that the change is an improvement, without considering whether the new word is really better, not merely in itself, but also relatively to the context. They who are nice in the use of words, and who take pains in correcting their writings, must often have found afterward that many of their corrections were for the worse; and I think it must have surprised them to observe how much further and more clearly they saw during the fervour of composition, than afterward when they were looking over what they had written, and examining it critically and reflectively. Hence Wordsworth in his last editions has often restored the old readings, in passages which in some of the intervening ones he had been induced to alter. For instance, the beautiful little poem on the Nightingale and the Stock-dove began originally,

O nightingale! thou surely art  
A creature of a *firy* heart.

This expression, as one might have expected, offended the prosaic mind of the Edinburgh Reviewer; and though the poet was not wont to hold Scotch criticism in much honour, he complied with it so far as to alter the second line, in the edition of 1815, into *A creature of ebullient heart*. The new epithet however, though not without beauty, does not introduce the following lines so appropriately, or bring out the contrast with the



stockdove's song so strongly, as its predecessor; which accordingly in the recent editions has resumed its place.

That an author, when revising his works some years after, will be much more liable to such forgetfulness of the thoughts and feelings which prompted the original composition, is plain; above all, if he be a poet, whose works must needs have a number of unseen threads running through them, and holding them together. "In truly great poets (as Coleridge tells us he was taught by his schoolmaster), there is a reason, not only for every word, but for the position of every word." Not that the poet is distinctly conscious of all these reasons: still less has he elaborately calculated and weighed them. But when he has acquired that genial mastery of language, which is one of the poet's most important attributes, his thoughts clothe themselves spontaneously in the fittest words. So too, when the mind is fully possessed with the idea of a work, it will carry out that idea in all its details, preserving a unity of tone and character throughout. In such a state it is scarcely less impossible for a true poet to say anything at variance with that idea, than it would be for an elm to bear apples, or for a rosebush to bring forth tulips. Whereas, when we look at the lines just cited, it seems clear that the author must have quite forgotten the scheme of his poem, and his purpose of telling it in a language adapted to the understandings of children; or he could hardly have compared his turtle-shell to "the pearly car of Amphitrite," and "the coracle on Vaga's breast."

Besides a poet's opinions both with regard to style and to things, his views as to the principles and forms and purposes of poetry and of life, will naturally undergo material changes in the course of years; the more so the more genial and progressive his mind is. Hence, in looking back on a work of former days, he will often find much that will not be in unison with his present notions, much that he would not say, at least just in the same manner, now. The truth is, the whole poem would be differently constructed, were he to write it now. And this, if it appear worth the while, is the best plan to adopt, — to rewrite the whole. Thus Shakspeare, if the first *King John* and *Lear*



are youthful works of his, as there is strong reason for believing, rewrote them throughout in the maturity of his life, when, being possessed with new ideas of the two works, he gave them a new and higher and mightier unity. Whereas a partial change will merely introduce that disharmony and jarring into the poem, which the author finds in his own mind. How would *Comus* have been frostbitten, had Milton set himself to correct it in his old age after the type of *Samson Agonistes*! The inferiority of the *Gerusalemme Conquistata* to the *Liberata* may indeed be attributable in great measure to the disease that was preying on Tasso's mind. But Schiller too, and even Goethe, when correcting their youthful works, have done little but enfeeble them. In learning and science subsequent researches may expand or rectify our views: but where a work has an ideal, imaginative unity, that unity must not be infringed: and the very fact of an author's finding a repugnance between his present self and the offspring of his former self, proves that the idea of the latter has past away from him, and that he is no longer in a fit state to meddle with it. Even supposing, what must always be questionable, that the changes in his own mind are all for the better, the old maxim, *Denique sit quod vis, simplex duntaxat et unum*, which even in morals is of such deep import, in esthetics is almost absolute.

Of incongruities introduced into a work by a departure from its original idea, there is an instance in Wordsworth's poem on a party of Gypsies, — a poem containing several majestic lines, but in which from the first the tone, as Coleridge observed, was elevated out of all proportion to the subject. Nor has this disproportionateness been lessened, but rather rendered more prominent, by the alteration it has undergone. The objections made in several quarters to the feeling expressed in this poem led the author to add four lines to it, protesting that he did not mean to speak in scorn of the gypsies; for that "they are what their birth And breeding suffers them to be, — Wild outcasts of humanity." Now this may be very true; and a new poem might have been written, giving utterance to this milder feeling. But it looks like a taint from the grandiloquence of



the former lines, when "all that stirs in heaven and earth" is called to witness this protestation. Nor can one well see why a poem needing it should be retained and recognized. Above all, there is an abrupt sinking, when the gorgeous lines which go before are followed by this apology. If the gypsies are merely "what their birth And breeding suffers them to be, Wild outcasts of humanity," how can it be said that "wrong and strife, By nature transient, are better than such torpid life"? And though the words, *by nature transient*, as applied to wrong and strife, express a deep and grand truth, alas! they are not so transient as the stationariness of the poor vagrants. Why again do the stars reprove such a life? Surely the lordly powers of Nature have something wiser and juster to do, than to shame a knot of outcasts, who are "what their birth and breeding suffers them to be." If they needs must reprove, though they hardly look as if they could, they might find many things on earth less congenial and more offensive to their heavenly peace. It might afford a wholesome warning to reformers, to observe how, in a poem of less than thirty lines, the author himself by innovating has shaken the whole structure.

Another poem, which seems to me to have been sadly impaired by alteration, is one of the author's most beautiful works, his *Laodamia*. When it was originally publisht in 1815, the penultimate stanza, which follows the account of her death, ran thus:

Ah, judge her gently, who so deeply loved!  
 Her, who in reason's spite, yet without crime,  
 Was in a trance of passion thus removed;  
 Delivered from the galling yoke of time,  
 And these frail elements, — to gather flowers  
 Of blissful quiet mid unfading bowers.

In the edition of 1827 this stanza was completely remoulded, and appeared in the following shape:

By no weak pity might the gods be moved.  
 She who thus perisht, not without the crime  
 Of lovers that in reason's spite have loved,  
 Was doomed to wander in a grosser clime,  
 Apart from happy ghosts, — that gather flowers  
 Of blissful quiet mid unfading bowers.



Here one cannot help noticing the ingenuity with which the words are twisted about, to mean the very opposite of their original meaning. Yet even in such things it is better not to put new wine into old bottles. When a totally different idea is to be exprest, it is far likelier to be exprest appropriately in words of its own, than in a set of cast-off words, which had previously served to clothe some other form of thought. What chiefly strikes us however in the new stanza, is the arbitrariness with which the poet's judgement has veered round ; so that, after having raised Laodamia to the joys of Elysium, he suddenly condemns her to endless sorrow. In the later editions indeed, the fourth line has been altered into "*Was doomed to wear out her appointed time ;*" whereby she is elevated from the lower regions into Purgatory, and allowed to look for a term to her woes. Yet still the sentence first past on her is completely reverst. The change too is one contrary to the whole order of things, both human and divine. They who have been condemned, may be pardoned : but they who have already been pardoned, must not be condemned. This is the course even of earthly judicatures. Man has an instinct in the depths of his consciousness, which teaches him that the throne of Mercy is above that of Justice, that wrath is by nature transient, and that a sentence of condemnation may be revoked, but that the voice of Love is eternal, and that, when it has once gone forth, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

On first perceiving this change, one naturally supposes that some new light must have broken upon the poet, or rather some new darkness ; that he must at least have discovered some fresh marks of guilt in Laodamia, of which before he was not aware. But it is not so. Her words, her actions, her feelings are just what they were. The two or three slight alterations in the former part of the poem are merely verbal, and no way affect her character. If she was "without crime" before, she must be so still : if she is "not without crime" now, so must she have been from the first. The change is solely in the author's mind, without the slightest outward warrant for it : not a straw is



thrown into the scale: his absolute nod alone makes it rise or sink. The only difference is, that he quotes the passage of Virgil where the shade of Laodamia "is placed in a mournful region, among unhappy lovers." But surely Virgil's judgement in such a manner is not to overrule that of a Christian poet. Although the wisdom of the heathens was in certain respects more spiritual than that which has been current of late years, this is not one of the points in which we should appeal to their decision. The eternal law, by which the happiness and misery of man are bound up with his moral and spiritual condition, was but dimly recognized in the popular traditions of the ancients. The inmates of Tartarus were rather the vanquished enemies of the gods; and being so regarded, the contemplation was not so painful to the moral sense: nor did it imply the same presumption in the judgement which cast them there. No one would now take Virgil as an authority for placing the whining souls of infants, wailing over the shortness of their lives, and those who had been condemned by unjust sentences, along with suicides, in the same mournful region. Nor would all who have perished through love, whether with or without crime, be consigned to the same doom; so as to make Phedra, Procris, Eriphyle, and Pasiphae, the companions of Evadne and Laodamia. The introduction of Evadne, so renowned for her heroic self-devotement, proves that Virgil was guided in his selection more by the similarity of earthly destiny, than by any moral rule: and every one may perceive the poetical reason for enumerating the martyrs, as well as the guiltier victims, of passionate love; inasmuch as it is among these shades that Eneas is to find Dido.

My reason however for referring to the *Laodamia* was, that it is a remarkable instance how the imaginative, ideal unity of a work may be violated by an alteration. It is said that Windham, when he came to the end of a speech, often found himself so perplexed by his own subtilty, that he hardly knew which way he was going to give his vote. This is a good illustration of the fallaciousness of reasoning, and of the uncertainties which attend its practical application. Ever since the time of the Sophists, Logic has been too ready to maintain either side



of a question; and that, not merely in arguing with others, but even within our own bosoms. The workings of the Imagination however are far less capricious. When a poet comes to the end of his work, it does not rest with him to wind it up in this way or that.

What! may he not do as he pleases with the creatures of his own fancy?

A true poet would almost as soon think of doing as he pleased with his children. He feels that the creations of his imagination have an existence and a reality independent of his will; and he therefore regards them with reverence. The close of their lives, he feels, must be determined by what has gone before. The botchers of Shakspeare indeed have fancied they might remodel the catastrophes of his tragedies. One man would keep Hamlet alive, — another, Romeo, — a third, Lear. Yet even these changes are less violent, and more easily excusable, than the entire reversal of Laodamia's sentence. For in every earthly, outward event there is something the ground of which we cannot discern, and which we therefore ascribe to chance: and though in poetry the necessary concatenation of events ought to be more apparent, the unity of a character may still be preserved under every vicissitude of fortune. But the ultimate doom, which must needs be determined by the essence of the character itself, cannot be changed without a corresponding change in the character.

Horace has warned painters against combining a man's head with a horse's neck, or making a beautiful woman terminate in the tail of a fish. Yet in both these cases we know, from the representations of centaurs and mermaids, the combination is not incompatible with a certain kind of beauty. Indeed there is something pleasing and interesting in the sight of the animal nature rising into the human. The reverse, which we sometimes see in Egyptian idols, the human form topt by the animal, — a man for instance with a horse's head, or a woman with a fish's, — would on the other hand be purely painful and monstrous; unless where, as in the case of Bottom, we look on the transformation as temporary, and as a piece of grotesque hu-



mour. But far more revolting would it be to see a living head upon a skeleton, or a death's head upon a living body. In moral combinations the contrast may not be so glaring: yet surely in them also is a harmony which ought not to be violated. The idea of the *Laodamia*, when we view it apart from the questionable stanza, is clearly enunciated in those fine lines:

Love was given,  
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for this end,—  
For this the passion to excess was driven,—  
That self might be annulled, her bondage prove  
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.

But as the poem ends now, it directly falsifies this assertion. It shows that the excess of love cannot annul self; that,—so far is the bondage of self from being the fetters of a dream, opposed to love,—the intensest love, even when blest with the special favour of the gods, is powerless against the bondage of self. Protesilaus seems to be sent to the prayers of his wife for no purpose, except of proving that they who hear not Moses and the prophets, will not be persuaded even when one rises from the dead. Had the poet's original intention been to consign *Laodamia* to Erebus, the whole scheme of the poem must have been different. Her weakness would have been brought out more prominently; and the spirit of Protesilaus would hardly have been charged with the utterance of so many divine truths, when his sermon was to be as unavailing as if he had been preaching to the winds. The impotence of truth is not one of the aspects of human life which a poet may well choose as the central idea of a grave work. U.

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The reflective spirit is so dominant in the literature of the age, and it is so injurious to all pure beauty in composition, that perhaps it will not be deemed idle trifling, if I point out one or two more instances in which it seems to me too obtrusive. And I will select them from the same great master of modern poetry; not only because his works stand criticism, and reward it better than most others, so that even, when tracking a fault, one is sure to light upon sundry beauties; but also because he



is eminently the poet of his age, the poet in whom the best and highest tendencies of his contemporaries have found their fullest utterance.

There are few lovers of poetry but will remember the admirable account of the sailor in the *Brothers* ; who

in his heart

Was half a shepherd in the stormy seas.  
 Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard  
 The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds  
 Of caves and trees; and when the regular wind  
 Between the tropics filled the steady sail,  
 And blew with the same breath through days and wee  
 Lengthening invisibly its weary line  
 Along the cloudless main, he, in those hours  
 Of tiresome indolence, would often hang  
 Over the vessel's side, and gaze, and gaze;  
 And, while the broad green wave and sparkling foam  
 Flasht round him images and hues that wrought  
 In union with the employment of his heart,  
*He, thus by feverish passion overcome,*  
*Even with the organs of his bodily eye*  
 Below him, in the bosom of the deep,  
 Saw mountains, saw the forms of sheep that grazed  
 On verdant hills, with dwellings among trees,  
 And shepherds clad in the same country gray,  
 Which he himself had worn.

Beautiful as this passage is, it would be all the better, I think, if the first of the two lines printed in italics were omitted, and the emphasis of the second diminished. At present they rather belong to a psychological analysis, than to a poetical representation, of feelings. It is true, the vision would be the effect of "feverish passion:" it would be visible "even to the organs of the bodily eye." So it is true, that a blush is caused by a sudden suffusion of blood to the cheek. But, though it might be physiologically correct to say, that, in consequence of the accelerated beating of the heart, there was such a determination of blood to the face,—the part of the body most apparent to him by whom the blush was occasioned,—that the veins became full, and the skin was tinged by it; yet no poet would write thus. The poet's business is to represent the effect, not the cause; the stem and leaves and blossoms, not the root;



that which is visible to the imagination, not that which is discerned by the understanding : although by bringing out the important moment, which he selects for representation, and by insulating it from the extraneous circumstances, which in ordinary life surround and conceal it, he enables us to discern the causes more immediately, than we should do when our thoughts are bewildered in the maze of outward realities.

Or look at this little poem :

Let other bards of angels sing,  
Bright suns without a spot:  
But thou art no such perfect thing:  
Rejoice that thou art not.

*Such if thou wert in all men's view,  
A universal show,  
What would my fancy have to do?  
My feelings to bestow?*

Heed not, though none should call thee fair:  
So, Mary, let it be!  
If nought in loveliness compare  
With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,  
Whose veil is unremoved,  
Till heart with heart in concord beats,  
And the lover is beloved.

This poem again, it seems to me, would be exceedingly improved by the expulsion of the second stanza. The other three have a sweet, harmonious unity, and express a truth, which if any one has not felt, he is greatly to be pitied. But the second stanza jars quite painfully with the others. Even if the thought conveyed in it were accurately true, it would be bringing forward the internal process, which in poetry ought to be latent. It is only a partial truth however, which, being stated by itself, as though it were the whole truth, becomes false. Beauty is represented, according to the notions of the egoistical idealists, as purely subjective, as a mere creation of the beholder : whereas it arises from the conjoint and reciprocal action of the beholder and the object, as is so exquisitely expressed in the last stanza. Beauty is indeed in the mind, in the feelings: were there not the idea of Beauty in the beholder,



associated with the feeling of pleasure, nothing would be beautiful or lovely to him. But it is also in the object: and the union and communion of the two is requisite to its full perception. According to the second stanza, the uglier a woman was the more beautiful would she be: for the more would our fancy have to do, our feelings to bestow. And conversely, the more beautiful she was, the more destitute would she be of beauty.

Besides there is an unpoetical exclusiveness and isolation in grudging that what we deem beautiful should be beautiful "in all men's view," and in speaking scornfully of what is so as "a universal show." The poet will indeed perceive deeper and more spiritual beauties than other men; and he will discern hidden springs and sources of Beauty, where others see nothing of the sort: but he will also acknowledge with thankfulness, that Beauty is spread abroad through earth and sea and sky, and dwells on the face and form, and in the heart of man: and he will shrink from the thought of its being a thing which he, or any one else, could monopolize. He will deem that the highest and most blessed privilege of his genius is, that it enables him to cherish the widest and fullest sympathy with the hearts and thoughts of his brethren.

U.

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"There is one class of minds (says Schelling, *Philosophische Schriften*, i. 388), who think *about* things, another, who strive to understand them in themselves, according to the essential properties of their nature." This is one of the momentous distinctions between men of productive genius, and men of reflective talents. In the history of literature we find examples without number, how, on eating of the Tree of Knowledge, we are banished from the Tree of Life. Poets, it is plain from the very meaning of the word *poetry*, if they have any claim to their title, must belong to the class whose aim is to think and know the things themselves. Nor poets only: all that is best and truly living in history, in philosophy, and even in science, must have its root in the same essential knowledge, as distinguished from that which is merely circumstantial.

Here we have the reason why Poetry has been wont to



flourish most in the earlier ages of a nation's intellectual life ; because essential knowledge is not so apt then to be overrun, and stunted or driven awry, by circumstantial, production by reflection. In all poetry that is really such, if it pretend to more than an ephemeral existence, as in all life, there must be a mysterious basis, which is and ever must be incomprehensible to the reflective understanding. There must be something in it which can only be apprehended by a corresponding act of the imagination, discerning and reproducing the incarnate idea. Now that which cannot be comprehended by the reflective understanding of others, can still less have been produced by an act of the poet's own reflective understanding. Its source must lie deep within him, below the surface of his consciousness. The waters which are spread out above that surface, and which are not fed by an unseen fountain, are sure to dry up, and will never form a living, perennial stream. Indeed, if we look through the history of poetry, we find, in the case of all the greatest and most genial works, that, though their beauty may have manifested itself immediately to the simple instinctive feelings of mankind, ages have past away before the reflective understanding has attained anything like a correct estimate and analysis of their merits. For they have been truly mysterious, and have indeed possess a hidden life. But of most modern works it may be said, that they have been brought down to the level of the meanest capacities. That which is designed to be the most mysterious in them, is thrust the most conspicuously into view. They need no time, no study, to detect their beauties. Knowing from their own consciousness how unimaginative men are wont to be, the authors interline their works with a commentary on their merits, and act as guides through their own estates. It is much as if all the leaves and flowers in a garden were to be suddenly gifted with voices, and to begin crying out in clamorous consort, *Come and look at me, how beautiful I am !* What could a lover of Nature do amid such a hubbub, but seek out a tuft of violets, which could not but still be silent, and bury his face in it, and weep ?

The examples hitherto cited, of the harm done to poetry by



the intrusion of reflexion, have referred merely to lesser points of detail, and have been taken from the works of one who is indeed a poet of great imaginative power ; although he too, as all men must, bears the marks of his age, of its weakness, as well as of its strength. There have been writers however, in whom the shadow has almost supplanted the substance, who give us the ghosts of things, instead of the realities, and who, having been taught to observe the ideas impersonated in the master-pieces of former ages, think they too may start up and claim rank among the priests of the Muses, if they set about giving utterance to the same ideas loudly and sonorously. They forget that roots should lie hid, that the heart and lungs and all the vital processes are out of sight, and that, if they are laid bare to the light, death ensues : and they would fain stick their roots atop of their heads, and carry their hearts in their hands. Instead of representing persons, we are apt to describe them. Nay, to shorten the labour, as others cannot look into them, and see all the inward movements of their feelings, they are made to describe themselves.

Some dramatic writers have been wont to preface their plays with descriptive accounts of the characters they are about to bring on the stage. Shadwell, for instance, did so : the list of the *dramatis personae* in the *Squire of Alsatia* fills three pages : and a like practice is found in Wycherly, Congreve, and other writers of their times. Indeed it accords with the nature of their works, which are chiefly remarkable for wit, — a quality dealing in contrasts, and therefore implying the distinct consciousness necessarily brought out thereby, — and for acuteness of observation, where the observer feels himself set over against the objects he is observing : so that they are rather the offspring of the reflective understanding, working consciously in selecting, arranging, and combining the materials supplied to it from without, than of any genial, spontaneous, imaginative throes. Jonson too prefixt an elaborate catalogue of the same sort to his *Every Man out of his Humour* : and in him again we see a like predominance of reflexion, though in a mind of a higher and robuster order : nor are his characters the creations of a





plastic imagination, blending the various elements of humanity indistinguishably into a living whole ; but mosaic constructions, designed to exhibit the enormities and extravagances of some peculiar humour. All such lists are merely clumsy devices for furnishing the reader with what he ought to deduce from the works themselves. It is offensively obtrusive to tell us beforehand what judgement we are to form on the persons we read of. It prevents our regarding them as living men, whom we are to study, and to compare with our idea of human nature. Instead of this we view them as fictions for an express purpose, and compare them therewith. We think, not what they are, but how they exemplify the proposition which the writer designed to enforce : and wherever the author's purpose is prominent, art degenerates into artifice. In logic indeed the enunciation rightly precedes the proof. But the workings of poetry are more subtle and complicated and indirect : nor are our feelings so readily toucht by what a man intends to say or to do or to be, as by what he says and does and is without intending it. Thus we involuntarily recognise the hollowness of all that man does, when cut off from that spring of life, which, though in him, is not of him. Moreover to the author himself it must needs be hurtful, when he sets to work with a definite purpose of exhibiting such and such qualities, instead of living, concrete men. It leads him to consider, not how such a man would speak and act, but how on every occasion he may display his besetting humour ; which yet in real life he would mostly conceal, and which would scarcely vent itself, except under some special excitement, when he was thrown off his balance, and made forgetful of self-restraint.

Still the humours and peculiar aspects of human nature thus portrayed by the second-rate poets of former times are those which do actually rise the most conspicuously and obtrusively above the common surface of life, and which not seldom betray themselves by certain fixt habits of speech, gesture, and manner ; so that there is less inappropriateness in their being made thus prominent. But the psychological analysis of criticism has enabled us to discern deeper and more latent springs, and



more delicate shades, of feeling in the masters of poetry: and those feelings, which are only genuine and powerful when latent, are now drawn forward into view, whereupon they splash and vanish.

For example, no sooner had attention been called, some fifty years ago, to the powerful influence exercised by Fate, as the dark ground of the Greek tragedies, than poet after poet in Germany, from Schiller downward, set about composing tragedies on the principle of fatality; each insisting that his own was the true Fate, and that all others were spurious and fictitious. And so in fact they were: only his was no less so. Nor could it well be otherwise. When the Greek tragedians wrote, the overruling power of Fate was a living article of faith, both with them and with the people; as everything ought to be, which is made the leading idea in a tragedy. Since a drama, by the conditions of its representation, addresses itself to the assembled people, if it is to act strongly upon them, it must appeal to those feelings and thoughts which actually hold sway over them. Tragic poetry is indeed fond of drawing its plots and personages from the stores of ancient history or fable; partly because the immediate present is too full of petty details to coalesce into a grand imaginative unity, whereas antiquity even of itself is majestic; partly because it stirs so many personal feelings and interests, which sort ill with dignity and with solemn contemplation; and partly because a tragic catastrophe befalling a contemporary would have too much of painful horror. Yet, though the personages of tragedy may rightly be taken from former ages, or from foreign countries, — remoteness in space being a sort of equivalent for remoteness in time, — still a true dramatic poet will always make the universal human element in his characters predominate over the accidental costume of age and country. Nor will he bring forward any mode of faith or superstition as a prominent agent in his tragedy, except such as will meet with something responsive in the popular belief of his age. When Shakspeare wrote, almost everybody believed in ghosts and witches. Hence it is difficult for us to conceive the impression which must have been



made on such an audience by *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*: whereas the witches in the latter play now, on the stage, produce the effect of broad, fantastical caricatures; and so far are we from comprehending the power which the demoniacal apparitions exercised over Macbeth's mind, that they are seldom seen without peals of hoarse, dissonant laughter. In like manner Fate, in the modern German tragedies, instead of being awful, is either ludicrous or revolting. As it is not an object of faith, either with the poet or his hearers, so that they would hardly observe its latent working, he brings it forth into broad daylight; and his whole representation is cold, artificial, pompous, and untrue. While in Greek tragedy Fate stalks in silence among the generations of mankind, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children and grandchildren, — τῆς μὲν θ' ἀπαλοὶ πόδες· οὐ γὰρ ἐπ' οὐδεὶ Πίλναται, ἀλλ' ἄρα ἦγε κατ' ἀνδρῶν κράτα βαίνει, — on the modern German stage it clatters in wooden shoes, and springs its rattle, and clutches its victim by the throat.

U.

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Your good sayings would be far better, if you did not think them so good. He who is in a hurry to laugh at his own jests, is apt to make a false start, and then has to return with down-cast head to his place.

U.

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Many nowadays write what may be called a dashing style. Unable to put much meaning into their words, they try to eke it out by certain marks which they attach to them, something like pigtailed sticking out at right angles to the body. The finest models of this style are in the articles by the original editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, and in Lord Byron's poems, above all, in *the Corsair*, his most popular work, as one might have expected that it would be, seeing that his faults came to a head in it. A couplet from *the Bride of Abydos* may instance my meaning.

A thousand swords — thy Selim's heart and hand —  
Wait — wave — defend — destroy — at thy command.

How much grander is this, than if there had been nothing



between the lines but commas! even as a pigtail is grander than a curl, or at least has been deemed so by many a German prince. Tacitus himself, though his words are already as solid and substantial as one can wish, yet, when translated, is drest after the same fashion, with a skewer jutting out here and there. The celebrated sentence of Galgacus is turned into *He makes a solitude — and calls it — peace*. The noble poet places a flourish after every second word, like a vulgar writing-master. Or perhaps they are rather marks of admiration, standing prostrate, as Lord Castlereagh would have exprest it. Nor are upright ones spared.

U.

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Are you quite sure that Pygmalion is the only person who ever fell in love with his own handiwork?

U.

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“In good prose (says Frederic Schlegel) every word should be underlined.” That is, every word should be the right word; and then no word would be righter than another. There are no italics in Plato.

What! asks Holofernes; did Plato print his books all in romans?

In mentioning Plato, I mentioned him whose style seems to be the summit of perfection. But if it be objected that the purpose of italics is to give force to style, which Plato, from the character of his subjects, was not solicitous about, I would reply, that there are no italics in Demosthenes. Nor are there in any of the Greek or Roman writers, though some of them were adepts in the art of putting as much meaning into words, as words are well fitted to bear.

Among the odd combinations which Chance is ever and anon turning up, few are more whimsical than the notion that one is to gain strength by substituting italics for romans. In Italy one should not be surprised, if for the converse change a man were to incur a grave suspicion of designing to revive the projects of Rienzi, to be expiated by half a dozen years of *carcere duro*. Nay, the very shape of the letters would rather lead to the opposite conclusion, that *morbidezza* was the quality aimed at.



Two large classes of persons in these days are fond of underlining their words.

It is a favorite practice with a number of female letter-writers, — those, I mean, who have not yet crost over the river of self-consciousness into the region of quiet, unobtrusive grace, and whose intellectual pulses are always in a flutter, at one moment thumping, the next scarcely perceptible. Their consciousness of no-meaning worries them so, that the meaning, which, they are aware, is not in any words they can use, they try to put into them by scoring them, like a leg of pork, which their letters now and then much resemble.

On the other hand some men of vigorous minds, but more conversant with things than with words, and who, having never studied composition as an art, have not learnt that the real force of style must be effortless, and consists mainly in its simplicity and appropriateness, fancy that common words are not half strong enough to say what they want to say; and so they try to strengthen them by writing them in a different character. Men of science do this: for words with them are signs, which must stand out to be conspicuous. Soldiers often do this: for, though a few of them are among the most skilful in the drilling and manouvring of words, the chief part have no notion that a word may be louder than a cannon-ball, and sharper than a sword. Cobbett again is profuse of italics. This instance may be supposed to refute the assertion, that the writers who use them are not verst in the art of composition. But, though Cobbett was a wonderful master of plain speech, all his writings betray his want of logical and literary culture. He had never sacrificed to the Graces; who cannot be won without many sacrifices. He cared only for strength; and, as his own bodily frame was of the Herculean, rather than the Apollinean cast, he thought that a man could not be very strong, unless he displayed his thews. Besides a Damascus blade would not have gasht his enemies enough for his taste: he liked to have a few notches on his sword.

To a refined taste a parti-lettered page is much as if a musician were to strike a note every now and then in a wrong key,



for the sake of startling attention. The proper use of italics seems to be, when the word italicized is not meant to be a mere part of the flowing medium of thought, but is singled out to be made a special object of notice, whether on account of its etymology, or of something peculiar in its form or meaning. As the word is employed in a different mode, there is a sort of reason for marking that difference by a difference of character. On like grounds words in a foreign language, speeches introduced, whether in a narrative or a didactic work, quotations from Scripture, and those words in other quotations to which attention is especially called, as bearing immediately on the point under discussion, may appropriately be printed in italics. This rule seems to agree with the practice of the best French writers, as well as of our own, and is confirmed by the best editions of the Latin classics, in which orthography, punctuation, and the like minuter matters, are treated far more carefully than in modern works.

U.

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What a dull, stupid lake! It makes no noise: one can't hear it flowing: it is as still as a sheet of glass. It rolls no mud along, and no soapsuds. It lets you see into it, and through it, and does nothing all day but look at the sky, and show you pictures of everything round about, which are just as like as if they were the very things themselves. And if you go to drink, it shews you your own face. Hang it! I wish it would give us something of its own. I wish it would roar a little.

Such is the substance of Bottom's criticisms on Goethe, which in one or other of his shapes he has brayed out in many an English Review. Sometimes one might fancy he must have seen the vision which scared Peter Bell.

Nor is Goethe the only writer who has to stand reprov'd, because he does not pamper the love of noise and dust. Nor is it in books alone that our morbid restlessness desires to find a response. The howling wind lashes the waves, and makes them roar in symphony. This is a type of the spirit which revels in revolutions.

U.



*Why do you drug your wine?* a merchant was askt by one of his customers.

*Because nobody would drink it without.*

Is it not just so with Truth? Bacon at least has declared that it is: and how many writers have lived in the course of three thousand years, who have not acted on this persuasion, more or less distinctly? nay, how many men who have not dealt in like manner even with their own hearts and minds? U.

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We have learnt to exclaim against the yew-trees which are cut out into such fantastical shapes in Dutch gardens, and to recognize that a yew-tree ought to be a yew-tree, and not a peacock or a swan. This may seem a trivial truism; and yet it is an important truth, of very wide and manifold application: though it does not involve that we are to let children run wild, and that all Education is a violation of Nature. But it does involve the true principle of Education, and may teach us that its business is to *educe*, or bring out, that which is within, not merely, or mainly, to *instruct*, or impose a form without. Only we are not framed to be self-sufficient, but to derive our nourishment, intellectual and spiritual, as well as bodily, from without, through the ministration of others; and hence Instruction must ever be a chief element of Education. Hence too we obtain a criterion to determine what sort of Instruction is right and beneficial,—that which ministers to Education, which tends to bring out, to nourish and cultivate the faculties of the mind, not that which merely piles a mass of information upon them. Moreover since Nature, if left to herself, is ever prone to run wild, and since there are hurtful and pernicious elements around us, as well as nourishing and salutary, pruning and sheltering, correcting and protecting are also among the principal offices of Education.

But the love of artificiality is not restricted to the Dutch, in whom it may find much excuse from the meagre poverty of the forms of Nature around them, and whose country itself thus in a manner prepared them for becoming the Chinese of Europe. There are still many modes in which few can be brought to



acknowledge that a yew-tree ought to be a yew-tree : and when we think how beautiful a yew-tree is, left to itself, and crowned with the solemn grandeur of a thousand years, we need not marvel that people should be slower to admit this proposition as to things less majestic and more fleeting. Indeed I hardly know who ever lived, except perhaps Shakspeare, who did acknowledge it in its fulness and variety : and even he doubtless can only have done so in the mirror of his world-reflecting imagination. At all events very many are most reluctant to acknowledge it, and that too under the impulse of totally opposite feelings, not merely with regard to persons whom they dislike, and whom they paint, like Bolognese pictures, on a dark ground, but even with regard to their friends, whom they ought to love for what they are. Yet they will not let their friends be such as they are, or such as they were meant to be, but pare and twist them into imaginary shapes, as though they could not love them until they had made dolls of them, until they saw the impress of their own hands upon them. So too is it with most writers of fiction, and even of history. They do not give us living men, but either puppets, or skeletons, or, it may be, shadows : and these puppets may at times be giants, as though a Lilliputian were dandling a Brobdignagian. For bigness with the bulk of mankind is the nearest synonym for greatness. U.

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A celebrated preacher is in the habit of saying, that, in preaching, the thing of least consequence is the Sermon : and they who remember the singular popularity of the late Dean Andrewes, or who turn from the other records of Bishop Wilson's life to his writings, will feel that there is more in this saying than its strangeness. The latter instance shews that the most effective of all sermons, and that which gives the greatest efficacy to every other, is the sermon of a Christian life.

But, apart from this consideration, the saying just cited coincides in great measure with the declaration of Demosthenes, that, in speaking, Delivery is the first thing, and the second, and the third. For this reason oratorical excellence is rightly called Eloquence.



Commonly indeed the apophthegm of Demosthenes has been understood in a narrower sense, as limited to Action, whereby it becomes a startling paradox. Even Landor has adopted this version of it, and makes Eschines attack Demosthenes on account of this absurdity, in his Conversation with Phocion; while Demosthenes, in that with Eubulides, adduces this as a main distinction between himself and Pericles, expressing it with characteristic majesty: "I have been studious to bring the powers of Action into play, that great instrument in exciting the affections, which Pericles disdained. He and Jupiter could strike any head with their thunderbolts, and stand serene and immovable: I could not." And again a little after: "Pericles, you have heard, used none, but kept his arm wrapt up within his vest. Pericles was in the enjoyment of that power, which his virtues and his abilities well deserved. If he had carried in his bosom the fire that burns in mine, he would have kept his hand outside."

Still this interpretation seems to have no better origin than the passages in which Cicero, when alluding to the anecdote of Demosthenes (*De Orat.* iii. 56. *De Clar. Orat.* 38. *Orat.* 17), uses the word *Actio*. Many errors have arisen from the confounding of special significations of words, which are akin, both etymologically and in their primary meaning, like *Actio* and *Action*. But I believe, the Latin *Actio*, in its rhetorical application, was never restricted within our narrow bounds: indeed we ourselves reject this restriction in the dramatic use of *acting* and *actor*. The vivid senses of the Romans felt that the more spiritual members of the body can act, as well as the grosser and more massive; and they who have lived in southern climes know that this attribute of savage life has not been extinguished there by civilization. Indeed the context in the three passages of Cicero ought to have prevented the blunder: his principal agents are the voice and the eyes: "*animi est enim omnis actio, et imago animi vultus, indices oculi*:" and he defines *Actio* to be "*corporis quaedam eloquentia, cum constet e voce atque motu*." Even after the mistake had been made, it ought to have been corrected, by the observation that Quintilian (xi. 3)



has substituted *Pronunciatio* for *Actio*. But the whole story is plain, and the exaggeration accounted for, when we read it in the *Lives of the Ten Orators* ascribed to Plutarch. Every one has heard of the bodily disadvantages which Demosthenes had to contend with. No man has more triumphantly demonstrated the dominion of the mind over the body; for few speakers have had graver natural disqualifications for oratory, than he whose name in the history of oratory stands beyond competition the foremost. Having been cought down, as we term it, one day, he was walking home despondently. But Eunomus the Thriasian, who was already an old man, met him and encouraged him: so too did the actor Andronicus still more, telling him that his speeches were well, but that he failed in action and delivery (λείποι δὲ τὰ τῆς ὑποκρίσεως). He then reminded him of what he had spoken in the assembly; whereupon Demosthenes, believing him, gave himself up to the instruction of Andronicus. Hence, when some one askt him what is the first thing in oratory, he said ὑπόκρισις, *Manner*, or *Delivery*; what the second? *Delivery*; what the third? *Delivery*. In this story there may perhaps be some slight inaccuracies; but in substance it agrees with Plutarch's account in his *Life of Demosthenes*, § viii.

We may deem it an essential character of Genius, to be unconscious of its own excellence. If a man of genius is a vain man, he will be vain of what is not his genius. But we are very apt to overrate a talent, which has been laboriously trained and cultivated. Thus Petrarch lookt to his *Africa* for immortality, and Shakspeare to his *Sonnets*, more, it would seem, than to his *Plays*. Thus too Bacon "conceived that the Latine volume of his *Essayes*, being in the universal language, might last as long as bookes last;" though other considerations are also to be taken into account here. No wonder then that Demosthenes somewhat overvalued an attainment, which had cost him so much trouble, and in which the speech of Eschines, — *What would you have said, if you had heard the beast himself?* — proves that he had achieved so much in overcoming the disabilities of his nature; so much indeed, that Dionysius (περί



τῆς λεκτικῆς Δημοσθένους δεινότητος, § xxii.) says, that he was acknowledged by all to be the most consummate master of *ὑπόκρισις*. His own experience had taught him how the effect of a speech depended almost entirely upon its delivery, by the defects of which his earlier orations had been marred; as Bacon, in his Essay on Boldness, after giving the erroneous version of our anecdote, remarks: "He said it, that knew it best, and had by nature himself no advantage in that he commended." The objections which are subjoined to this remark, are founded mainly on the misunderstanding of what Demosthenes had said.

Still, though there is a considerable analogy between the importance of manner or delivery in speaking and in preaching, it should be borne in mind that nothing is more injurious to the effect of the latter, than whatever is artificial, studied, theatrical. Besides, while, as a friend observes, *ὑπόκρισις* has often been a main ingredient in oratory under more senses than one, when it enters into preaching under the sense denounced in the New Testament, it is the poison, a drop of which shivers the glass to atoms. In fact the reason why delivery is of such force, is that, unless a man appears by his outward look and gesture to be himself animated by the truths he is uttering, he will not animate his hearers. It is the live coal that kindles others, not the dead. Nay, the same principle applies to all oratory; and what made Demosthenes the greatest of orators, was that he appeared the most entirely possessed by the feelings he wished to inspire. The main use of his *ὑπόκρισις* was, that it enabled him to remove the natural hindrances which checked and clogged the stream of those feelings, and to pour them forth with a free and mighty torrent that swept his audience along. The effect produced by Charles Fox, who by the exaggerations of party-spirit was often compared to Demosthenes, seems to have arisen wholly from this earnestness, which made up for the want of almost every grace, both of manner and style. U.

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Most people, I should think, must have been visited at times by those moods of waywardness, in which a feeling adopts the



language usually significant of its opposite. Oppressive joy finds vent in tears; frantic grief laughs. So inadequate are the outward exponents of our feelings, that, when a feeling swells beyond its wont, it bursts through its ordinary face, and lays bare the reverse of it. Something of the sort may be discerned in the exclamation of Eschines just quoted. No laudatory term could have exprest his admiration so forcibly as the single word *θῆριον*.

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U.

The proposition asserted a couple of pages back, that genius is unconscious of its own excellence, has been contested by my dear friend, Sterling, in his Essay on Carlyle. In his argument on this point there is some truth, which required perhaps to be stated, for the sake of limiting the too exclusive enforcement of the opposite truth: but there is no sufficient recognition of that opposite truth, which is of far greater moment in the present stage of the human mind, and which Mr. Carlyle had been proclaiming with much power, though not without his favorite exaggerations. I will not take upon me to arbitrate between the combatants, by trying to shew how far each is in the right, and where each runs into excess: but, as Sterling adduces some passages from Shakspeare's Sonnets, in proof that he was not so unconscious of his own greatness, as he has commonly been deemed, I will rejoin, that the distinction pointed out above seems to remove this objection. If Shakspeare speaks somewhat boastfully of his Sonnets, we are to remember that they were not, like his Plays, the spontaneous utterances and creations of his Genius, but artificial compositions, artificial even in their structure, and alien in their origin, hardly yet naturalized. Besides there is a sort of conventional phraseology, handed down from the age of Horace, and which he had inherited from that of Pindar, whereby poets magnify their art, declaring that, while all other memorials of greatness perish, those committed to immortal verse will endure. In speaking thus the poet is magnifying his art, rather than himself. But of the wonderful excellence of his Plays, we have no reason for believing that Shakspeare was at all aware;



though Sterling does not go beyond the mark, when he says, that, "if in the wreck of Britain, and all she has produced, one creation of her spirit could be saved by an interposing Genius, to be the endowment of a new world," it would be the volume that contains them. Yet Shakspeare himself did not take the trouble of publishing that volume; and even the single Plays printed during his life seem to have been intended for playgoers, rather than to gain fame for their author.

I grant that, in this world of ours, in which the actual is ever diverging from or falling short of its idea, the unconsciousness, which belongs to Genius in its purity, cannot be preserved undefiled, any more than that which belongs to Goodness in its purity. Miserable experience must have taught us that it is impossible not to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing; and yet this is the aim set before us, not merely the lower excellence of not letting others know, but the Divine Perfection of not knowing it ourselves. The same thing holds with regard to Genius. There are numbers of alarums on all sides to arouse our self-consciousness, should it ever flag or lag, from our cradle upward. Whithersoever we go, we have bells on our toes to regale our carnal hearts with their music; and bellmen meet us in every street to sound their chimes in our ears. Others tell us how clever we are; and we repeat the sweet strains with ceaseless iteration, magnifying them at every repetition. Hence it is next to a marvel if Genius can ever preserve any of that unconsciousness which belongs to its essence; and this is why, when all talents are multiplying, Genius becomes rarer and rarer with the increase of civilization, as is also the fate of its moral analogon, Heroism. Narcissus-like it wastes away in gazing on its own loved image.

Yet still Nature is mighty, in spite of all that man does to weaken and pervert her. Samsons are still born; and though to the fulness and glory of their strength it is requisite that the razor should not trim their exuberant locks into forms which they may regard with complacency in the flattering mirror of self-consciousness, the hair, after it has been cut off, may still grow again, and they may recover some of their pristine vigour.



But in such cases, as has been instanced in so many of the most genial minds during the last hundred years, the energies, which had been cropt and checkt by the perversities of the social system, are apter, when they burst out afresh, for the work of destruction, than of production, even at the cost of perishing among the ruins, which they drag down on the objects of their hatred.

Of the poets of recent times, the one who has achieved the greatest victory over the obstructions presented to the pure exercise of the Imagination by the reflective spirit and the restless self-consciousness of modern civilization, there can be little question, is Goethe : and the following remarks in one of Schiller's letters to him may help us to understand how that victory was gained, confirming and illustrating much of what has just been said. "Your attentive observation, which rests upon objects with such calmness and simplicity, preserves you from the risk of wandering into those by-paths, into which both Speculation and Imagination, when following its own arbitrary impulses, are so apt to stray. Your unerring intuitions embrace everything in far more completeness, which Analysis laboriously hunts out ; and solely because it lies thus as a whole in you, are you unaware of your own riches : for unhappily we only know what we separate. Minds of your class therefore seldom know how far they have penetrated, and how little reason they have to borrow from Philosophy, which has only to learn from them. Philosophy can merely resolve what is given to her : giving is not the act of Analysis, but of Genius, which carries on its combinations according to objective laws, under the dim but sure guidance of the pure Reason. — You seek for what is essential in Nature ; but you seek it by the most difficult path, from which a weaker intellect would shrink. You take the whole of Nature together, in order to gain light on its particular members : in the totality of its phenomena you search after the explanation of individual objects. From the simplest forms of organization, you mount step by step to the more complex, so as at length to construct the most complex of all, man, genetically out of the materials of the whole edifice of



Nature. By reproducing him, so to say, in conformity to the process of Nature, you try to pierce into his hidden structure. A great and truly heroic idea ! which sufficiently shews how your mind combines the rich aggregate of your conceptions into a beautiful unity. You can never have hoped that your life would be adequate for such a purpose ; but the mere entering on such a course is of higher value than the completion of any other ; and you have chosen like Achilles between Phthia and immortality. Had you been born a Greek, or even an Italian, and been surrounded from your cradle by exquisite forms of Nature and ideal forms of Art, your journey would have been greatly shortened, or perhaps rendered wholly needless. The very first aspect of things would have presented them in their necessary forms ; and your earliest experience would have led you to the grand style in art. But, as you were born a German, as your Greek mind was cast into our Northern world, you had no other choice, except either to become a Northern artist, or by the help of reflexion to gain for your imagination, what the realities around you denied to it, and thus by a sort of inward act and intellectual process to bring forth your works as though you were in Greece. At that period of life, at which the soul fashions its inner world from the outer, being surrounded by defective forms, you had received the impressions of our wild, Northern Nature, when your victorious Genius, being superior to its materials, became inwardly conscious of this want, and was outwardly confirmed in its consciousness through your acquaintance with the Nature of Greece. Hereupon you were forced to correct the old impressions previously graven on your imagination by a meaner Nature, according to the higher model which your formative spirit created ; and such a work cannot be carried on, except under the guidance of ideal conceptions. But this logical direction, which the spirit of reflexion is compelled to take, does not agree well with the esthetical processes through which alone the mind can produce. Thus you had an additional labour ; for, as you had past over from immediate contemplations to abstractions, you had now to transform your conceptions back again into intuitions, and your thoughts



into feelings ; because it is only by means of these that Genius can bring forth. This is the notion I have formed of the course of your mind ; and you will know best whether I am right. But what you can hardly know, — because Genius is always the greatest mystery to itself, — is the happy coincidence of your philosophical instinct with the purest results of speculative Reason. At first sight indeed it would seem as though there could be no stronger opposition than between the speculative spirit, which starts from unity, and the intuitive, which starts from multiplicity. But if the former seeks after Experience with a chaste and faithful purpose, and if the latter seeks after Law with a free, energetic exercise of thought, they cannot fail of meeting halfway. It is true that the intuitive mind deals only with individuals, and the speculative with classes. But if an intuitive spirit is genial, and seeks for the impress of necessity in the objects of experience, though it will always produce individuals, they will bear the character of a class : and if the speculative spirit is genial, and does not lose sight of experience, while rising above experience, though it will only produce classes, they will be capable of life, and have a direct relation to realities."

There are some questionable positions in this passage, above all, the exaggerated depreciation of the northern spirit, and exaltation of the classical, from which misjudgement Goethe in his youth was one of our first deliverers, though in after years he perhaps gave it too much encouragement, and which exercised a noxious influence upon Schiller, as we see in his *Bride of Messina*, and in the frantic Paganism of his ode on the Gods of Greece. But the discussion of these questions would require a survey of the great age of German literature. My reasons for quoting the passage are, that it asserts what seems to me the truth with regard to the unconsciousness of Genius, and that it sets forth the difficulty of preserving that unconsciousness in an age of intellectual cultivation, shewing at the same time how it has been overcome by him who of all men has done the most in the way of overcoming it. A mighty Genius will transform its conceptions back into intuitions, even as the tech-



nical rules of music or painting are assimilated by a musician or a painter, and as we speak and write according to the rules of grammar, without ever thinking about them. But it requires a potent Genius to carry this assimilative power into the higher regions of thought. U.

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When a poetical spirit first awakens in a people, and seeks utterance in song, its utterances are almost entirely objective. The child's mind is well nigh absorbed for a time in the objects of its perceptions, and is scarcely conscious of its own existence as independent and apart from them; and in like manner the poet, in the childhood of a nation, — which is of far longer duration than that of an individual, because the latter is surrounded by persons in a more advanced state, who lift and draw him up to their level, whereas a people has to mount step by step, without aid, and in spite of the *vis inertiae* of the mass, — the poet, I say, in this stage, seems to lose himself in the objects of his song, and hardly to contemplate himself in his distinctness and separation. Nor does he make those distinctions among these objects, which the refinements of more cultivated ages establish, often not without arbitrary fastidiousness. All things are interesting to him, if they shew forth life and power: the more they have of life and power, the more interesting they become: but even the least things are so, as they are also to a child, by a kind of natural sympathy, not by an act of the will fixing itself reflectively upon them, according to the process so frequently exemplified in Wordsworth. Thus we see next to nothing of the poet in the Homeric poems, in the Niebelungen, in the ballads of early ages. To represent what is and has been, suffices for delight. Nothing further is needed. Poetry is rather a natural growth of the mind, than a work of art. The umbilical chord, which connects it with its mother, has not yet been severed.

In youth the objects of childish perceptions become the objects of feelings, of desires, of passions. Self puts forth its horns. Consciousness wakes up out of its dreamy slumber; but the objects of that consciousness, which stir and excite it,



are outward. Hence it finds vent in lyrical poetry; but this lyrical poetry will be objective, in that it will be the vivid utterance of actual feelings, not a counterfeit, nor a meditative analysis of them.

Moreover in both these forms poetry will be essentially and thoroughly national. Indeed all true poetry must be so, and all poetry in early ages will be so of necessity. For in the early ages of a people all its members have a sort of generic character: the individualizing features come out later, with the progress of cultivation; and still later is the introduction of foreign elements; which at once multiply varieties, and impair distinct individuality. But a poet is the child of his people, the first-born of his age, the highest representative of the national mind, which in him finds an utterance for its inmost secrets. The vivid sympathies with nature and with man, which constitute him a poet, must needs be excited the most powerfully, from his childhood upward, by those forms of outward nature and of human, with which he has been the most conversant; and when he speaks, he will desire to speak so as to find an answer in the hearts of his hearers. In the ballad or epic he merely exhibits the objects of their own faith to them, of their own love and fear and hatred and desire, their own views of man and of the powers above him, their favorite legends, the very sights and sounds, the forms and colours, the incidents and adventures, they are most familiar with and most delight in. As the German poet has said,

Think you that all would have listened to Homer, that all would have read him,

Had he not smoothed his way to the heart by persuading his reader,  
That he is just what he wishes? and do we not high in the palace,  
And in the chieftain's tent see the soldier exult in the Iliad?

While in the street and the market, where citizens gather together  
All far gladlier hear of the craft of the vagrant Ulysses.

There the warrior beholdeth himself in his helmet and armour;  
Here in Ulysses the beggar perceives how his rags are ennobled.

In like manner the lyrical poetry of early ages is the national expression of feeling and of passion, of love and of devotion, — national both in its modes and in its objects.



This however is little more than the blossoms which are scattered, more or less abundantly, over a fruit-tree in spring, and which gleam with starry brightness amid the dark network of the leafless branches. As the season advances, Nature no longer contents herself with these fleeting manifestations of her exuberant playfulness: the down on the boyish cheek gives place to the rougher manly beard, the smile of merriment to the sedate, stern aspect of thought: she strips herself of the bloom with which she had been toying, arrays her form in motherly green; and, though she cannot repress the pleasure of still putting forth flowers here and there, her main task is now, not to dally with the air and sunshine, but to convert them into nourishing fruit, and living, generative seed. Feeling, passion, desire, kindling often into fervid intensity, are the predominant characters of youth. In manhood, when it is really attained to, these are controlled and subjugated by the will. The business of manhood is to act. Thus the manhood of poetry is the drama. The continuous flow of outward events, the simple effusion of feelings venting themselves in song, will not suffice to fill the mind of a people, when it has found out that its proper calling and work is to act, to shape the world after its own forms and wishes, to rule over it, and to battle incessantly with all manner of enemies, especially those which the will raises against itself, by struggling against the moral laws of the universe.

Now the whole form, and all the conditions of dramatic poetry, according to its original conception, — which is an essential part of its idea, — imply that it is to be address, more directly than any other kind of poetry, to large bodies of hearers, who assemble out of all classes, and may therefore be regarded as representatives of the whole nation, and that it is to stir them by acting immediately on their understanding and their feelings. Hence the adaptation to them, which is requisite in all poetry, is above all indispensable to the drama; and it belongs to the essence of dramatic poetry to be national. So too it has been, in the countries in which it has greatly flourished, in Greece, in Spain, in England. In France also comedy has been so, the only kind which has prospered there. For as to French trage-



dy, it is a hybrid exotic, aiming mainly at a classical form, yet omitting the very feature which had led to the adoption of that form, the chorus, and substituting a conventional artificiality of sentiments and manners for the ideal simplicity of the Greeks. It was designed for the court, not for the people.

In these latter times a new body has sprung up, to whom writers address themselves, that which Coleridge jeers at under the title of *the Reading Public*. Now for many modes of authorship, for philosophy, for science, for philology and all other *ologies*, indeed for prose generally, with the exception of the various branches of oratory, it has ever been a necessary condition that they should be designed for readers. With regard to these the danger is, that, in proportion as the studious readers are swallowed up and vanish in the mass of the unstudious, that which, from its speculative or learned character, ought to require thought and knowledge, may be debased by being popularized. The true philosopher's aim must ever be, *Fit audience let me find, though few*. But, through the general diffusion of reading, a multitude of people have become more or less conversant with books, and have attained to some sort of acquaintance with literature. This is the public for which our modern poets compose. They no longer sing; they are no longer *ἀοῖδοι* bards: they are mere writers of verses. Instead of sounding a trumpet in the ears of a nation, they play on the flute before a select auditory.

This is injurious to poetry in many ways. It has become more artificial. It no longer aims at the same broad, grand, overpowering effects. It is grown elegant, ingenious, refined, delicate, sentimental, didactic. Instead of epic poems, in which the heart and mind of a people roll out their waves of thought and feeling, to receive them back into their own bosom, we have poems constructed according to rules, which are not inherent laws, but maxims deduced by empirical abstraction; and we even get at length to compositions, like some of Southey's, in which materials are scraped together from the four quarters of the world, and the main part of the poetry may often lie in the notes, — not those of the harp awakening the bard to a sympa-



thetic flow of emotion, but of the artificer exhibiting the processes of his own craft. A somewhat similar change comes over lyric poetry. It takes to expressing sentiment, rather than feeling; though here may be a grand compensation, as we see eminently in Wordsworth.

But to no kind of poetry is this revolution of the national mind, this migration out of the period of unconscious production into that of reflective composition, more hurtful than to the Drama. Hence, when a nation has had a great dramatic age, as it has been an age of intense national life, like that which followed the Persian wars in Greece, and the reign of our Elizabeth, so has it been anterior to the age when reflexion became predominant, and has been cut short thereby. Hence too in Germany, as the effect of the religious Schism, in which the new spirit did not gain the same political ascendancy as in England, and that of the Thirty Years war, — unlike that of foreign wars, which unite and concentrate the energies of a people, — was to denationalize the nation, the period, which would else have been fit for the drama, past away almost barrenly; and when poets of high genius began to employ themselves upon it, in the latter half of the last century, the true dramatic age was gone by, so that their works mostly bear the character of posthumous, or postobits. In Goethe's dramas indeed, as in all his works, we find the thoughts and speculations and doubts and questionings, the feelings and passions, the desires and aspirations and antipathies, the restless cravings, the boastful weaknesses, the self-pampering diseases of his own age, that is, of an age in which the elementary constituents of human nature have been filtered through one layer of books after another: but for this very reason his dramas are wanting in much that is essential to a drama, — in action, the proper province of which is the outward world of Nature and man, — and in theatrical power, being mostly better fitted for meditative reading than for scenic representation.

The special difficulty which besets the poets of these later days, arises from this, that they cannot follow the simple impulses of their genius, but are under the necessity of comparing



these every moment with the results of reflexion and analysis. It is not merely that the great poets of earlier times preoccupy the chief objects and topics of poetical interest, and thus, as has been argued, drive their successors into the byways and the outskirts of the poetical world, and compell those who would excell or emulate them, to betake themselves to intellectual antics and extravagances. Whatever of truth may lie in this remark, is merely superficial. Every age has its own peculiar forms of moral and intellectual life; and Goethe has fully proved that an abundant store of materials for the creative powers of the Imagination were to be found, by those who had eyes to discern them, in what might have been deemed an utterly prosaic age. The difficulty to which I am referring, is that which he himself has so happily exprest, when, in speaking of some comparisons that had been instituted between himself and Shakspeare, he said: *Shakspeare always hits the right nail on the head at once; but I have to stop and think which is the right nail, before I hit.*

It is true, that from the very first certain rules and maxims of art, pertaining to its outward forms, became gradually established, with which the poet is in a manner bound to comply, even as he is with the rules of metre. But such rules, as I have already said, are readily assimilated and incorporated by the Imagination, which recognizes its own types and processes in them, and grows in time to conform to them without thinking of them. This however is far more difficult, when analysis and reflexion have dug down to the deeper principles of poetry, and it yet behoves us to shape our works according to those principles, without any conscious reference, conforming to them as it were instinctively. That this can be done, we see in Goethe; and the observations of Schiller quoted above are an attempt to explain the process. An instance too of the manner in which the Imagination works according to secret laws, without being distinctly conscious of them, is afforded by Goethe's answer, when Schiller objected to the conclusion of his beautiful Idyl, *Alexis and Dora*. After giving one reason for it founded on the workings of nature, and another on the principles of art,



which reasons, it is plain, he had been quite unconscious of, though he had acted under their influence, until he was called upon for an explanation, he adds : " Thus much in justification of the inexplicable instinct by which such things are produced."

For an example of the opposite error, I might refer to what was said some twenty pages back about the manner in which Fate has been introduced in a number of recent German tragedies, much as though, instead of the invisible laws of attraction, we were called to gaze on a planetary system kept in motion by myriads of ropes and pullies. A like illustration might be drawn from the prominence often given to the diversities of national character ; with regard to which point reflexion of late years has attained to correcter views, and, in so doing, as is for ever the case, has justified the perceptions of early ages. Among the results from the decay of the Imagination, and the exclusive predominance of the practical Understanding, one was the losing sight of the peculiarities of individual and of national character. The abstract generalization, man, compounded according to prescription of such and such virtues, or of such and such vices, was substituted for the living person, whose features receive their tone and expression from the central principle of his individuality. Hence our serious poetry hardly produced a character from the time of Milton to that of Walter Scott. On the other hand, among the ideas after which the foremost minds of the last hundred years have been striving, is that of individuality, and, as coordinate therewith, of nationality, not indeed in its older forms, as cut off from the grand unity of mankind, but as a living component part of it. That this idea, though it had not been philosophically enunciated, preexisted in the poetical Imagination, we see in Shakspeare, especially in his Roman plays. In Shakspeare however this nationality is represented rightly, as determining and moulding the character, but not as talking of itself, not as being aware that it is anything else than an essential part of the order of Nature. Coriolanus is a Roman ; but he is not for ever telling us so. Rome is in his heart : if you were to anatomize him, you would find it mixt with his lifeblood, and pervading every vein : but it does not flit



about the tip of his tongue. Indeed so far is the declaration of what one is from being necessary to the reality of one's being, that it is more like the sting of those insects which die on the wound they inflict.

To turn to an instance of an opposite kind: Muellner, a German playwright, who gained great celebrity in his own country about thirty years ago, and some of whose works were lauded in England, — who moreover really had certain talents for the stage, especially that of producing theatrical effect, having himself been in the habit of acting at private theatres, thereby making up in a measure for the want of the advantage possessed by the Greek dramatists and by Shakspeare, of studying their art practically, as well as theoretically, — tried in like manner to make up for his want of creative Imagination, by dressing his tragedies according to the newest, most fashionable receipts of dramatic cookery. His art was *ostentare artem*, through fear lest we might not discover it without. There is no undercurrent in his writings, no secret working of passion: every vein and nerve and muscle is laid bare, as in an anatomy, and accompanied with a comment on its peculiar excellences. His personages are never content with being what they are, and acting accordingly: they are continually telling you what they are; and their morbid self-consciousness preys upon them so, that they can hardly talk or think of anything except their own prodigious selves.

Thus in his tragedy, called *Guilt*, which turns in great part upon the contrast between the Norwegian character and the Spanish, a Norwegian maiden comes in, saying, *I am a Norwegian maiden; and Norwegian maidens are very wonderful creatures.* A Spanish woman exclaims, *I am a Spanish woman; and Spanish women are very wonderful creatures.* Even a boy is stript of his blessed privilege of unconscious innocence, and tells us how unconscious and innocent he is. To crown the whole, the hero enters, and says: *I am the most wonderful being of all: for I am a Norwegian; and Norwegians are wonderful beings: and I am also a Spaniard; and Spaniards also are wonderful beings. The North and the South have commit-*



*ted adultery within me. Out on them! there's death in their kiss. I am a riddle to myself. Pole and Pole unite in me. I combine fire and water, earth and heaven, God and the devil.* The last sentences are translated literally from the original. They were meant to be very grand, and probably excited shouts of applause: yet they are a piece of turgid falsetto.

In a certain sense indeed there is a truth in these lines, so far as they set forth the inherent discords of our nature, a truth to which all history bears witness, and which comes out more forcibly at times and in characters of demoniacal power. But it is as contrary to nature for a man to anatomize his heart and soul thus, as it would be to make him dissect his own body. The blunder lies in representing a person as speaking of himself in the same way in which a dispassionate observer might speak of him. It is much as if one were to versify the analytical and rhetorical accounts, which critics have given of Shakspeare's characters, and then to put them into the mouths of Macbeth, Othello, Lear, nay, of Juliet, Imogen, Ophelia, and even of the child, Arthur.

Yet in Hamlet himself, that personification of human nature brooding over its own weaknesses and corruptions, that only philosopher, with one exception, whom Poetry has been able to create, how different are all the reflexions! which moreover come forward mainly in his soliloquies; whereas Muellner's hero raves out his self-analysis in the ears of another, a woman, his own sister, the very sight of whom should have made him fold up the poisoned leaves of his heart. The individual, personal application of Hamlet's reflexions is either swallowed up in the general confession of the frailty of human nature; or else they are the self-reproaches and self-stimulants of irresolute weakness, the foam which the sea leaves behind on the sands, when it sinks back into its own abysmal depths, and the dissonant muttering of the waves, that have been vainly lashing an immovable rock. So that they arise naturally, and almost necessarily, out of his situation, out of the conflict with the pressure of events, which he shrinks from encountering, and thus are altogether different from the practice of modern writ-



ers, who make a man stand up in cold blood, and recite a dissertation upon himself, carried on, with the interposition of divers similar dissertations recited by others, through the course of five acts.

To make the difference more conspicuous, it would be instructive to see a soliloquy for Hamlet written by one of these modern playwrights. How thickly would it be deckt out with all manner of floscules! for the same reason for which a tragedy-queen wears many more diamonds than a real one. The following might serve as a sample.

I am a prince. A prince a sceptre bears.  
 Sceptres are golden. Gold is flexible.  
 Therefore am I as flexible as gold.  
 'T is strange! 'T is passing strange! I'm a strange being!  
 None e'er was stranger. I was born in Denmark;  
 In Wittenberg I studied. Wittenberg!  
 Why Wittenberg is set amid the sands  
 Of Northern Germany. So stood Palmyra  
 Amid the sands of Syria. Sand! Sand! Sand!  
 I wonder how 't was possible for Sand  
 To murder Kotzebue. Sand flies round and round  
 And every puff of wind will change its form.  
 Thus every puff of wind will change my mind.  
 Ay, that vile sand I breathed at Wittenberg  
 Has rusht into my soul; and there it whirls  
 And whirls about, just like the foam that flies  
 From water-wheels. It almost chokes me up.  
 So did it Babylon. That baby loon!  
 To build his city in the midst of sands!  
 But that was in the babyhood of man.  
 Now we are older grown, and wiser too.  
 I live in Copenhagen by the sea.  
 That is the home of every Dane. The sea!  
 But that too waves and wavers. So do I.  
 I am the sea. But I am golden too,  
 And sandy too. O what a marvel 's this!  
 I am a golden, sandy sea. Prodigious!  
 Ay, ay! There are more things in heaven and earth,  
 Than are dreamt of in our Philosophy.

Nor are these aberrations and extravagances, these preposterous inversions of the processes of the Imagination, trying to educe the concrete out of a medley of abstractions, confined to Germany. They may be commoner there, because the German



mind has been busier in philosophical and esthetical speculations: and when they are found in our own poetry, there may be more of genuine poetical substance to sustain them. But I have cited some passages in which the reflective spirit has operated injuriously on Wordsworth; and, if we look into Lord Byron's works, we shall not have to go far before we light on examples of similar errors. For he is eminently the prince of egotists; and, instead of representing characters, he describes them, by versifying his own reflexions and meditations about them. It has been asserted indeed by a celebrated critic, "that Lord Byron's genius is essentially dramatic." But this assertion merely illustrates the danger of meddling with hard words. For no poet, not even Wordsworth or Milton, was more unfitted by the character of his mind for genuine dramatic composition. He can however write fine, sounding lines in abundance, where self-exaltation assumes the language of self-reproach, and a man magnifies himself by speaking with bitter scorn of all things. Such are the following from the opening soliloquy in *Manfred*.

Philosophy, and science, and the springs  
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,  
I have essayed; and in my mind there is  
A power to make these subject to itself:  
But they avail not. I have done men good:  
And I have met with good even among men:  
But this availed not. I have had my foes;  
And none have baffled, many fallen before me:  
But this availed not. Good or evil, life,  
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,  
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,  
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,  
And feel the curse to have no natural fear.  
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,  
Or lurking love of something on the earth.

Or look at this speech in Manfred's conversation with the Abbot:

My nature was averse from life,  
And yet not cruel; for I would not make,  
But find a desolation: — like the wind,  
The red-hot breath of the most lone simoom,  
Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o'er  
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast,



And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,  
 And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,  
 But being met is deadly; such hath been  
 The course of my existence.

Now if in these lines *he* and *his* be substituted for *I* and *my*, and they be read as a description of some third person, they may perhaps be grand, as the author meant that they should be. But at present they are altogether false, and therefore unpoetical. Indeed it may be laid down as an axiom, that, whenever the personal pronouns can be interchanged in any passage without injury to the poetry, the poetry must be spurious. For no human being ever thought or spoke of himself, as a third person would describe him. Yet, such is the intelligence shewn in our ordinary criticism, these very passages have been cited as examples of Lord Byron's dramatic genius. U.

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There is a profound knowledge of human nature in those lines which Shelley puts into Orsino's mouth, in *the Cenci* (Act II. SC. II.).

It is a trick of this same family  
 To analyse their own and other minds.  
 Such self-anatomy shall teach the will  
 Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers,  
 Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,  
 Into the depth of darkest purposes.

This is not at variance with what has been said in these last pages, but on the contrary confirms it. Self-anatomy is not an impossible act. It belongs however to a morbid state. When in health, we do not feel our own feelings, any more than we feel our limbs, or see our eyes, but their objects, the objects on which they were designed to act. On the other hand, when any part of the body becomes disordered, we feel it, the more so, the more violent the disorder is. The same thing happens in an unhealthy state of heart and mind, when the living communion with their objects is blockt up and cut off, and the blood is thrown back upon the heart, and our sight is filled with delusive spectra. If the Will gives itself up to work evil, the Conscience ever and anon lifts up its reproachful voice, and smites with its



avenging sting; whereupon the Will commands the Understanding to lull or stifle the Conscience with its sophistries, and to prove that our moral nature is a mere delusion. Hence Shakspeare has made his worst characters, Edmund, Iago, Richard, all more or less self-reflective. Even in such characters however, it is necessary to track the footsteps of Nature with the utmost care, in order to avoid substituting a shameless, fiendish profession of wickedness, for the jugglings whereby the remaining shreds of our moral being would fain justify or palliate its aberrations. *Evil, be thou my Good!* is a cry that could never have come from human lips. They always modify and mitigate it into *Evil, thou art my Good*. Thus they shake off the responsibility of making it so, and impute the sin of their will to their nature or their circumstances. Yet in nothing have the writers of spurious tragedies oftener gone wrong, than in their way of making their villains proclaim and boast of their villainy. Even poets of considerable dramatic genius have at times erred grievously in this respect, especially during the immaturity of their genius: witness the soliloquies of Francis Moor in Schiller's *Titanic* first-birth. Slow too and reluctant as I am to think that anything can be erroneous in Shakspeare, whom Nature had wedded, so to say, for better, for worse, and whom she admitted into all the hidden recesses of her heart, still I cannot help thinking that even he, notwithstanding the firm grasp with which he is wont to hold the reins of his solar chariot, as it circles the world, beholding and bringing out every form of life in it, has somewhat exaggerated the diabolical element in the soliloquies of Richard the Third. I refer especially to those terrific lines just after the murder of Henry the Sixth.

Down, down, to hell, and say, I sent thee thither,  
*I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear.*  
 Indeed 't is true, that Henry told me of:  
 For I have often heard my mother say,  
 I came into the world with my legs forward.  
 Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste,  
 And seek their ruin that usurpt our right?  
 The midwife wondered, and the women cried,  
 O, Jesus bless us! he is born with teeth.



And so I was; *which plainly signified,*  
*That I should snarl, and bite, and play the dog.*  
*Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,*  
*Let hell make crookt my mind, to answer it.*  
 I had no father; I am like no father:  
 I have no brother; I am like no brother:  
*And this word, Love, which greybeards call divine,*  
*Be resident in men like one another,*  
*And not in me: I am myself alone.*

Of a like character are those lines in the opening soliloquy of the play called by his name :

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,  
 Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass, —  
 I that am curtailed of this fair proportion,  
 Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,  
 Deformed, unfinisht, sent before my time  
 Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
 And that so lamely and unfashionably,  
 That dogs bark at me, as I halt by them; —  
 Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,  
 Have no delight to pass away the time,  
 Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,  
 And descant on my own deformity.  
 And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,  
 To entertain these fair, well-spoken days,  
*I am determined to prove a villain,*  
 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

How different is this bold avowal of audacious, reckless wickedness, from Edmund's self-justification !

Why bastard? wherefore base?  
 When my dimensions are as well compact,  
*My mind as generous,* and my shape as true,  
 As honest madam's issue.

How different too is Iago's speech !

*And what's he then, that says, I play the villain?*  
*When this advice is free I give, and honest,*  
*Probable to thinking, and indeed the course*  
*To win the Moor again.* For 't is most easy  
 The inclining Desdemona to subdue  
 In any honest suit: she's famed as fruitful  
 As the free elements. And then for her  
 To win the Moor, — were 't to renounce his baptism,  
 All seals and symbols of redeemed sin, —



His soul is so enfeathered to her love,  
 That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
 Even as her appetite shall play the god  
 With his weak function. *How am I then a villain,*  
*To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,*  
*Directly to his good?*

After which inimitable bitterness of mockery at all his victims, and at Reason itself, how awfully does that sudden flash of conscience rend asunder and consume the whole network of sophistry!

Divinity of hell!

When devils will their blackest sins put on,  
 They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,  
 As I do now.

If we compare these speeches with Richard's, and in like manner if we compare the way in which Iago's plot is first sown, and springs up and gradually grows and ripens in his brain, with Richard's downright enunciation of his projected series of crimes from the first, we may discern the contrast between the youth and the mature manhood of the mightiest intellect that ever lived upon earth, a contrast almost equally observable in the difference between the diction and metre of the two plays, and not unlike that between a great river rushing along turbidly in spring, bearing the freshly melted snows from Alpine mountains, with flakes of light scattered here and there over its surface, and the same river, when its waters have subsided into their autumnal tranquillity, and compose a vast mirror for the whole landscape around them, and for the sun and stars and sky and clouds overhead.

It is true, Shakspeare's youth was Herculean, was the youth of one who might have strangled the serpents in his cradle. There are several things in Richard's position, which justify a great difference in the representation of his inward being. His rank and station pampered a more audacious will. The civil wars had familiarized him with crimes of lawless violence, and with the wildest revolutions of fortune. Above all, his deformity,—which Shakspeare received from a tradition he did not think of questioning, and which he purposely brings forward so



prominently in both the speeches quoted above, — seemed to separate and cut him off from sympathy and communion with his kind, and to be a plea for thinking that, as he was a monster in body, he might also be a monster in heart and conduct. In fact it is a common result of a natural malformation to awaken and irritate a morbid self-consciousness, by making a person continually and painfully sensible of his inferiority to his fellows: and this was doubtless a main agent in perverting Lord Byron's character. Still I cannot but think that Shakspeare would have made a somewhat different use even of this motive, if he had rewritten the play, like King John, in the maturity of his intellect. Would not Richard then, like Edmund and Iago, have palliated and excused his crimes to himself, and sophisticated and played tricks with his conscience! Would he not have denied and avowed his wickedness, almost with the same breath? and made the ever-waxing darkness of his purposes, like that of night, at once conceal and betray their hideous enormity? At all events, since the justifications that may be alledged for Richard's bolder avowals of his wickedness, result from the peculiar idiosyncrasy of his position taken along with his physical frame, he is a most unsafe model for other poets to follow, though a very tempting one, especially to young poets, many of whom are glad to vent their feelings of the discord between their ardent fancies and the actual state of the world, in railing at human nature, and embodying its evils in some incarnate fiend. Besides the main difficulties of dramatic poetry are smoothed down, when a writer can make his characters tell us how good and how bad he designs them to be. U.

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Some readers, who might otherwise incline to acknowledge the truth of the foregoing observations, may perhaps be perplexed by the thought, that the tenour of them seems scarcely consistent with that Christian principle, which makes self-examination a part of our duty. To this scruple I might reply, that *corruptio optimi fit pessima*; for this involves the true explanation of the difficulty. But the solution needs to be brought out more plainly.



Now it is quite true that one of the main effects produced by Christianity on our nature has been to call forth our conscience, and, along therewith, our self-consciousness, into far greater distinctness; which has gone on increasing with the progress of Christian thought. This however is only as the Law called forth the knowledge of sin. The Law called forth the knowledge of the sinfulness of the outward act, with the purpose of making us turn away from it, even in thought, to its opposite. The Gospel, completing the work of the Law, has called forth the knowledge of the sinfulness of our inward nature; not however to the end that we should brood over the contemplation of that sinfulness,—far less that we should resolve to abide and advance therein; but to the end that we should rise out of it, and turn away from it, to the Redemption which has been wrought for us. To have aroused the consciousness of sin, without assuaging it by the glad tidings of Redemption, would have been to issue a sentence of madness against the whole human race. One cry of despair would have burst from every heart, as it was lasht by the stings of the Furies: *O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?* And the echo from all the hollow caverns of earth and heaven and hell would only have answered, *Who?*

In truth, even in this form of self-consciousness, there is often a great deal of morbid exaggeration, of unhealthy, mischievous poring over and prying into the movements of our hearts and minds; which in the Romish Church has been stimulated feverishly by the deleterious practices of the confessional, and which taints many of the very best Romish devotional works. A vapid counterpart of this is also to be found in our modern sentimental religion. In the Apostles, on the other hand, there is nothing of the sort. Their life is hid with Christ in God. Their hearts and minds are filled with the thought and the love of Him who had redeemed them, and in whom they had found their true life, and with the work which they were to do in His service, for His glory, for the spreading of His kingdom. This too was one of the greatest and most



blessed among the truths which Luther was especially ordained to reproclaim,—that we are not to spend our days in watching our own vices, in gazing at our own sins, in stirring and raking up all the mud of our past lives; but to lift our thoughts from our own corrupt nature to Him who put on that nature in order to deliver it from its corruption, and to fix our contemplations and our affections on Him who came to clothe us in His perfect righteousness, and through whom and in whom, if we are united to Him by a living faith, we too become righteous. Thus, like the Apostle, are we to forget that which is behind, and to keep our eyes bent on the prize of our high calling, to which we are to press onward, and which we may attain, in Christ Jesus.

I cannot enter here into the questions, how far and what kinds of self-examination are necessary as remedial, medicinal measures, in consequence of our being already in so diseased a condition. These are questions of ascetic discipline, the answers to which will vary according to the exigences of each particular case, even as do the remedies prescribed by a wise physician for bodily ailments. I merely wish to shew that, in the Christian view of man, no less than in the natural, the healthy, normal state is not the subjective, but the objective, that in which, losing his own individual, insulated life, he finds it again in Christ, that in which he does not make himself the object of his contemplation and action, but directs them both steadily and continually toward the will and the glory of God.

Of course the actual changes which have thus been wrought in human nature by the operation of Christianity, and which are not confined to its religious aspect, but pervade all its movements, will justify and necessitate a corresponding difference in the poetical representations of human characters. Still the poet will have to keep watch against excesses and aberrations in this respect; and this has not been done with sufficient vigilance, it seems to me, in the passages which I have found fault with.

U.

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The general opinion on the worth of an imaginative work may ultimately be right: immediately it is likely to be wrong;



and this likelihood increases in proportion to the creative power manifested in it. The whole history of literature drives us to this conclusion. There have indeed been cases in which the calm judgement of posterity has confirmed the verdict pronounced by contemporaries: but, though the results have been the same, the way of arriving at them was different. What Jonson said of him, in whom, above all other men, the spirit of Poetry became incarnate, is true of Poetry itself: "it is not of an age, but for all time." In the very act of becoming an immanent power in the life of the world, it advances, as our common phrases imply, beyond its own age, and rises above it. Now, from the nature of man, there are always aspirations and yearnings in him, which soar beyond the ken of his understanding, and depths of thought and feeling, which strike down below it: wherefore no age has ever been able to comprehend itself, even what it is, much less what it is striving after and tending to. A Thucydides or a Burke may discern some of the principles which are working and seething, and may guess at the consequences which are to be evolved out of them. But they who draw the car of Destiny cannot look back upon her: they are impelled onward and ever blindly onward by the throng pressing at their heels. Far less can any age comprehend what is beyond it and above it.

Besides much of the beauty in every great work of art must be latent. Like the Argive seer, οὐ δοκεῖν ἄριστον, ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλει. Such a work will be profound; and few can sound depth. It will be sublime; and few can scan highth. It will have a soul in it; and few eyes can pierce through the body. Thus the Greek epigram on the History of Thucydides,—

ὦ φίλος, εἰ σοφὸς εἶ, λάβε μ' ἐς χέρας · εἰ δὲ πέφυκας

Νῆϊς Μουσάων, ῥίψον ἅ μὴ νοέεις.

Εἰμὶ γὰρ οὐ πάντεσσι βατός · παῦροι δ' ἀγάσαντο, —

may be regarded as more or less appropriate to every great work of art. So that Orator Puff's blunder, in spending as many words on a riband as a Raphael, did not lie solely in the superior merits of the latter, but also in the greater facility with



which all the merits of the former were sure to be discerned. At the Exhibition of the King's pictures last year (in 1826), Grenet's Church, with its mere mechanical dexterity of perspective, had more admirers, ten to one, than any of Rembrandt's wonderful masterpieces, more, fifty to one, than Venusti's picture of the Saviour at the foot of the Cross: for you will find fifty who will be delighted with an ingenious artifice, sooner than one who can understand art. Hence there is little surprising in being told that Sophocles was not so great a favorite on the Athenian stage as Euripides: what surprises me far more is, that any audience should ever have been found capable of deriving pleasure from the severe grandeur and chaste beauty of Sophocles. Nor is it surprising that Jonson and Fletcher should have been more admired than Shakspeare: the contrary would be surprising. Thus too, when one is told that Schiller must be a greater poet than Goethe, because he is more popular in Germany, one may reply, that, were he less popular, one might perhaps be readier to suppose that there may be something more in him, than what thrusts itself so prominently on the public view.

We are deaf, it is said, to the music of the spheres, owing to the narrowness and dimness and dulness of our auditory organs. So is it with what is grandest and loveliest in poetry. Few admire it, because few have perceptions capacious and quick and strong enough to feel it. Lessing has said (vol. xxvi. p. 36): "The true judges of poetry are at all times, in all countries, quite as rare as true poets themselves are." Thus among my own friends, although I feel pride in reckoning up many of surpassing intellectual powers, I can hardly bethink myself of more than one possessing that calmness of contemplative thought, that insight into the principles and laws of the Imagination, that familiarity with the forms under which in various ages it has manifested itself, that happy temperature of activity not too restless or vehement, with a passiveness ready to receive the exact stamp and impression which the poet purport to produce, and the other qualities requisite to



fit a person for pronouncing intelligently and justly on questions of taste.\*

How then do great works ever become popular?

In the strict sense they very seldom do. They never can be rightly appreciated by the bulk of mankind, because they can never be fully understood by them. No author, I have remarked before, has been more inadequately understood than Shakspeare. But who, among the authors that make or mark a great epoch in the history of thought, imaginative or reflective, has fared better? Has Plato? or Sophocles? or Dante? or Bacon? or Behmen? or Leibnitz? or Kant? Their names have indeed been extolled; but for the chief part of those who have extolled them, they might as well have written in an unknown tongue. Look only at Homer, whom one might deem of all poets the most easily intelligible. Yet how the Greek critics misunderstood him! who found everything in him except a poet. How must Virgil have misunderstood him, when he conceived himself to be writing a poem like the *Iliad*! How must those persons have misunderstood him, who have pretended to draw certain irrefragable laws of epic poetry from his works! laws which are as applicable to them, as the rules of carpet-making are to the side of a hill in its vernal glory. How must Cowper have misunderstood him, when he congealed him! and Pope, when he bottled up his streaming waters in couplets, and coloured them till they were as gaudy as a druggist's window! Here, as in numberless instances, we see how, as Goethe says so truly, every reader

Reads himself out of the book that he reads, nay, has he a strong mind,  
Reads himself into the book, and amalgams his thoughts with the author's.

Nevertheless in the course of time the judgement of the intelligent few determines the judgement of the unintelligent many. Public opinion flows through the present as through a marsh, scattering itself in a multitude of little brooks, taking any

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\* This was written in 1826. Since then the opinion here expressed has been justified by the *Essay on the Irony of Sophocles*, which has been termed the most exquisite piece of criticism in the English language.



casual direction, and often stagnating sleepily ; until the more vigorous and active have gone before, and cut and embankt a channel, along which it may follow them. Thus on the main it has one voice for the past ; and that voice is the voice of the judicious : but it has an endless consort, or rather dissonance of voices for the present ; and amid a mob the wisest are not likely to be the loudest. For they have the happy feeling that Time is their ally ; and they know that hurrying impedes, oftener than it accelerates. At length however, when people are persuaded that they ought to like a book, they are not slow in finding out something to like in it. Our perceptions are tractable and ductile enough, if we earnestly desire that they should be so.

U.

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Sophocles is the summit of Greek art. But one must have scaled many a steep, before one can estimate his highth. It is owing to his classical perfection, that he has generally been the least admired of the great ancient poets : for little of his beauty is discernible by a mind that is not deeply principled and imbued with the spirit of antiquity. The overpowering grandeur of Eschylus has more of that which bursts through every conventional barrier, and rushes at once to the innermost heart of man. Homer lived before the Greeks were cut off so abruptly from other nations, and their peculiar qualities were brought out, in part through the influences of their country, which tended to break them up into small states, and thus gave a political importance to each individual citizen, — in part through the political institutions which sprang out of these causes, and naturally became more democratical, — in part through the workings, moral and intellectual, of Commerce, and of that freedom which all these circumstances combined to foster. Hence his national peculiarities are not so definitely markt. In many respects he nearly resembles those bards in other countries, who have lived in a like state of society. Therefore, as a child is always at home wherever he may chance to be, so is Homer in all countries ; and thus on the whole he perhaps is the ancient poet who has found the most favour with the mod-



erns, grossly as, we have just seen, even he has often been misunderstood. Next to him in popularity, if I mistake not, come Euripides and Ovid; who have been fondled in consequence of their being infected with several modern epidemic vices of style. They have nothing spiritual, nothing ideal, nothing mysterious. All that is valuable in them is spread out on the surface, often thinly as gold leaf. They are full of glittering points. Some of their gems are true; and few persons have eyes to distinguish the false. They have great rhetorical pathos; and in poetry as in life clamorous importunity will awaken more general sympathy than silent distress. They are skilful in giving characteristic touches, rather than in representing characters; and the former please everybody, while it requires a considerable reach of imagination to apprehend and estimate the latter. In fine they are immoral, and talk morality. U.

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When a man says he sees nothing in a book, he very often means that he does not see himself in it: which, if it is not a comedy or a satire, is likely enough.

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What a person praises is perhaps a surer standard, even than what he condemns, of his character, information, and abilities. No wonder then that in this prudent country most people are so shy of praising anything.

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Most painters have painted themselves. So have most poets; not so palpably indeed and confessedly, but still more assiduously. Some have done nothing else. U.

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Many persons carry about their characters in their hands; not a few under their feet. U.

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What a lucky fellow he would be, who could invent a beautifying glass! How customers would rush to him! A royal funeral would be nothing to it. Nobody would stay away, except the two extremes, those who were satisfied with themselves through their vanity, and those who were contented in their



humility. At present one is forced to take up with one's eyes; and they, spiteful creatures, wont always beautify quite enough.

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U.

Everybody has his own theatre, in which he is manager, actor, prompter, playwright, sceneshifter, boxkeeper, doorkeeper, all in one, and audience into the bargain.

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U.

A great talker ought to be affable. Else how can he look to find others so? Yet his besetting temptation is to speak, rather than to hear.

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U.

C'est un grand malheur qu'on ne peut se battre qu'en combattant.

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U.

Nothing is accounted so proper in England as property.

En France le propre est la propreté.

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U.

I have mentioned individuality of character above (p. 105) among the distinctive qualities of the English. Not however that it is peculiarly ours, but common to us with the other nations of the Teutonic race, between whom and those nations in whose character, as in their language, the Latin blood is predominant, there is a remarkable contrast in this respect. Landon, having resided many years among the latter, could not fail to notice this. "I have often observed more variety (he makes Puntomichino say) in a single English household, than I believe to exist in all Italy." Solger (*Briefwechsel*, p. 82) has a like remark with reference to the French: "A certain general outward culture makes them all know how to keep in their station, each doing just as his neighbours do; so that one seldom meets among them with that interesting and instructive originality, which in other nations is so often found in the lower orders. In France all classes have much the same sort of education, a superficial one enough, it is true; but hence even the meanest are able to hold up their heads."

Talk to a dozen Englishmen on any subject: there will be



something peculiar and characteristic in the remarks of each. Talk to a dozen Frenchmen: they will all make the very same remark, and almost in the same words. Nor is this merely a delusive appearance, occasioned by a stranger's inattention to the minuter shades of difference, as in a flock of sheep an inexperienced eye will not discern one from another. It is that the generic and specific qualities are proportionably stronger in them, that they all tread in the same sheeptrack, that they all follow their noses, and that their noses, like those of cattle when a storm is coming on, all point the same way. A traveler cannot go far in the country, but something will be said about passports. I have heard scores of people talk of them at different times. Of course they all thought them excellent things: this belongs to their national vanity. What surprised me was, that they every one thought them excellent things for the self-same reason, — because they prevent thieves and murderers from escaping . . . a reason learnt by rote, concerning which they had never thought of asking whether such was indeed the fact.

Let me relate another instance in point. I happened to be in Paris at the time of the great eclipse in 1820, and was watching it from the gardens of the Tuileries. Several voices, out of a knot of persons near me, cried out one after the other, *Ah, comme c'est drôle ! Regardez, comme c'est drôle*. My own feelings not being exactly in this key, I walkt away, but in vain. Go whither I would, the same sounds haunted me. Old men and children, young men and maidens, all joined in the same cuckoo cry: *C'est bien drôle ! Regardez, comme c'est drôle*. *Ah, comme c'est drôle*. Paris had tongues enough; for these are never scarce there. But it seemed only to have a single mind: and this mind, even under the aspect of that portent which “perplexes nations,” could not contain or give utterance to more than one thought or feeling, that what they saw was *bien drôle*.

U.

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The monotonousness of French versification is only a type of that which pervades the national character, and herewith, of necessity, the representative and exponent of that character,



their literature, since the age of Louis the Fourteenth. But this ready suppression, or rather imperfect development, of those features which constitute individuality of character, is common, as I remarkt before, more or less to all the nations of the Latin stock: and it is scarcely less noticeable in the Romans, than in the rest. Indeed this is one main difference, to which most of the others are referable, between the literature of the Greeks and that of the Romans. Hence, for instance, the Greeks, like ourselves and the Germans, had dramatic poetry, the essence of which lies in the revelation of the inner man; whereas the Roman drama, at least in its higher departments, was an alien growth. Moreover in Greek literature every author is himself, and has distinctive qualities whereby you may recognize him. But every Roman writer, as Frederic Schlegel has justly observed, "is in the first place a Roman, and next a Roman of a particular age." That portion of him which is peculiarly his own, is ever the least. *Pars minima ipse sui*. You may find page after page in Tacitus and Seneca and the elder Pliny, which, but for the difference of subject, might have been composed by any one of the three: and if Lucan had not written in verse, the trio might have been a quartett.

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U.

The Romans had no love of Beauty, like the Greeks. They held no communion with Nature, like the Germans. Their one idea was Rome, not ancient, fabulous, poetical Rome, but Rome warring and conquering, and *orbis terrarum domina*. S. P. Q. R. is inscribed on almost every page of their literature. With the Greeks all foreign nations were βάρβαροι, outcasts from the precincts of the Muses. To the Roman every stranger was a *hostis*, until he became a slave. Only compare the Olympic with the gladiatorial games. The object of the former was to do homage to Nature, and to exalt and glorify her excellent gifts; that of the latter to appease the thirst for blood, when it was no longer quenched in the blood of foes. None but a Greek was deemed worthy of being admitted to the first: but a Roman would have thought himself degraded by a mimic combat, in



which the victory lay rather with the animal, than with the intellectual part of man. He left such sport to his jesters, slaves, and wild beasts. To him a triumph was the ideal and sum total of happiness: and verily it was something grand.

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U.

Milton has been compared to Raphael. He is much more like Michaelangelo. Michaelangelo is the painter of the Old Testament, Raphael of the New. Now Milton, as Wordsworth has said of him, was a Hebrew in soul. He was grand, severe, austere. He loved to deal with the primeval, elementary forms both of inanimate nature and of human, before the manifold, ever multiplying combinations of thought and feeling had shaped themselves into the multifarious complexities of human character. Both Samson and Comus are equally remote from the realities of modern humanity. He would have been a noble prophet. Among the Greeks, his imagination, like that of Eschylus, would have dwelt among the older gods. He wants the gentleness of Christian love, of that feeling to which the least thing is precious, as springing from God, and claiming kindred with man.

Where to find a parallel for Raphael in the modern world, I know not. Sophocles, among poets, most resembles him. In knowledge of the diversities of human character, he comes nearer than any other painter to him, who is unapproachd and unapproachable, Shakspeare; and yet two worlds, that of Humour, and that of Passion, separate them. In exquisiteness of art, Goethe might be compared to him. But neither he nor Shakspeare has Raphael's deep Christian feeling. And then there is such a peculiar glow and blush of beauty in his works: whithersoever he comes, he sheds beauty from his wings.

Why did he die so early? Because morning cannot last till noon, nor spring through summer. Early too as it was, he had lived through two stages of his art, and had carried both to their highest perfection. This rapid progressiveness of mind he also had in common with Shakspeare and Goethe, and with few others.

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U.



The readers of the Giaour will remember the narrow arch, over which the faithful are to enter into Paradise. In fact this arch was the edge of the sword, or rather of the arched scimitar. Hereby, if they wielded it bravely and murderously, the Mussulmen thought they should attain to that Garden of Bliss. Hence too did they deem it their duty to drive all men thither, even along that narrow and perilous bridge; far more excusable in so doing, than those who have used like murderous weapons against their Christian brethren, in the belief that they were casting them, not into heaven, but into hell. Even in minor matters the sword is a perilous instrument whereby to seek one's aim. Compulsion is not, and never can be conviction. They exclude each other.

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U.

Musicians, at least dilettanti ones, are apt to complain of those who *encore* a tune, as having no true feeling for the art. It should be remembered however, that the peculiarity of music is, that its parts can never be perceived contemporaneously, but only in succession. Yet no work of art can be understood, unless we have conceived the idea of it as a whole, and can discern the relations of its parts to each other as members of that whole. To judge of a picture, a statue, a building, we look at it again and again, both in its unity and in its details. So too do we treat a poem, which combines the objective permanence of the last-mentioned arts, with the successive development belonging to music. But until we know a piece of music, until we have heard it through already, it is scarcely possible for any ear to understand it. The sturdiest asserter of the organic unity of works of art will not pretend that he could construct a play of Shakspeare or of Sophocles out of a single scene, or even that he could construct a single speech out of the preceding ones; although, when he has read and carefully examined it, he may maintain that all its parts hang together by a sort of inherent, inviolable necessity. The habit of lavishing all one's admiration on striking parts, independently of their relation to the whole, does indeed betoken a want of imaginative perception, and of proper esthetical culture. In true works of art too



the beauty of the parts is raised to a higher power by the living idea which pervades the whole, as the physical beauty of Raphael's Virgins is by their relation to their Divine Child. But for that very reason do we gaze on them with greater intentness, and return to them again and again. Nay, does not Nature herself teach us to *encore* tunes? Her songsters repeat their songs over and over, with endless iteration. U.

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Wisdom is Alchemy. Else it could not be Wisdom. This is its unfailing characteristic, that it "finds good in everything," that it renders all things more precious. In this respect also does it renew the spirit of childhood within us: while foolishness hardens our hearts, and narrows our thoughts, it makes us feel a childlike curiosity and a childlike interest about all things. When our view is confined to ourselves, nothing is of value, except what ministers in one way or other to our own personal gratification: but in proportion as it widens, our sympathies increase and multiply: and when we have learnt to look on all things as God's works, then, as His works, they are all endeared to us.

Hence nothing can be further from true wisdom, than the mask of it assumed by men of the world, who affect a cold indifference about whatever does not belong to their own immediate circle of interests or pleasures. U.

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It were much to be wisht that some philosophical scholar would explain the practical influence of religion in the ancient world. Much has been done of late for ancient mythology, which itself, until the time of Voss, was little better than a confused, tangled mass. Greek and Roman fables of all ages and sexes were jumbled together indiscriminately, with an interloper here and there from Egypt, or from the East; and, whether found in Homer or in Tzetzes, they were all supposed to belong to the same whole. Voss, not John Gerard, but John Henry, did a good service in trying to bring some sort of order and distinctness into this medley. But he mostly left out of sight, that one of the chief elements in mythology is the relig-



ious. His imagination too was rather that of a kitchen-garden, than either of a flower-garden, or a forest: his favorite flowers were cauliflowers. Since his days there have been many valuable contributions toward the history and genesis of mythology by Welcker, Ottfried Mueller, Buttmann, and others; though the master mind that is to discern and unfold the organic idea is still wanting.

Mythology however is not Religion. It may rather be regarded as the ancient substitute, the poetical counterpart, for dogmatic theology. In addition to this, we require to know what was the Religion of the ancients, what influence Religion exercised over their feelings, over their intellect, over their will, over their views of life, and their actions. This too must be a historical work, distinguishing what belongs to different ages, giving us fragmentary representations where nothing more is discoverable, and carefully eschewing the attempt to complete and restore the fragments of one age by pieces belonging to another. Here also we shall find progressive stages, faith, superstition, scepticism, secret and open unbelief, which slid or rolled back into new forms of arbitrary superstition.

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U.

Many learned men, Grotius, for instance, and Wetstein, have taken pains to illustrate the New Testament by quoting all the passages they could collect from the writers of classical antiquity, expressing sentiments in any way analogous to the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel. This some persons regard as a disparagement to the honour of the Gospel, which they would fain suppose to have come down all at once from heaven, like a meteoric stone from a volcano in the moon, consisting of elements wholly different from anything found upon earth. But surely it is no disparagement to the wisdom of God, or to the dignity of Reason, that the development of Reason should be preceded by corresponding instincts, and that something analogous to it should be found even in inferior animals. It is no disparagement to the sun, that he should be preceded by the dawn. On the contrary this is his glory, as it was also that of



the Messiah, that, in the words with which Milton describes His approach to battle, "far off His coming shone." If there had been no instincts in man leading him to Christianity, no yearnings and cravings, no stings of conscience and aspirations, for it to quiet and satisfy, it would have been no religion for man. Therefore, instead of shrinking from the notion that anything at all similar to any of the doctrines of Christianity may be found in heathen forms of religion, let us seek out all such resemblances diligently, giving thanks to God that He has never left Himself wholly without a witness. When we have found them all, they will only be single rays darting up here and there, forerunners of the sunrise. Subtract the whole amount of them from the Gospel, and quite enough will remain to bless God for, even the whole Gospel. u.

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Everybody knows and loves the beautiful story of the dog Argus, who just lives through the term of his master's absence, and sees him return to his home, and recognizes him, and rejoicing in the sight dies. Beautiful too as the story is in itself, it has a still deeper allegorical interest. For how many Arguses have there been, how many will there be hereafter, the course of whose years has been so ordered, that they will have just lived to see their Lord come and take possession of His home, and in their joy at the blissful sight have departed! How many such spirits, like Simeon's, will swell the praises of Him who spared them that He might save them.

When watching by a deathbed, I have heard the cock crow as a signal for the spirit to take its flight from this world. This, I believe, is a common hour for such a journey. It is a comfortable thought, to regard the sufferer as having past through the night, and lived to see the dawn of an eternal day. Perhaps some thought of this kind flitted through the mind of Socrates, when he directed his sacrifice to Esculapius. Mr. Evans has thought fit, in his life of Justin Martyr, when comparing the end of Justin with that of Socrates, to rebuke the latter as "a mere moralist," who "exhibited in his last words a trait of gross heathen superstition." Surely this is



neither wise nor just. It was not owing to any fault in Socrates, that he was not a Christian, that he was "a mere moralist." On the contrary, it is a glorious thing that he should have been a moralist, and such a moralist, amid the darkness of Heathenism; and his glory is increast by his having recognized the duty of retaining a positive worship, while he saw its abuses, by his having been a philosopher, and yet not an unbeliever. I never could understand how it is necessary for the exaltation of Christianity to depreciate Socrates, any more than how it is requisite for the exaltation of the Creator to revile all the works of His Creation.

U.

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The Rabbis tell, that, when Moses was about to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, he remembered the promise made to Joseph, that his bones should be carried with them, and buried in the Land of Promise. But not knowing how to make out which were the real bones of Joseph, among the many laid in the same sepulchre, he stood at the entrance of the sepulchre, and cried, *Bones of Joseph, come forth!* Whereupon the bones rose up and came toward him. With thankful rejoicing he gathered them together, and bore them away to the tents of Israel.

Strange as this fable may seem, it is the likeness of a stranger reality, which we may see in ourselves and in others. For when our spirits, being awakened to the sense of their misery and slavery, are roused by the voice of some great Deliverer to go forth into the land of freedom and hope, do we not often turn back to the sepulchres in the house of our bondage, in which from time to time we have laid up such parts of ourselves as seemed to belong to a former stage of being, expecting to find them living, and able to answer the voice which calls them to go forth with us? It is only by repeated disappointments, that we are taught no longer to seek the living among the dead, but to proceed on our pilgrimage, bearing the tokens of mortality along with us, in the assurance that, if we do bear them patiently and faithfully, until we come to the Land of Life, we may then deposit them in their true home, as precious



seeds of immortality, which though sown in corruption and dishonour and weakness, will be raised in incorruption and glory and power.

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When will the earth again hear the glad announcement, that *the people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make* (Exod. xxxvi. 5)? Yet, until we bring more than enough, at least until we are kindled by a spirit which will make us desire to do so, we shall never bring enough. And ought we not? Your economists will say *No*. They, who would think the sun a useful creature, if he would come down from the sky and light their fires, will gravely reprehend such wasteful extravagance. At the same time no doubt they will continually be guilty of far greater and more wasteful.

Among the numberless marvels, at which nobody marvels, few are more marvellous than the recklessness with which priceless gifts, intellectual and moral, are squandered and thrown away. Often have I gazed with wonder at the prodigality displayed by Nature in the cistus, which unfolds hundreds or thousands of its white starry blossoms morning after morning, to shine in the light of the sun for an hour or two, and then fall to the ground. But who, among the sons and daughters of men, — gifted with thoughts “which wander through eternity,” and with powers which have the godlike privilege of working good, and giving happiness, — who does not daily let thousands of these thoughts drop to the ground and rot? who does not continually leave his powers to draggle in the mould of their own leaves? The imagination can hardly conceive the heights of greatness and glory to which mankind would be raised, if all their thoughts and energies were to be animated with a living purpose, — or even those of a single people, or of the educated among a single people. But as in a forest of oaks, among the millions of acorns that fall every autumn, there may perhaps be one in a million that will grow up into a tree, somewhat in like manner fares it with the thoughts and feelings of man.



What then must be our confusion, when we see all these wasted thoughts and feelings rise up in the Judgement, and bear witness against us!

But how are we to know whether they are wasted or not?

We have a simple, infallible test. Those which are laid up in heaven, those which are laid up in any heavenly work, those whereby we in any way carry on the work of God upon earth, are not wasted. Those which are laid up on earth, in any mere earthly work, in carrying out our own ends, or the ends of the Spirit of Evil, are heirs of death from the first, and can only rise out of it for a moment, to sink back into it for ever.

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U.

People seem to think that love toward God must be something totally different in kind from the love which we feel toward our fellow-creatures, nay, as though it might exist without any feeling at all. If we believed that it ought to be the same feeling, which is excited by a living friend upon earth, higher and purer, but not less real or warm, and if we tried our hearts, to see whether it is in us, by the same tests, there would be less self-deception on this point; and we should more easily be convinced that we must be wholly destitute of that, of which we can show no lively token.

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a.

The difference between heathen virtue and Christian goodness is the difference between oars and sails, or rather between gallies and ships.

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God never does things by halves. He never leaves any work unfinished: they are all wholes from the first. There are no demigods in Scripture. What is God is perfect God. What is man is mere man.

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The power of Faith will often shine forth the most, where the character is naturally weak. There is less to intercept and interfere with its workings.

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In the outward course of events we are often ready to see the hand of God in great things, but refuse to own it in small. In like manner it often happens that even they, who in heavy trials look wholly to God for strength and support, will in lesser matters trust to themselves. This is the source of the weakness and inconsistency betrayed by many, who yet on great occasions will act rightly.

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a.

A blind man lets himself be led by a child. So must we be brought to feel, and to acknowledge to ourselves, that we are blind; and then the time may come when a little Child shall lead us.

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u.

Love, it has been said, descends more abundantly than it ascends. The love of parents for their children has always been far more powerful than that of children for their parents: and who among the sons of men ever loved God with a thousandth part of the love which God has manifested to us?

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A.

By giving the glory of good actions to man, instead of to God, we weaken the power of example. If such or such a grace be the growth of such or such a character, our character, which is different, may be quite unable to attain to it. But if it be God's work in the soul, then on us too may He vouchsafe to bestow the same gift as on our neighbour.

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a.

In darkness there is no choice. It is light, that enables us to see the differences between things: and it is Christ, that gives us light.

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What is snow? Is it that the angels are shedding their feathers on the earth? Or is the sky showering its blossoms on the grave of the departed year? In it we see that, if the Earth is to be arrayed in this vesture of purity, her raiment must descend on her from above. Alas too! we see in it, how soon that pure garment becomes spotted and sullied, how soon



it mostly passes away. There is something in it singularly appropriate to the season of our Lord's Nativity, as Milton has so finely urged in his Hymn.

Nature in awe to Him  
 Had doft her gaudy trim,  
 With her great Master so to sympathize.  
 Only with speeches fair  
 She woos the gentle air  
 To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,  
 And on her naked shame,  
 Pollute with sinful blame,  
 The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;  
 Confounded that her Maker's eyes  
 Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

For this, as well as for other reasons, it was happy that the Nativity was placed in December. U.

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*Written at Cambridge, January 15th, 1817.*

Mighty Magician, Nature! I have heard  
 Of rapid transformations,—in my dreams  
 Seen how with births the mind at freedom teems,—  
 Seen how the trees their gallant vestments gird  
 In Spring's all-pregnant hour. But thou excellest  
 All fabled witchery, all the mind's quick brood;  
 Even thyself thou dost surpass. What mood  
 Of wanton power is this, in which thou wellest  
 From thy impenetrable source, to pour  
 A flood of milk-white splendour o'er the earth!  
 Shedding such tranquil joy on Winter hoar,  
 More pure than jocund Spring's exulting mirth,—  
 A joy like that sweet calmness, which is sent  
 To soothe the parting hour, where life is innocent.

Yes, lovely art thou, Nature, as the death  
 Of righteous spirits. Yesternight I sate,  
 And gazed, and all the scene was desolate.  
 I wake, and all is changed,—as though the breath  
 Of sleep had borne me to another world,  
 The abode of innocence. Still a few flakes  
 Drop, soft as falling stars. The sun now makes  
 The dazzling snow more dazzling. Flowers up-curl'd  
 In sleep thus swiftly scarce their bloom unfold,  
 As these wide plains, so lately blank, disclose  
 Their lillied face. The nun, whose streaming hair



Is shorn, arrayed in spotless white behold:  
And Earth, when shorn of all her verdure, glows,  
In her bright veil, more saintly and more fair.

An hour have I been standing, and have gazed  
On this pure field of snow, smooth as a lake,  
When every wind is husht; and no thought brake  
The trance of pleasure which the vision raised.  
Or, if a thought intruded, 't was desire  
To lean my fevered cheek upon that breast  
Of virgin softness, and to taste the rest  
Its beauty seemed to promise. But the fire  
Would not more surely mock my erring grasp.  
No faith is found, no permanence, in form  
Of loveliness, not e'en in woman's. Love  
Must stand on some more stable base, must clasp  
Round objects more enduring, life more warm:  
His only food the soul, his only home above.

And now another thought intrudes to mar  
The quiet of my musings, like a sound  
Of thunder groaning through Night's still profound,  
And lures me to wage reckless, impious war  
Against the beauty of that silver main, —  
To violate it with my feet, to tread  
O'er all its charms, to stain its spotless bed, —  
As some lewd wretch would a fair virgin stain.  
Whence this wild, wayward fantasy? My soul  
Would shrink with horror from such deed of shame.  
Yet oft, amid our passions restless roll,  
We love with wrong to dally without aim.\*  
Alas! too soon the angel visitant  
In Nature's course will leave our earthly haunt.

U.

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*January 17th, 1817.*

I said, our angel visitant would flee  
Too soon, unknowing with what truth I spoke.  
For he is gone, already gone, like smoke  
Of mists dissolving o'er the morning lea.  
The faint star melts in daylight's dawning beam;  
The thin cloud fades in ether's crystal sea;  
Thoughts, feelings, words, spring forth, and cease to be:  
And thou hast also vanisht, like a dream  
Of Childhood come to cheer Earth's hoary age,  
As though the aged Earth herself had dreamt, —  
Viewless as hopes, fleeting as joys of youth;

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\* "To dally with wrong that does no harm." Coleridge, *Christabel*.



And, bright as was thine air-born equipage,  
It only served fallaciously to tempt  
With visionary bliss, and bore no heart of truth.

How like to Joy in everything thou art!  
Who camest to smile upon our wintry way,  
Like in thy brightness, like in thy decay,  
A moment radiant to delude the heart.  
And what of thee remains? Nought, — save the tear  
In which thou diest away; — save that the field  
Has now relaxt its bosom late congealed,  
As frozen hearts will in some short career  
Of gladness open, looking for the spring,  
And find it not, and sink back into ice; —  
Save that the brooks rush turbidly along,  
Flooding their banks: thus, after reveling  
In some brief rapturous dream of Paradise,  
In passionate recoil our roused affections throng.

U.

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The French rivers partake of the national character. Many of them look broad, grand and imposing; but they have no depth. And the greatest river in the country, the Rhone, loses half its usefulness from the impetuosity of its current.

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True goodness is like the glowworm in this, that it shines most when no eyes, except those of heaven, are upon it. U.

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He who does evil that good may come, pays a toll to the devil to let him into heaven.

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Many Italian girls are said to profane the black veil by taking it against their will; and so do many English girls profane the white one.

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The bulk of men, in choosing a wife, look out for a *Fornarina*: a few in youth dream about finding a *Belle Jardinière*.

U.

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We are so much the creatures of habit, that no great and sudden change can at first be altogether agreeable . . . unless it be here and there a honeymoon.

A.



Our appetites were given to us to preserve and to propagate life. We abuse them for its destruction. A.

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The mind is like a sheet of white paper in this, that the impressions it receives the oftenest, and retains the longest, are black ones.

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None but a fool is always right; and his right is the most unreasonable wrong.

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The difference between a speech and an essay should be something like that between a field of battle and a parade. U.

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What do our clergy lose by reading their sermons? They lose preaching, the preaching of the voice in many cases, the preaching of the eye almost always.

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Histories used often to be stories. The fashion now is to leave out the story. Our histories are stall-fed: the facts are absorbed by the reflexions, as the meat sometimes is by the fat. U.

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*C'est affreux comme il est pâle! il devoit mettre un peu de rouge:* cried a woman out of the crowd, as the First Consul rode by at a review in 1802. She thought a general ought to shew a little blood in his cheeks. One might say the same of sundry modern philosophical treatises. U.

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Some persons give one the notion of an abyss of shallowness. These terms may seem contradictory; but, like so many other contradictions, they have met and shaken hands in human nature. All such a man's thoughts, all his feelings, are superficial; yet, try him where you will, you cannot get to a firm footing. U.

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A historian needs a peculiar discernment for that which is important and essential and generative in human affairs. This



is one of the main elements of the historical genius, as it is of the statesmanly. U.

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A statesman should have ears to hear the distant rustling of the wings of Time. Most people only catch sight of it, when it is flying away. When it is overhead, it darkens their view. U.

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*La France, c'est moi*, disoit Louis XIV. Mais son ambition n'étoit que mediocre : car, *le monde, c'est moi*, dit tout le monde. U.

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An epicure is said to have complained of a haunch of venison, as being too much for one, yet not enough for two. Bonaparte thought the same of the world. What a great man he must have been then ! To be sure : ambition is just as valid a proof of a strong and sound mind, as gormandising is of a strong and sound body. U.

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The memory ought to be a store-room. Many turn theirs rather into a lumber-room. Nay, even stores grow mouldy and spoil, unless aired and used betimes ; and then they too become lumber. U.

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At Havre I saw some faces from the country, which reminded me of our old monuments, and shewed me what the beauties must have been, that inspired the chivalry of our Henries and Edwards. They were long, almost to a fault, regular, tranquil, unobservant, with the clearest, freshest bloom. At Rouen these faces are no longer met with ; and one finds oneself quite in France, the only country in civilized Europe where beauty is of the composite order, made up of prettiness, liveliness, sparkling eyes, artificial flowers, and a shawl,—the only region between Lapland and Morocco, where youth is without bloom, and age without dignity.

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Expression is action ; beauty is repose.

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People say, St. Peter's looks larger every time they see it. It does more. It seems to grow larger, while the eye is fixt on it, even from the very door, and then expands, as you go forward, almost like our idea of God.

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*Hic Rhodus ; hic salta.* Do not wait for a change of outward circumstances ; but take your circumstances as they are, and make the best of them. This saying, which was meant to shame a braggart, will admit of a very different and profounder application. Goethe has changed the postulate of Archimedes, *Give me a standing-place, and I will move the world*, into the precept, *Make good thy standing-place, and move the world*. This is what he did throughout his life. So too was it that Luther moved the world, not by waiting for a favorable opportunity, but by doing his daily work, by doing God's will day by day, without thinking of looking beyond. We ought not to linger in inaction until Blucher comes up, but, the moment we catch sight of him in the distance, to rise and charge. Hercules must go to Atlas, and take his load off his shoulders perforce. This too is the meaning of the maxims in Wilhelm Meister: *Here, or nowhere, is Herrnhut: Here, or nowhere, is America*. We are not to keep on looking out for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to believe firmly, and to acknowledge that it is come, and to live and act in that knowledge and assurance. Then will it indeed be come for us. U.

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The business of Philosophy is to circumnavigate human nature. Before we start, we are told that we shall find people who stand head-downwards, with their feet against ours. Very many won't believe this, and swear it must be all a hoax. Many take fright at the thought, and resolve to stay at home, where their peace will not be disturbed by such preposterous visions. Of those who set out, many stop half way, among the antipodes, and insist that standing head-downwards is the true posture of every reasonable being. It is only the favoured few, who are happy enough to complete the round, and to get home again ; where they find everything just as they left it, save that hence-



forward they see it in its relations to the world, of which it forms a part. This too is the proof that they have indeed completed the round, their getting back to their home, and not feeling strange, but at home in it. U.

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The common notion of the Ideal, as exemplified more especially in the Painting of the last century, degrades it into a mere abstraction. It was assumed that, to raise an object into an ideal, you must get rid of everything individual about it. Whereas the true ideal is the individual, purified and potentiated, the individual freed from everything that is not individual in it, with all its parts pervaded and animated and harmonized by the spirit of life which flows from the centre.

This blunder however ran cheek by jowl with another, much like a pair of mules dragging the mind of man to the palace of the Omnipotent Nonentity. For the purport of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, like that of its unacknowledged parent, and that of the numerous fry which sprang from it, was just the same, to maintain that we have no ideas, or, what amounts to the same thing, that our ideas are nothing more than abstractions, defecated by divers processes of the Understanding. Thus flame, for instance, is an abstraction from coal, a rose from a clod of earth, life from food, thought from sense, God from the world, which itself is only a prior abstraction from Chaos.

There is no hope of arriving at Truth, until we have learnt to acknowledge that the creatures of Space and Time are, as it were, so many chambers of the prisonhouse, in which the timeless, spaceless Ideas of the Eternal Mind are shut up, and that the utmost reach of Abstraction is, not to create, but to liberate, to give freedom and consciousness to that, which existed potentially and in embryo before. U.

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The word *encyclopedia*, which of late years has emerged from the study of the philosopher, and is trundled through every street and alley by such as go about teaching the rudiments of omniscience, is an example how language is often far wiser than the people who make use it. The framers of words,



as has been remarkt already (p. 228), seem not seldom to have been gifted with something like a spirit of divination, which enabled them to see more than they distinctly perceived, to anticipate more than they knew. The royal stamp however, which was legible when the word was first issued, is often rubbed off; and it is worn down until one hardly knows what it was meant to be. The word *encyclopedia* implies the unity and circularity of knowledge, — that it has one common central principle, which is at once constitutive and regulative: for there can be no circle without a centre; and it is by an act emanating from the centre, that the circle must be constructed. Moreover the name implies that in knowledge, as in being, there is not merely a progression, but a returning upon itself, that the alpha and omega coincide, and that the last and fullest truth must be the selfsame with the first germinal truth, that it must be, as it were, the full-grown oak which was latent in the acorn. Whereas our encyclopedias are neither circular, nor have they any centre. If they have the slightest claim to such a title, it can only be as round robins, all the sciences being tost together in them just as the whim of the alphabet has dictated. Indeed one might almost fancy that a new interpretation of the name had been devised, and that henceforward it was to mean, *all knowledge in a penny piece*.

U.

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Dugald Stewart, in trying, at the beginning of his *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, to account for the prejudice commonly entertained in England against metaphysical speculations, urges “the frivolous and absurd discussions which abound in the writings of most metaphysical authors,” as the justifying cause of this prejudice. Hereby, it appears shortly after, he especially means “the vain and unprofitable disquisitions of the Schoolmen.” No doubt too he would subsequently have rankt “the vain and unprofitable disquisitions” of Kant and his successors along with them. Here we find a singular phenomenon in the history of causation. A cause, which acts attractively in its own neighbourhood, is assumed to act repulsively at a distance, both in time and in space. The Scholastic Philosophy, which so



fascinated the thoughtful in its own age, the modern Philosophy of Germany, by which almost every intellect in that country has been more or less possessed and inspired, are the cause why we in England and in these days care so little about *the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. Conversely he may perhaps have consoled himself by arguing, that, as so few people in his days cared about *the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, multitudes, according to the law of compensation, will take the deepest interest in it hereafter; and that Reid's Philosophy is like a rocket, which has nothing very captivating while one holds it in one's hands, yet which will spread out into a stream of light, when it mounts to a distance. But O no! These very speculations, which are condemned as "vain and unprofitable," are the speculations which come home to men's hearts and bosoms, and stir and kindle them. When we are told that we are bundles of habits, that our minds are sheets of white paper, that our thoughts are the extract of our sensations, that our conscience is a mere ledger of profit and loss, we turn to the practical business of life, as furnishing nobler subjects to occupy our time with. When we are told of our immortal, heavenborn nature, of the eternal laws of Reason, of Imagination, of Conscience, we start out of our torpours; and our hearts respond to the voice which calls us to such contemplations. Surely the countrymen of Locke and Hume and Hartley and Reid and Priestley and Paley might have nearer reasons for disregarding metaphysics, than those found in the subtleties of Scotus and Aquinas, — of whom, be it remembered, they knew nothing. U.

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A similar habit of thought led the same writer to say, in his *Dissertation on the Progress of Philosophy*, prefixed to the *Supplement to the Encyclopedia Britannica* (p. 25): "In modern times this influence of names is, comparatively speaking, at an end. The object of a public teacher is no longer to inculcate a particular system of dogmas, but to prepare his pupils for exercising their own judgements, to exhibit to them an outline of the different sciences, and to suggest subjects for their future examination." Now what is the result of this change? That



the pupil's mind is mazed and bewildered in a labyrinth of outlines,—that he knows not whither to turn his steps, or where to fix,—that the “future examination” is postponed *sine die*,—and that he leaves the university knowing a little about everything, but knowing nothing. No good was ever effected by filling a student's mind with outlines. It is to sow the husk, instead of the kernel.

“It was in consequence (Mr. Stewart adds in a Note) of this mode of conducting education, by means of oral instruction alone, that the different sects of philosophy arose in ancient Greece.” One might have fancied that this instance would have sufficed to shew what a powerful influence may be exercised in this manner, by a teacher who knows how to act upon the minds and the affections of his hearers; wherefore the aim of a wise teacher should be to make the most of so useful an instrument, taking care to apply it to a right purpose. For what example does the history of literature present of a study flourishing as Philosophy did in Greece? In fact the worst thing about it was its over-luxuriance, which needed pruning and repressing. But no. The oracles of history, like all others, are two-edged. Let them speak as loudly and distinctly as they may, they are not to be understood, unless the hearer is willing to understand them. Where this will is wanting, a person may prefer the barrenness which has surrounded the Edinburgh metaphysical chair, to the rich, ever-teeming tropic landscape of Greek Philosophy.

Cherish and foster that spirit of love, which lies wakeful, seeking what it may feed on, in every genial young mind: supply it with wholesome food: place an object before it worthy of its embraces: else it will try to appease its cravings by lawless indulgence. What your system may be, is of minor importance: in every one, as Leibnitz says, there is a sufficiency of truth: the tree must have life in it; or it could not stand. But you should plant the tree in the open plain, before your pupil's eyes: do not leave him to find out his way amid the windings of a tangled forest: let him see it distinctly, by itself; and no matter to what highth it may rise, his sight will



overtop it; though, when it is surrounded by others, he cannot scan its dimensions. Plunge as deep as you will into the sea of knowledge; and do not fear his being unable or unwilling to follow you. The difficulty itself acts as a spur. For in this respect the mind is unlike a sword: it will be sharpened more effectively by a rugged rock, than by a whetstone. It springs up strongest and loftiest in craggy places, where it has had to commune and wage battle with the winds.

The cautious avoidance of difficult and doubtful points by a teacher in a university implies an ignorance of the susceptibility and subtilty of the youthful mind, whenever its feelings go along with its studies. He who is to win the race, must not stop short of the goal, or go wide of it, through fear of running against it: *meta fervidis evitata rotis*, — this will be his aim. Would Columbus have discovered America, if he had been merely trained to fair-weather, pleasure-boat sailing? Could Shakspeare have written Lear and Hamlet, if some Scotch metaphysician had “prepared him for exercising his own judgment,” by “exhibiting an outline of the different sciences to him, and suggesting subjects to his future examination”? Concrete is said to be the best foundation for a house; and it is by the observation of the concrete, that Nature trains the thinking powers of mankind. This her method then, we may be sure, will also be the most efficient with individuals.

Besides, this calling upon the young, at the very moment when they are first crossing the threshold of the temple of Knowledge, to sit in judgement on all the majestic forms that line the approach to its sanctuary, tends to pamper the vice, to which the young are especially prone, of an overweening, presumptuous vanity. Under judicious guidance they may be trained to love and reverence Truth, and all her highpriests: but more easily may they be led to despise the achievements of former times, and to set up their own age, and more especially themselves, as the highest objects of their worship. This too must needs be the result, when they are taught to give sentence on all the great men of old, to regard their own decision as supreme, and to pay homage solely to themselves. What





will, what must be the produce of such a system? Will they not be like the Moralists in Wordsworth's *Poet's Epitaph*? who

has neither eyes nor ears,  
Himself his world, and his own God:

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling  
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small,  
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,  
An intellectual all-in-all.

U.

A strong and vivid imagination is scarcely less valuable to a philosopher, than to a poet. For the philosopher also needs that the objects of his contemplation should stand in their living fulness before him. The first requisite for discerning the relations and differences of things is to see the things themselves clearly and distinctly. From a want of this clear, distinct perception, the bulk of those who busy themselves in the construction of philosophical systems, are apt to substitute abstractions for realities; and on these abstractions they build their card-houses by the aid of logical formulæ. No wonder that such houses are soon overthrown, nay, that they topple ere long through their own insubstantiality.

Nevertheless an imaginative philosopher has continual occasion for exercising a more than ordinary selfdistrust. Among the manifold aspects of things, there are always some which will appear to accord with his prepossessions. They will seem in his eyes, under the colouring of these prepossessions, to fit into his scheme, just as though it had been made for them. But whenever this is the case, we should be especially distrustful of appearances. For a *prima facie* view of things cannot be a scientifically or philosophically correct one. It will have more or less of subjective, relative truth, but can never be the truth itself, absolutely and objectively. Whatever our position may be, it cannot be the centre; and only from the centre can things be seen in their true bearings and relations. Yet, by an involuntary delusion, consequent upon our separation and estrangement from the real Centre of the Universe,—



the Centre that does not abide in any single point, but at every point finds a Universe encircling it,—we cannot help assuming that we ourselves are that centre, and that the sun and moon and stars are merely revolving around us. U.

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*Prudens inquisitio dimidium scientiae.* The first step to self-knowledge is self-distrust. Nor can we attain to any kind of knowledge, except by a like process. We must fall on our knees at the threshold; or we shall not gain entrance into the temple. U.

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They who are in the habit of passing sentence upon books,—and what ignoramus in our days does not deem himself fully qualified for sitting in the seat of the scorner?—are apt to think that they have condemned a work irretrievably, when they have pronounced it to be unintelligible. Unintelligible to whom? To themselves, the self-constituted judges. So that their sentence presumes their competency to pronounce it: and this, to every one save themselves, may be exceedingly questionable.

It is true, the very purpose for which a writer publishes his thoughts, is, that his readers should share them with him. Hence the primary requisite of a style is its intelligibleness: that is to say, it must be capable of being understood. But intelligibleness is a relative quality, varying with the capacity of the reader. The easiest book in a language is inaccessible to those who have never set foot within the pale of that language. The simplest elementary treatise in any science is obscure and perplexing, until we become familiar with the terminology of that science. Thus every writer is entitled to demand a certain amount of knowledge in those for whom he writes, and a certain degree of dexterity in using the implements of thought. In this respect too there should not only be milk for babes, but also strong meat for those who are of full age. It is absurd to lay down a rule, that every man's thoughts should move at the selfsame pace, the measure of which we naturally take from our own. Indeed, if it fatigues us to keep



up with one who walks faster, and steps out more widely than we are wont to do, there may also be an excess on the other side, which is more intolerably wearisome.

Of course a writer, who desires to be popular, will not put on seven-league boots, with which he would soon escape out of sight. Yet the highest authority has told us, that "the poet's eye Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," taking the rapidity of vision as a type for that of the Imagination, which surely ought not to lag behind the fleetest of the senses. In logical processes indeed transitions are less sudden. If you wish to bind people with a chain of reasoning, you must not skip over too many of the links; or they may fail to perceive its cogency. Still it is wholesome and bracing for the mind, to have its faculties kept on the stretch. It is like the effect of a walk in Switzerland upon the body. Reading an Essay of Bacon's for instance, or a chapter of Aristotle or of Butler, if it be well and thoughtfully read, is much like climbing up a hill, and may do one the same sort of good. Set the tortoise to run against the hare; and, even if he does not overtake it, he will do more than he ever did previously, more than he would ever have thought himself capable of doing. Set the hare to run with the tortoise: he falls asleep.

Suppose a person to have studied Xenophon and Thucydides, till he has attained to the same thorough comprehension of them both; and this is so far from being an unwarrantable supposition, that the very difficulties of Thucydides tempt and stimulate an intelligent reader to form a more intimate acquaintance with him: which of the two will have strengthened the student's mind the most? from which will he have derived the richest and most lasting treasures of thought? Who, that has made friends with Dante, has not had his intellect nerved and expanded by following the pilgrim through his triple world? and would Tasso have done as much for him? The labour itself, which must be spent in order to understand Sophocles or Shakspeare, to search out their hidden beauties, to trace their labyrinthine movements, to dive into their bright, jeweled caverns, and converse with the sea-nymphs that dwell there, is its own abundant



reward ; not merely from the enjoyment that accompanies it, but because such pleasure, indeed all pleasure that is congenial to our better nature, is refreshing and invigorating, like a draught of nectar from heaven. In such studies we imitate the example of the eagle, unsealing his eyesight by gazing at the sun.

South, in his sixth Sermon, after speaking of the difficulties which we have to encounter in the search after truth, urges the beneficial effect of those difficulties. "Truth (he says) is a great stronghold, barred and fortified by God and Nature ; and diligence is properly the Understanding's laying siege to it ; so that, as in a kind of warfare, it must be perpetually upon the watch, observing all the avenues and passes to it, and accordingly makes its approaches. Sometimes it thinks it gains a point ; and presently again it finds itself baffled and beaten off : yet still it renews the onset, attacks the difficulty afresh, plants this reasoning, and that argument, this consequence, and that distinction, like so many intellectual batteries, till at length it forces a way and passage into the obstinate enclosed truth, that so long withstood and defied all its assaults. The Jesuits have a saying common amongst them, touching the institution of youth, (in which their chief strength and talent lies,) that *Vexatio dat intellectum*. As when the mind casts and turns itself restlessly from one thing to another, strains this power of the soul to apprehend, that to judge, another to divide, a fourth to remember, — thus tracing out the nice and scarce observable difference of some things, and the real agreement of others, till at length it brings all the ends of a long and various hypothesis together, sees how one part coheres with and depends upon another, and so clears off all the appearing contrarieties and contradictions, that seemed to lie cross and uncouth, and to make the whole unintelligible, — this is the laborious and vexatious inquest, that the soul must make after science. For Truth, like a stately dame, will not be seen, nor shew herself at the first visit, nor match with the understanding upon an ordinary courtship or address. Long and tedious attendances must be given, and the hardest fatigues endured and digested : nor did ever



the most pregnant wit in the world bring forth anything great, lasting, and considerable, without some pain and travail, some pangs and throes before the delivery. Now all this that I have said is to shew the force of diligence in the investigation of truth, and particularly of the noblest of all truths, which is that of religion."

For my own part, I have ever gained the most profit, and the most pleasure also, from the books which have made me think the most: and, when the difficulties have once been overcome, these are the books which have struck the deepest root, not only in my memory and understanding, but likewise in my affections. For this point too should be taken into account. We are wont to think slightly of that, which it costs us a slight effort to win. When a maiden is too forward, her admirer deems it time to draw back. Whereas whatever has associated itself with the arousal and activity of our better nature, with the important and memorable epochs in our lives, whether moral or intellectual, is, — to cull a sprig from the beautiful passage in which Wordsworth describes the growth of Michael's love for his native hills, —

Our living being, even more  
Than our own blood, and, — could it less? — retains  
Strong hold on our affections, is to us  
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,  
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

If you would fertilize the mind, the plough must be driven over and through it. The gliding of wheels is easier and rapider, but only makes it harder and more barren. Above all, in the present age of light reading, that is, of reading hastily, thoughtlessly, indiscriminately, unfruitfully, when most books are forgotten as soon as they are finished, and very many sooner, it is well if something heavier is cast now and then into the midst of the literary public. This may scare and repel the weak: it will rouse and attract the stronger, and increase their strength by making them exert it. In the sweat of the brow is the mind as well as the body to eat its bread. *Nil sine magno Musa labore dedit mortalibus.*

Are writers then to be studiously difficult, and to tie knots for



the mere purpose of compelling their readers to untie them? Not so. Let them follow the bent of their own minds. Let their style be the faithful mirror of their thoughts. Some minds are too rapid and vehement and redundant to flow along in lucid transparence; some have to break over rocks, and to force a way through obstacles, which would have dammed them in. Tacitus could not write like Cesar. Niebuhr could not write like Goldsmith.

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U.

Train the understanding. Take care that the mind has a stout and straight stem. Leave the flowers of wit and fancy to come of themselves. Sticking them on will not make them grow. You can only engraft them, by grafting that which will produce them.

Another rule of good gardening may also be applied with advantage to the mind. Thin your fruit in spring, that the tree may not be exhausted, and that some of it may come to perfection.

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U.

There are some fine passages, I am told, in that book.

Are there? Then beware of them. Fine passages are mostly *culs de sacs*. For in books also does one see

Rich windows that exclude the light,  
And passages that lead to nothing.

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U.

A writer is the only person who can give more than he has. It may be doubted however whether such gifts are not mostly in bad money.

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U.

Fields of thought seem to need lying fallow. After some powerful mind has brought a new one into cultivation, the same seed is sown in it over and over again, until the crop degenerates, and the land is worn out. Hereupon it is left alone, and gains time to recruit, before a subsequent generation is led, by the exhaustion of the country round, to till it afresh.

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U.

The ultimate tendency of civilization is toward barbarism.

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The question is not whether a doctrine is beautiful, but whether it is true. When we want to go to a place, we don't ask whether the road leads through a pretty country, but whether it is the right road, the road pointed out by authority, the turnpike-road.

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How poorly must he have profited by the study of Plato, who said, *Malo cum Platone errare, quam cum istis vera sentire!* A maxim of this kind may indeed serve for those who are not ordained to the ministry of Truth. The great bulk of mankind must in all things take much for granted, as everybody must in many things. They whose calling is to act, need to have certain guiding principles of faith to look up to, fixt like stars high above the changeful, and often storm-rent atmosphere of their cares and doubts and passions, principles which they may hold to be eternal, from their fixedness, and from their light. The philosopher too himself must perforce take many things for granted, seeing that the capacities of human knowledge are so limited. Only his assumptions will be in lower and commoner matters, with regard to which he will have to receive much on trust. For his thoughts dwell among principles. He mounts, like the astronomer, into the region of the stars themselves, and measures their magnitudes and their distances, and calculates their orbits, and distinguishes the fixt from the erring, the solar sources of light from the satellites which fill their urns from these everlasting fountains, and distinguishes those also, which dutifully preserve their regular, beatific courses, from the vagrant emissaries of destruction. He must have an entire, implicit faith in the illimitable beneficence, that is, in the divinity of Truth. He must devoutly believe that God is Truth, and that Truth therefore must ever be one with God.

Cicero, I am aware, ascribes that speech (*Tusc. Quaest. i. 17*) to the young man whom he is instructing; a circumstance overlookt by those who have tried to confirm themselves in their faintheartedness, by pleading his authority for believing that a falsehood may be better than Truth. But he immediately applauds his pupil, and makes the sentiment his own:



*Macte virtute: ego enim ipse cum eodem illo non invitus erraverim.* It is plain from this sentence, the evidence of which might be strengthened by a number of others, that what Cicero admired so much in Plato, was not his philosophy. On the contrary, as he himself often forgot the thinker in the talker, so, his eye for words having been sharpened by continual practice, he was apt to look in others also at the make of the garments, their thoughts were arrayed in, rather than at the countenance or the body of the thoughts themselves. He had told us himself a little before: *Hanc perfectam philosophiam semper judicavi, quae de maximis quaestionibus copiose posset ornateque dicere.* Thus what he valued most in Plato, was his eloquence; the true unequaled worth of which however is its perfect fitness for exhibiting the thoughts it contains, or, so to say, its transparency. For, while in most other writers the thoughts are only seen dimly, as in water, where the medium itself is visible, and more or less distorts or obscures them, being often turbid, often coloured, and often having no little mud in it, in Plato one almost looks through the language, as through air, discerning the exact form of the objects which stand therein, and every part and shade of which is brought out by the sunny light resting upon them. Indeed, when reading Plato, we hardly think about the beauty of his style, or notice it except for its clearness: but, as our having felt the sensations of sickness makes us feel and enjoy the sensations of health, so does the acquaintance we are forced to contract with all manner of denser and murkier writers, render us vividly sensible of the bright daylight of Plato. Cicero however might almost have extracted *the Beauties of Plato*, as somebody has extracted *the Beauties of Shakspeare*; which give as good a notion of his unspeakable, exuberant beauty, as a *pot pourri* gives of a flower-garden, or as a lump of teeth would give of a beautiful mouth.

As to Plato's pure, impartial, searching philosophy, Cicero was too full of prejudices to sympathize with it. Philosophy was not the bread of life to him, but a medicinal cordial in his afflictions. He loved it, not for itself, but for certain results



which he desired and hoped to gain from it. In philosophy he was never more than an Eclectic, that is, in point of fact, no philosopher at all. For the very essence of the philosophical mind lies in this, that it is constrained by an irresistible impulse to ascend to primary, necessary principles, and cannot halt until it reaches the living, streaming sources of Truth; whereas the Eclectic will stop short where he likes, at any maxim to which he chooses to ascribe the authority of a principle. The philosophical mind must be systematic, ever seeking to behold all things in their connexion, as parts or members of a great organic whole, and impregnating them all with the electric spirit of order; while the Eclectic is content if he can string together a number of generalizations. A Philosopher incorporates and animates; an Eclectic heaps and ties up. The Philosopher combines multiplicity into unity; the Eclectic leaves unity straggling about in multiplicity. The former opens the arteries of Truth, the latter its veins. Cicero's legal habits peer out from under his philosophical cloak, in his constant appeal to precedent, his ready deference to authority. For in law, as in other things, the practitioner does not go beyond maxims, that is, secondary or tertiary principles, taking his stand upon the mounds which his predecessors have erected.

Cicero was indeed led by his admiration of Plato to adopt the form of the dialogue for his own treatises, of all forms the best fitted for setting forth philosophical truths in their free expansion and intercommunion, as well as in their distinctness and precision, without chaining up Truth, and making her run round and round in the mill of a partial and narrow system. But he has nothing of the dialectic spirit. His collocutors do not wrestle with one another, as they did in the intellectual gymnasia of the Greeks. After some preliminary remarks, and the interchange of a few compliments characterized by that urbanity in which no man surpasses him, he throws off the constraint of logical analysis; and his speakers sit down by turns in the portico, and deliver their didactic harangues, just as in a bad play the personages tell you their story at length, and of course each to his own advantage. You must not inter-



rupt them with a question for the world; you would be sure to put them out.

But if the love of Plato is a worthless ground for preferring error to truth, still more reprehensible is it to go wrong out of hatred or contempt for any one, be he who he may. Could the Father of lies speak truth, it would be our duty to believe him when he did so.

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U.

In the preface to Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, there is a sentence, which at first thought may remind us of Cicero's saying about Plato, and may seem analogous to it, but which, when more closely examined, we perceive to be its diametrical opposite. That unhappy enthusiast, who, through a calamitous combination of circumstances, galling and fretting a morbidly sensitive temperament, became a fanatical hater of the perversions and distortions conjured up by his own feverish imagination, there says: "For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to heaven with Paley and Malthus." Here however, if we look away from the profaneness of the expressions, the meaning is grand and noble. Such is the author's faith in truth and goodness, and his love for them, he would rather incur everlasting misery by cleaving to them, than enjoy everlasting happiness, if it could only be won by sacrificing his reason and conscience to falsehood and coldhearted worldliness. Thus this sentence at bottom is only tantamount to that most magnanimous saying of antiquity, *Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum*: which does not mean, that the fulfilment of Justice would be the knell of the Universe, but that, even though this were to be the consequence, even though the world were to go to rack, Justice must and ought to be fulfilled. The mind which had not been taught how Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace were to meet together and to be reconciled for ever in the Divine Atonement, could not mount to a sublimer anticipation of the blessed declaration, that Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but the word of God shall not pass away.

At the same time Shelley's words exhibit the miserable delusion he was under, and shew how what he hated, under the



name of Christianity, was not Christianity itself, but rather a medley of antichristian notions, which he blindly identified with it, from finding them associated with it in vulgar opinion. U.

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The name Eclectic is often misused nowadays, by being applied to such as will not surrender their reason and conscience to the yoke of a dogmatical system, anathematizing everything beyond its pale, — to those who, recognizing the infinite fulness and plastic life of Truth, delight to trace it out under all manifestations, and to acknowledge that, amid the numberless errors and perversions and exaggerations with which it has been mixt up, it has still been the one source of a living power in every mode of human opinion. Thus I have seen the name assigned to Neander, and to other writers no less alien from the Eclectic spirit. This however is mere ignorance and confusion.

The Eclectic is a person who picks out certain propositions, such as strike his fancy or his moral sense, and seem edifying or useful, from divers systems of philosophy, and strings or patches them together, without troubling himself much about their organic unity or coherence. When the true philosophical spirit, which everywhere seeks after unity, under the conviction that the universe must reflect the oneness of the contemplating as well as of the Creative Mind, was waning away, dilettanti philosophers, who were fond of dabbling in the records of prior speculations, arose both among the Greeks and at Rome: and of these, Diogenes Laertius tells us (i. § 21), Potamo of Alexandria introduced *ἐκλεκτικὴν αἵρεσιν, ἐκλεξάμενος τὰ ἀρέσαντα ἐξ ἑκάστης τῶν αἱρέσεων*. That is to say, he may have been the first to assume the name; but the spirit which led him to do so was already wisely diffused. Indeed little else in the way of philosophy gained much favour, from his days, at the beginning of the Roman empire, down to the first coming forward of the Schoolmen.

This procedure may best be illustrated by the wellknown story of Zeuxis, who took the most beautiful features and members of several beautiful women to make a more beautiful one than any in his Helen. In fact this story is related by



Cicero at the beginning of the second Book of his work *De Inventione*, with the view of justifying his own design of writing a treatise, in which, he says, "Non unum aliquod proposuimus exemplum, cujus omnes partes, quocumque essent in genere, exprimendae nobis necessario viderentur; sed, omnibus unum in locum coactis scriptoribus, quod quisque commodissime praecepere videbatur, excerpimus, et ex variis ingeniis excellentissima quaeque libavimus." He adds that, if his skill were equal to that of the painter, his work ought to be still better, inasmuch as he had a larger stock of models to choose from: "Ille una ex urbe, et ex eo numero virginum, quae tum erant, eligere potuit: nobis omnium, quicumque fuerunt, ab ultimo principio hujus praeceptionis usque ad hoc tempus, expositis copiis, quodcumque placeret eligendi potestas fuit." That such a process, though the genius of Zeuxis may have corrected its evil, is not the right one for the production of a great work of art, — that a statue or picture ought not to be a piece of patchwork, or a posy of multifarious beauties, — that it must spring from an idea in the mind of the artist, as is express by Raphael in the passage quoted above (p. 273), will now be generally acknowledged by the intelligent; though it continually happens that clever young men, such as Cicero then was, fancy they shall dazzle the sun, by bringing together a lamp from this quarter and that, with a dozen candles from others. Cicero himself, in his later writings on the same subject, followed a wiser course, and drew from the rich stores of his own experience and knowledge. But how congenial the other practice was to the age, is proved by Dionysius, who sets up the same story of Zeuxis, in the introduction to his *Judgement on Ancient Writers*, as an example it behoves us to follow, καὶ τῆς ἐκείνων ψυχῆς ἀπανθίζεσθαι τὸ κρεῖττον.

On the other hand they who are gifted with a true philosophical spirit, who feel the weight of the mystery of the universe, on whom it presses like a burthen, and will not let them rest, who are constrained by an inward necessity to solve the problems it presents to their age, will naturally have much sympathy with those in former ages who have been impelled



by the same necessity to attempt the solution of similar problems. They will, or at all events ought to regard them as fellow-workers, as brothers. The problems which occupied former ages, were only different phases of the same great problem, by which they themselves are spell-bound. Whatever there was of truth in the solutions devised of yore, must still retain its character of truth, though it will have become partial, and can no longer be regarded as absolute. As in Science the later, more perfect systems incorporate all the truths ascertained by previous discoveries, nay, take these truths as the materials for further researches, so must it also be, under certain modifications, in Philosophy. Hence to call a philosopher an Eclectic on this account is a mere misapprehension of the name, and of the laws which govern the development of the human mind. It is just as absurd, as it would be to call Laplace and Herschel Eclectics, because their speculations recognize and incorporate the results of the discoveries of Newton and Kepler and Galileo and Copernicus, nay, of Hipparchus and Ptolemy, so far as there was truth in them.

On this topic there is a remarkable passage in the 12th Chapter of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, where the author says that the doctrines of Leibnitz, "as hitherto interpreted, have not produced the effect, which Leibnitz himself, in a most instructive passage, describes as the criterion of a true philosophy, namely, that it would at once explain and collect the fragments of truth scattered through systems apparently the most incongruous. The truth, says he, is diffused more widely than is commonly believed; but it is often painted, yet oftener maskt, and is sometimes mutilated, and sometimes, alas, in close alliance with mischievous errors. The deeper however we penetrate into the ground of things, the more truth we discover in the doctrines of the greater number of the philosophical sects. The want of substantial reality in the objects of the senses, according to the Sceptics,—the harmonies or numbers, the prototypes and ideas, to which the Pythagoreans and Platonists reduced all things,—the ONE and ALL of Parmenides and Plotinus, without Spinozism,—the necessary



connexion of things according to the Stoics, reconcilable with the spontaneity of the other schools, — the vital philosophy of the Cabbalists and Hermetists, who assumed the universality of sensation, — the substantial forms and entelechies of Aristotle and the Schoolmen, — together with the mechanical solution of all particular phenomena according to Democritus and the recent philosophers, — all these we shall find united in one perspective central point, which shews regularity and a coincidence of all the parts in the very object, which from every other point of view must appear confused and distorted. The spirit of sectarianism has been hitherto our fault, and the cause of our failures. We have imprisoned our own conceptions by the lines which we have drawn in order to exclude the conceptions of others.”

The observations of Leibnitz here referred to are so interesting, — both as an expression of his own genius, which was always seeking after harmony and unity, and as the anticipation of a truth which was to come out more distinctly in the subsequent expansion of philosophy, but which had to lie dormant for nearly a century after he uttered it, and which even now is recognized by few beyond the limits of the country where it was uttered, — that I will quote what he says on the subject. It occurs in his first letter to Remond de Montmort, written in 1714, not long before the close of his long life of meditation, and is also pleasing as a record of the growth of his own mind. “J’ai tâché de déterrer et de réunir la vérité ensévelie et dissipée sous les opinions des différentes sectes des Philosophes ; et je crois y avoir ajouté quelque chose du mien pour faire quelques pas en avant. Les occasions de mes études dès ma première jeunesse, m’y ont donné de la facilité. Etant enfant j’appris Aristote ; et même les Scholastiques ne me rebutèrent point ; et je n’en suis point fâché présentement. Mais Platon aussi dès lors, avec Plotin, me donnèrent quelque contentement, sans parler d’autres anciens, que je consultai. Par après étant émancipé des écoles triviales, je tombai sur les Modernes ; et je me souviens que je me promenai seul dans un bocage auprès de Leipsic, appelé le Rosendal, à l’âge de quinze ans, pour délibérer si je garderois



les Formes substantielles. Enfin le Mécanisme prévalut, et me porta à m'appliquer aux Mathématiques. Il est vrai que je n'entrai dans les plus profondes, qu'après avoir conversé avec M. Huygens à Paris. Mais quand je cherchai les dernières raisons du Mécanisme, et des loix même du mouvement, je fus tout surpris de voir qu'il était impossible de les trouver dans les Mathématiques, et qu'il falloit retourner à la Métaphysique. C'est ce qui me ramena aux Entelechies, et du matériel au formel, et me fit enfin comprendre, après plusieurs corrections et avancements de mes notions, que les monades, ou les substances simples, sont lest seules véritables substances ; et que les choses matérielles ne sont que des phénomènes, mais bien fondés et bien liés. C'est de quoi Platon, et même les Académiciens postérieurs, et encore les Sceptiques, ont entrevu quelque chose ; mais ces messieurs, après Platon, n'en ont pas si bien usé que lui. J'ai trouvé que le plupart des Sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas tant en ce qu'elles nient. Les Formalistes, comme les Platoniciens, et les Aristotéliens, ont raison de chercher la source des choses dans les causes finales et formelles. Mais ils ont tort de négliger les efficientes et les matérielles, et d'en inférer, comme faisoit M. Henri Morus en Angleterre, et quelques autres Platoniciens, qu'il y a des phénomènes qui ne peuvent être expliqués mécaniquement. Mais de l'autre côté les Matérialistes, ou ceux qui s'attachent uniquement à la Philosophie mécanique, ont tort de rejeter les considérations métaphysiques, et de vouloir tout expliquer par ce qui dépend de l'imagination. Je me flatte d'avoir pénétré l'Harmonie des differens règnes, et d'avoir vu que les deux parties ont raison, pourvu qu'ils ne se choquent point ; que tout se fait mécaniquement et métaphysiquement en même temps dans les phénomènes de la nature, mais que la source de la mécanique est dans la métaphysique. Il n'étoit pas aisé de découvrir ce mystère, parce qu'il y a peu de gens qui se donnent la peine de joindre ces deux sortes d'études." Vol. v. pp. 8, 9. Ed. Dutens.

In his third Letter to Remond, Leibnitz recurs to the same subject. "Si j'en avois le loisir, je comparerois mes dogmes



avec ceux des Anciens et d'autres habiles hommes. La vérité est plus répandue qu'on ne pense ; mais elle est très souvent fardée, et très souvent aussi enveloppée, et même affoiblie, mutilée, corrompue par des additions qui la gâtent, ou la rendent moins utile. En faisant remarquer ces traces de la vérité dans les Anciens, ou, pour parler plus généralement, dans les antérieurs, on tireroit l'or de la boue, le diamant de sa mine, et la lumière des ténèbres ; et ce seroit en effet *perennis quaedam Philosophia*. On peut même dire, qu'on y remarqueroit quelque progrès dans les connoissances. Les Orientaux ont de belles et de grandes idées de la Divinité. Les Grecs y ont ajouté le raisonnement et une forme de science. Les Pères de l'Eglise ont rejeté ce qu'il y avoit de mauvais dans la Philosophie des Grecs ; mais les Scholastiques ont tâché d'employer utilement pour le Christianisme, ce qu'il y avoit de passable dans la Philosophie des Payens. J'ai dit souvent *aurum latere in stercore illo scholastico barbariei* ; et je souhaiterois qu'on pût trouver quelque habile homme versé dans cette Philosophie Hibernoise et Espagnole, qui eut de l'inclination et de la capacité pour en tirer le bon. Je suis sûr qu'il trouveroit sa peine payée par plusieurs belles et importantes vérités." p. 13.

That Philosophy, in the last sixty years, has been advancing at no slow pace toward the grand goal, which Leibnitz descried from afar, by a Pisgah view of the land he himself was not destined to enter, will not be questioned by any one acquainted with the recent philosophers of Germany. One of the clearest proofs German Philosophy has exhibited of its being on the road toward the truth, has lain in this very fact, that it has been enabled to appreciate the philosophical systems of former ages, as they had never been appreciated previously. If we look, for instance, into Dugald Stewart's Historical Essay, we find no attempt even to do anything of the sort. As I have said above (p. 337), he merely selects a few remarks or maxims from the writings of preceding philosophers, such as at all resemble the observations of his own philosophy, or the received maxims of his own age, and takes no thought about anything else, nor even about the coherence of these remarks with the rest of the



systems they belong to. On the other hand, if we turn to Ritter's History of Philosophy, or to Hegel's Lectures,—to mention two of the chief examples of what has been repeated in many others,—we see them endeavouring to estimate all prior systems according to their historical position in the progressive development of human thought, to shew what truths it was the especial province of each to bring out, and how each fulfilled its appointed work. In England this method has been applied to the history of Science by Dr Whewell, to that of Philosophy in the History of Moral Philosophy published in the Encyclopedia Metropolitana.

Now that this historical, genetical method of viewing prior systems of philosophy is something totally different from Eclecticism, nay, is the direct opposite to it, will not need further proof. But it is termed conceited and presumptuous, to pretend to know better than all the wisest men of former times, and to sit in judgement upon them. This however is sheer nonsense. Conceit and presumption may indeed shew themselves in this, as in every other mode of uttering our thoughts: but there can hardly be a better corrective for those evil tendencies, than the attentive, scrutinizing contemplation of the great men of former times, with the view of ascertaining the amount of the truth they were allowed to discern, the power of the impulse they gave to the progress of the human mind. If we know more in some respects than they did, this itself is a ground of gratitude to them through whose labours we have gained this advantage, and of reverence for those who with such inferior means achieved so much. It is no way derogatory to Newton, or Kepler, or Galileo, that Science in these days should have advanced far beyond them. Rather is this itself their crown of glory. Their works are still bearing fruit, and will continue to do so. The truths which they discovered are still living in our knowledge, pregnant with infinite consequences. Nor will any one be so ready and able to do them justice, as he who has carefully examined what they actually accomplished for the advancement of Science. So too will it be with regard to Socrates and Plato and Aristotle, to Anselm and



Bacon and Leibnitz. The better we know and appreciate what they did, the humbler it must needs make us. Nay the very process of endeavouring faithfully and carefully to enter into the minds of others, as it can only be effected by passing out of ourselves, out of our habitual prepossessions and predilections, is a discipline both of love and of humility. In this respect at all events there can be no comparison between such a Philosophy, and an exclusive dogmatical system, which peremptorily condemns whatever does not coincide with it.

Of course this profounder Philosophy, which aims at tracing the philosophical idea through its successive manifestations, is not exempt from the dangers which encompass every other form of Knowledge, especially from that which is exprest by the separation between the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life. My dear friend, Sterling, says, in one of his letters (p. xxxviii.): "Cousin makes it the peculiar glory of our epoch; that it endeavours to comprehend the mind of all other ages. But I fear it must be the tendency of his philosophy, while it examines what all other philosophies were, to prevent us from being anything ourselves. — We must live, not only for the past, but also for the present. Herein is the great merit of Coleridge: and I confess for myself, I would rather be a believing Jew or Pagan, than a man who sees through all religions, but looks not with the eyes of any." How far this censure may apply to Cousin, we need not enquire; but there seems no reason why it should attach to that form of Philosophy, of which we have been speaking, more than to any other. In all speculation, of whatsoever kind, there is a centrifugal tendency, which requires to be continually counteracted and kept in check. This would appear to have been the peculiar work of Socrates in Greek philosophy, as it had been previously of Pythagoras, and as it was that of Bacon in Science. But, though the Tree of Knowledge is not the Tree of Life, the Tree, or rather the scrubby underwood of Ignorance is quite as far removed from it: nor shall we turn the Tree of Knowledge into it, by lopping off its



expanding, sheltering branches, which spread out on every side, and converting it into a Maypole. U.

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There are a number of points, with regard to which we understand the ancients better than they understood themselves.

Does this seem strange? Mount a hill: will you not descry the outlines and bearings of the vallies or plains at its feet, more clearly than they who are living in the midst of them? That which was positive among the ancients, their own feelings, the direct power which their religion, their political and social institutions, their literature, their art exercised upon them, they undoubtedly understood far better than we can hope to do. But the relations in which they stand to other nations, and to the general idea of human nature, the particular phase of that idea which was manifested in them, the place which they occupy in the progressive history of mankind,—and in like manner the connexion between their language, their institutions, their modes of thought, their form of religion, of literature, of philosophy, of art, and those of other nations, anterior, contemporaneous, or subsequent,—of all these things we have far better means of judging, than they could possibly have. Thus they were more familiar with their own country, with its mountains and dells and glens, its brooks and tarns, than any foreiner can be: yet we have a clearer view of its geographical position with reference to the rest of the earth.

Moreover such a general comparative survey will enable us to adjust the proportions of many things, which, in the eyes of persons living in the midst of them, would be exaggerated by propinquity, or coloured and distorted by occasional feelings. In fact the postulate of Archimedes is no less indispensable for knowledge. To comprehend a thing thoroughly we need a standing-place out of it.

Such a *ποῦ στῶ* has been supplied for us all by Christianity. Therefore Christian Philosophy and Christian Science have an incalculable advantage of position over every other form of knowledge. U.

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It might be allowable for a heathen to say of himself, with somewhat of selfcomplacency, that he was *Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*. As a body, when it is losing its unity, and resolving into its parts, is fast crumbling into nothingness, and as an ochlocracy is no more than a noisy prelude to anarchy, so is Polytheism to Atheism. Whenever we find a real religious feeling in any ancient writer, we may also discern a dim, though perhaps scarcely conscious recognition of Unity, of one supreme Deity, behind and above all the rest, who permits the gods of Olympus to play round his feet, smiling on their sports, or, if they become too wanton and boisterous, checking them with a frown. For any moral influence on its votaries, the worship of many gods is scarcely more powerful than no worship at all.

Besides it was the misfortune of Roman literature, that, as in that of the French, there was in it

No single volume paramount, no code,  
No master spirit, no determined road.

Such must needs be wanting, where political or social interests predominate over those which are more purely intellectual. Neither Poetry, nor Philosophy will thrive, when anything is standing by to overshadow them. They lose their dignity, and cannot walk freely as the handmaids of any other queen than Religion. The Greeks, on the other hand, had such a "volume paramount," a volume as to which their greatest poets might boast that their works were merely fragments from its inexhaustible banquet. Whereas the Romans had nothing, with regard to which they could enjoy the comfortable feeling, that they might cut and cut and come again. Their dishes, like those of our neighbours, were kickshaws, which, having already been hasht up a second time, were drained of their juices, and unfit for further use. If any of them became a standing dish, it was only, like artificial fruit, to be lookt at.

This want of a nest-egg is a calamity which no people can get the better of. There is scarcely any blessing so precious for the mind of a nation, as the possession of such a great national heirloom, a work loved by all, revered by all, familiar to



all, from which all classes for generation after generation draw their views of Nature and of Life, which thus forms a great bond of intellectual and moral sympathy amongst all, in which all ranks may meet, as in a church, and all may feel at home. How fortunate then are we in England, inasmuch as, — over and above that which, wherever it has not been withdrawn from the people by a shortsighted, narrowminded, selfseeking policy, is the “Volume Paramount,” and the bond of union for all Christendom, — we have also the richest Eldorado of thought that man ever opened to man in the gold and diamond-mines of Shakspeare! *Paradise Lost* too may claim to be rankt as one of our volumes paramount, of our truly national works, which have mingled with the life-blood of the people. Indeed Erskine, I have been told, used to say, that, in addressing juries, he had found, there were three books, and only three, which he could always quote with effect, Shakspeare, Milton, and the Bible.

Moreover Horace’s boast was the simple, naked utterance of that Eclectic spirit, which I have been speaking of as characterizing his age, and which is always sure to prevail among such as are especially termed men of the world. Nor was it a less apt expression of his own personal character. For he was the prototype, and hence has ever been the favorite, of wits and fine gentlemen, of those who count it a point of goodbreeding to seem pleased with everything, yet not to be strongly affected by anything, *nil admirari*. As the chief fear of such persons is, lest they should dishonour their breeding by betraying too strong feelings on any matter, Horace’s declaration just meets their wishes. The pleasantest of dilettanti, he could add, *Quo me cunque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes*, without any regret at the thought that everywhere he was a *hospes*, that nowhere had he a home. Chance was to him a more acceptable guide than any master; and he drifted along before the wind and tide, rejoicing that he had no pole-star to steer by.

In him, I say, such a boast might be excusable. But for a Christian moralist to take these lines as his motto seems strangely inappropriate. For we Christians are far happier than the poor guideless Heathens. We have a Master; and we know



that His words are always true, and that they will be true eternally. Above all, for Johnson to make such a parade of masterlessness, as he does by prefixing these lines to the Rambler! for Johnson, who, whatever want of deference he might shew toward other masters, had one master ever close at his elbow, to whose words he was always ready to swear, a master too who never scrupled to try his patience by all sorts of wayward commands, — even himself, his own whims, his own caprices, his own imperious wilfulness. In fact this is usually the case with those who plume themselves on their unwillingness to bear the yoke of any authority. They are mostly the slaves of a despot, and therefore spurn the notion of being the subjects of a law. They have a Puck within their breasts, who is ever leading them “up and down, up and down:” and, as he is “feared in field and town,” both in town and field they stand alone. Or else he “drops his liquour in their eyes;” and then the next thing they look upon, “Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull, Or meddling monkey, or on busy ape, They will pursue it with the soul of love.” Hence, though it is very true that Johnson was *Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*, — except indeed to his own words, — it was hardly becoming to make this state of sheer negativeness a matter of boast. If one is to boast at all, it should be grounded on something positive, on something implying an act of the reasonable will, not on our being carried *quocunque rapit tempestas*, which can only land us in the Limbo of Vanities.

Will it be deemed a piece of captiousness, if I go on to object, as others have done before, to the title of *the Rambler*? But that too seems to have little appropriateness for a person who seldom rambled further than from one side of his armchair to the other, from one cell in his brain to another. His reading is indeed said to have been always very desultory; so that one of his biographers thinks it questionable, whether he ever read any book entirely through, except the Bible. If this was indeed the fact, it would form the best intellectual apology for his criticisms. At all events his habit arose from that peculiarity which marks all his writings, as well as all the anecdotes of



him, his incapacity for going out of himself, and entering into the minds of others, his inability to understand and sympathize with any form of human nature except his own. He only looked into a book to contemplate his own image in it; and when anything came across that image, he turned to another volume. This is not rambling, but staying at home in a home which is no home, inasmuch as a home must have some one beside oneself to endear and consecrate it.

By some it may be thought that the misnomer of *the Rambler* receives a kind of justification from the circuitousness of the author's style. This however is not rambling: it would be livelier, if it were. It merely rolls round, like the sails of a mill, ponderously and sonorously and monotonously, yet seldom grinding any corn. In truth it would seem constructed for the purpose of going round a thing, and round it, and round it, without ever getting to it. His sentences might be compared to the hoops worn by ladies in those days, and were almost equally successful in disguising and disfiguring the form, as well as in keeping you at a distance from it. In reading them one may often be puzzled to think how they could proceed from a man whose words in conversation were so close and sinewy. But Johnson's strength, as well as his weakness, lay in his will; and in conversation, when an object that irritated him stood before him, his words came down upon it, more like blows, than words. In reasoning on the other hand, in that which requires meditation or imagination, the will has little power, except so far as it has been exercised continuously in the formation and cultivation of the mind. A man cannot by a momentary act of the will endow himself with faculties and knowledge, which he does not possess already; though he can make himself pour out words, the bigness of which shall stand in lieu of force, and their multitude in lieu of meaning. How such a style could gain the admiration which Johnson's gained, in an age when numbers of men and women wrote incomparably better, would be another grave puzzle, unless one remembered that it was the age when hoops and toupees were thought to lighten the beauty of women, and full-bottomed wigs the dignity of men. He who saw in his glass



how his wig became his face and head, might easily infer that a similar full-bottomed, well-curled friz of words would be no less becoming to his thoughts. Nor did he miscalculate the effect upon his immediate readers. They who admired the hairy wig, were in raptures with the wordy one.

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U.

Young men are perpetually told that the first of duties is to render oneself independent. But the phrase, unless it mean that the first of duties is to avoid hanging, is unhappily chosen ; saying what it ought not to say, and leaving unsaid what it ought to say.

It is true, that, in a certain sense, the first of duties is to become free ; because Freedom is the antecedent condition for the fulfilment of every other duty, the only element in which a reasonable soul can exist. Until the umbilical chord is severed, the child can hardly be said to have a separate life. So long as the heart and mind continue in slavery, it is impossible for a man to offer up a voluntary and reasonable sacrifice of himself. Now in slavery, since the Fall, we are all born ; from which slavery we have to emancipate ourselves by some act of our own, halfconscious, it may be, or almost unconscious. By some act of our own, I say ; not indeed unassisted ; for every parent, every friend, every teacher is a minister ordained to help us in this act. But, though we cannot by our own act lift ourselves out of the pit, we must by an act of our own take hold of the hand which offers to lift us out of it. The same thing is implied in every act of duty ; which can only be an act of duty, so far as it is the act of a free, voluntary agent. Moreover, if we ascend in the scale of duties, we must also ascend in the scale of freedom. A person must have cast off the tyrannous yoke of the flesh, of its frailties and its lusts, before he can become the faithful servant of his country and his God.

Hence we perceive that the true motive for our striving to set ourselves free is, to manifest our freedom by resigning it, through an act to be renewed every moment, ever resuming and ever resigning it ; to the end that our service may be entire, that the service of the hands may likewise be the service of



the will; even as the Apostle, being *free from all*, made himself *servant to all*. This is the accomplishment of the great Christian paradox, *Whosoever will be great, let him be a minister; and whosoever will be chief, let him be a servant*.

Nothing can be more thoroughly opposed to the sublime humility of this precept, than the maxim which enjoins independence. At best Independence is a negative abstraction, and has merely assumed the specious semblance of reality, amid the multitude of indistinct, insubstantial words, which have been driven across our language from foreign regions; whereas Freedom is something positive. So far as our dictionaries, which in such matters are by no means safe guides, may be relied on, the word *independence*, in its modern acceptance, can hardly have come into use till after the Revolution. The earliest instance of it cited is from Pope, but is such as shews it must already have been a familiar expression. Nor is it ill suited to that age of superficial, disjointed, unconnected thought, when the work of cutting off the present from the past began, and people first took it into their heads, that the mass of evil in the world was the result, not of their own follies and vices, but of what their ancestors had done and established. That such an unscriptural word should not occur in our Bible, is not surprising: for Independence, as an attribute of man, if it be traced to its root, is a kind of synonym for irreligion. Nor, I believe, is it to be found in this sense in any writer of the ages when men were trained by the discipline of logic to think more closely and speak more precisely. Primarily however the word seems to have come from the Latinity of the Schoolmen, — for the Romans never acknowledged either the word or the thing signified by it, — and to have been coined, like other similar terms, for the sake of expressing one of those negations, out of which Philosophy compounds her idea of God; hereby confessing her inability to attain to a positive idea. Thus, in Baxter's *Methodus Theologiae Christianae*, God is said to be, with reference to causation, *Noncausatus, Independens*. In his *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, he says: "The first universal matter is not an uncaused, *independent* being. If such there be, its inactivity



and passiveness sheweth it to want the excellency of *independency*." Jackson (B. vi. c. 3) speaks of philosophers, who "allot a kind of *independent* being to immaterial substances." In Minshew's *Guide into the Tongues* (1625), *Independencie* is explained by *Absoluteness of oneself, without dependence on another*, which points to a like usage as already existing.

In this sense Segneri writes: *l'indipendenza é un tesoro inalienabile di Dio solo*. When thus used, the word expresses an attribute which belongs exclusively to the Deity, in the only way in which our intellect can express it, by a negation of its opposite. But, when applied to man, it directly contravenes the first and supreme laws of our nature, the very essence of which is universal dependence upon God, and universal interdependence on one another. Hence Leighton, speaking of disobedience, says (Serm. xv.): "This is still the treasonable pride or *independency*, and wickedness of our nature, rising up against God who formed us of nothing." With this our rightful state Freedom is not irreconcilable: indeed, if our dependence is to be reasonable and voluntary, Freedom, as I have already said, is indispensable to it. Accordingly Shakspeare, in his *Measure for Measure* (Act iv. sc. 3), has combined the two words: the Provost there replies to the Duke, *I am your free dependent*; where *free* signifies voluntary, willing. Now in a somewhat different sense we ought all to be *free dependents*. But nobody can be an *independent dependent*. As applied to man, *independent* can only have a relative sense, signifying that he is free from certain kinds of dependence. In this sense Cudworth often speaks of the heathen belief in several *independent* gods, that is, not absolutely, in the signification exemplified above, but *independent* of each other. In this sense too the name was assumed by the religious sect who intended thereby both to express their rejection of all previously established authority, and their notion that every particular congregation ought to be insulated and *independent* of all others. So again the American war was not to assert the Freedom, but the *Independence* of America. Thus things came to such a pass, that Smollett wrote an ode to *Independence*, calling it, or



her, or him, "Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye." Nay, even Wordsworth, in one of his early poems, after describing the scenery round the Lake of Lucerne, wrote: "Even here Content has fixed her smiling reign, With Independence, child of high Disdain," a line scarcely less objectionable in point of taste, than as glorifying the child of such a parent.

Moreover Freedom is susceptible of degrees, according to the capacity for Freedom in the person who attains to it. There is one Freedom in the peasant, who is unable to read, and whose time is wellnigh engrossed by bodily labour, but who humbly reveres the holy words proclaimed to him on his one day of weekly rest; and there is another Freedom in the poet, or philosopher, or statesman, or prince, who, with a full consciousness of the sacrifice he is making, well knowing what he is giving up and why, and feeling the strength of the reluctances he has to combat and overpower, increast as it is by the increast means of gratifying and pampering them, still in singleness of heart devotes all his faculties to the service of God in the various ministries of goodwill toward men. There is one Freedom in the maiden, who in her innocence scarcely knows of sin, either its allurements or its perils, and whose life glides along gently and transparently amid flowers and beneath shade; and another Freedom in the man, the stream of whose life must flow through the haunts of his fellow-creatures, and must receive the pollution of cities into it, and must become muddy if it be turbulent, and can only preserve its purity by its majestic calmness and might. There was one Freedom in Ismene, and a higher and nobler in Antigone. There was one Freedom in Adam before his Fall, and another in St Paul after his conversion. Yet, though everywhere different, it is everywhere essentially the same. Although it admits of innumerable gradations, in every one it may be entire and perfect: and, wherever it is entire and perfect, all lesser distinctions vanish. One star may indeed appear larger and brighter than another: but they are all permitted to nestle together on the impartial bosom of Night, and journey onward for ever, one mighty inseparable family. Nay, those which seem the smallest and feeblest, may



perchance in reality be the largest and most splendid ; only our accidental position misleads our judgement.

Independence on the other hand neither admits of degrees, nor of equality, neither of difference, nor of sameness. In fact nothing in the universe ever was, or ever can be, or was ever conceived to be independent ; except forsooth the atoms of the Corpuscular Philosophy : and even this Philosophy was constrained to acknowledge, that a hubbub of independent entities can produce nothing beyond a hubbub of independent entities. Hence, after rarifying the contents of its logical airpump, until there was no possibility for anything to exist therein, it was forced to turn the cock, and let in a little air, for the sake of giving its atoms a partial impulse, and thus bringing them to coalesce and interdepend.

Let it not be said that this is a fanciful quibble about words, and that Independence and Freedom mean the same thing in the end. They never did ; they do not ; they cannot. Independence is merely relative and outward : Freedom has its source within, in the depths of our spiritual life, and cannot subsist unless it is fed by fresh supplies from thence. Its essence is love ; for it is love that delivers us from the bondage of self. Its home is peace ; from which indeed it often strays far, but for which it always feels a homesick longing. Its lifeblood is truth, which alone can free us from the delusions of the world, and of our own carnal nature. Whereas the essence of Independence is hatred and jealousy, its home strife and warfare : it feeds upon delusions, and is itself the greatest. It was not until the true idea of Freedom, as not only reconcilable with Law and Order and the obedience and sacrifice of the Will, but requiring them imperatively to preserve it from running riot and perishing in wilfulness, was fading away, that the new word *Independence* was set up in its room. Since that time the apostles of Independence in political and social life, and of Atheism, that kindred negation, in religion, have so bewildered their hearers and themselves, that it is become very difficult to revive the true idea of Freedom, and to make people understand how it is no way necessary, for the sake of be-



coming free, to pull down the whole edifice of society, with all its time-hallowed, majestic sanctities, and to scatter its stones about in singleness and independence on the ground. Yet assuredly it would not be more absurd to call such a multitude of scattered, independent stones a house, than to suppose that a million, or twenty millions, of independent human beings, each stickling for his independence, and carrying out this principle through the ramifications of civil and domestic life, can coalesce into a nation or a state. There is need of mortar: there is need of a builder, yes, of a master builder: there is need of dependence, coherence, subordination of the parts to the whole and to each other.

U.

A lawyer's brief will be brief, before a freethinker thinks freely.

U.

The most bigoted persons I have known have been in some things the most sceptical. The most sceptical notoriously are often the greatest bigots. How account for this? except on the supposition that they are trees of the same kind, accidentally planted on opposite hillocks, and swayed habitually by the violence of opposite and partial gusts, which have checkt their growth, twisted their tops, and pointed their stag-heads against each other with an aspect of hatred and defiance.

The prophet who was slain by a lion, had a nobler and more merciful death than Bishop Hatto, who was eaten up by rats. Neither the crab, that walks with its back foremost, nor the polypus, that fittest emblem of a democracy, ranks so high among animals, that we should be ambitious of imitating them in the construction of the body politic. Indeed it seems an instinct among animals, to hang down their tails; except when the peacock spreads his out in the sunshine of a gala day, with its rows of eyes tier above tier, like the vista of a merry theatre. Unless Society can effect by education, what Lord Monboddoholds man to have done by willing it, and can get rid of her tail, it will be wisest to let the educated classes keep their natural station at the head.

U.



At Avignon I saw some large baths in the garden by the temple of Diana, built on the foundations of the old Roman ones. *Does anybody bathe here now?* we askt; for we could see no materials for the purpose.

*No*; the guide answered. *Before the Revolution, the rich used to bathe here: but they wanted to keep the baths to themselves; and the poor wanted to come too; and now nobody comes.*

What an epitome of a revolution!

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Few books have more than one thought: the generality indeed have not quite so many. The more ingenious authors of the former seem to think that, if they once get their candle lighted, it will burn on for ever. Yet even a candle gives a sorry, melancholy light, unless it has a brother beside it, to shine on it and keep it cheerful. For lights and thoughts are social and sportive: they delight in playing with and into each other. One can hardly conceive a duller state of existence than sitting at whist with three dummies: and yet many of our prime philosophers have seldom done anything else. U.

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To illustrate signifies to make clear. It would be well if writers would keep this in mind, and still better, if preachers were to do so. They would then feel the necessity of suiting their illustrations to their hearers. As it is, illustrations often seem to be stuck in for the same reason as shrubs round stables and outhouses, to keep the meaning out of sight. U.

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Apollo was content to utter his oracles, and left the hearers to make out their interpretation and meaning. So should his priests, poets. They should speak intelligibly indeed, but oracularly, even as all the works of Nature are oracular, embodying her laws, and manifesting them, but not spelling them in words, not writing notes and glosses on themselves, not telling you that they know the laws under which they act. They are content to prove their knowledge by fashioning themselves and all their courses according to it: and they leave man to decipher the laws from the living hieroglyphics in which they are written. U.

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The progress of knowledge is slow. Like the sun, we cannot see it moving; but after a while we perceive that it has moved, nay, that it has moved onward. U.

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A cobweb is soon spun, and still sooner swept away. U.

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We all love to be in the right. Granted. We like exceedingly to have right on our side, but are not always particularly anxious about being on the side of right. We like to be in the right, when we are so; but we do not like it, when we are in the wrong. At least it seldom happens that anybody, after emerging from childhood, is very thankful to those who are kind enough to take trouble for the sake of guiding him from the wrong to the right. Few in any age have been able to join heartily in the magnanimous declaration uttered by Socrates in the *Gorgias*: "I am one who would gladly be refuted, if I should say anything not true,—and would gladly refute another, should he say anything not true,—but would no less gladly be refuted than refute. For I deem it a greater advantage; inasmuch as it is a greater advantage to be freed from the greatest of evils, than to free another; and nothing, I conceive, is so great an evil as a false opinion on matters of moral concernment."

With some such persons indeed, Hermann says he has met, after speaking of the prevalence of the opposite spirit, in the Preface to his second Edition of the *Hecuba*: "*Tum maxime irasci aliquem, quum se jure reprehensum videat, aliorum exemplis cognovi. Nec mirum: piget enim errasse: illud vero mirum, si quos sibimet ipsis irasci aequius erat, iram in eos effundunt, a quibus sunt reprehensi, quasi horum, non sua sit culpa, vidisseque errorem gravius peccatum sit, quam commisisse. Sed inveni tamen etiam qui veri quam suae gloriae studiosiores non solum aequo animo et dissensionem et reprehensionem ferrent, verum etiam ingenue confiterentur errorem, atque adeo gratias agerent monenti.*" In act such persons, I am afraid, are rare; though in profession it is common enough to find people consenting to the declaration with which Sir Thomas Brown



closes his Preface: "We shall only take notice of such, whose experimental and judicious knowledge shall solemnly look upon our work, not only to destroy of ours, but to establish of his own; not to traduce or extenuate, but to explain and dilucidate, to add and amplify. — Unto whom we shall not contentiously rejoin, or only to justify our own, but to applaud or confirm his maturer assertions; and shall confer what is in us unto his name and honour, ready to be swallowed in any worthy enlarger, as having acquired our end, if any way, or under any name, we may obtain a work so much desired, and yet desiderated of truth."

But it is no way surprising that abstract truth should kick the beam, when weighed against any personal prejudice or predilection; seeing that, even in things of more immediate human interest, we are often beguiled by our selfishness into desiring, not that which is desirable in itself, but that which we have in some manner associated with our vanity and our personal credit. If a misfortune which a man has prognosticated, befalls his friend, the monitor, instead of sympathizing and condoling with him, will often exclaim with a taunting tone of triumph: *Did n't I tell you so? Another time you'll take my advice . . .* as if any one would be willing to take advice from so cold-hearted and unfriendly a counsellor. There are those too, I am afraid, who would rather see their neighbours suffer, than their own forebodings fail. Jonah is not the only prophet of evil, whom it has *displeased exceedingly*, and who has been *very angry*, because *God is a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil*. The beautiful apologue of the gourd is still, and, I fear, ever will be, applicable to many. Indeed what are our most cherished pleasures, for the loss of which we are the angriest, *even unto death?* but commonly such gourds, *for which we have not laboured, nor made them grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night*. On them we *have pity*, because they were a *shadow over our heads to deliver us from our griefs*, and because their withering exposes us to the sun and wind. Yet let a man once have turned his face against his brethren, — and



that, not for the wickedness of their hands or of their hearts, but merely for their holding some opinion or doctrine which he deems erroneous: it is not unlikely that he will be loth to see Nineveh spared, *that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle.* U.

The last words of the foregoing quotation remind me, that, in estimating the motives for and against any measure or measures, we rarely, if ever, look beyond the manner in which men will be affected thereby. Our lordly eyes cannot stoop to notice the happiness or misery of the animals beneath us. Indeed no one, except God, cares for more than a small particle of the universe. In reckoning up the horrors of war, we never think about the sufferings of the *much cattle*. I shall not forget a deserved rebuke which I received years ago from William Schlegel. He had been speaking of entering Leipsic on the day after the battle; and I asked him whether it was not a glorious moment, thoughtlessly, or rather thinking of the grand consequences which sprang from that victory, more than of the scene itself. *Glorious!* he exclaimed: *how could anybody think about glory, when crossing a plain covered for miles with thousands of his brethren, dead and dying? And what to me was still more piteous, was the sight of the poor horses lying about so helplessly and patiently, uttering deep groans of agony, with no one to do anything for them.*

Among the heroic features in the character of our great commander, none, — except that sense of duty which in him is ever foremost, and throws all things else into the shade, — is grander than the sorrow for his companions who have fallen, which seems almost to overpower every other feeling, even in the flush of a victory. The conqueror of Bonaparte at Waterloo wrote on the day after, the 19th of June, to the Duke of Beaufort: "The losses we have sustained, have quite broken me down; and I have no feeling for the advantages we have acquired." On the same day too he wrote to Lord Aberdeen: "I cannot express to you the regret and sorrow with which I



look round me, and contemplate the loss which I have sustained, particularly in your brother. The glory resulting from such actions, so dearly bought, is no consolation to me; and I cannot suggest it as any to you and his friends: but I hope that it may be expected that this last one has been so decisive, as that no doubt remains that our exertions and our individual losses will be rewarded by the early attainment of our just object. It is then that the glory of the actions in which our friends and relations have fallen, will be some consolation for their loss." He who could write thus, had already gained a greater victory than that of Waterloo: and the less naturally follows the greater.

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U.

Most men work for the present, a few for the future. The wise work for both, for the future in the present, and for the present in the future.

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U.

There are great men enough to incite us to aim at true greatness, but not enough to make us fancy that God could not execute His purposes without them.

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Man's works, even in their most perfect form, always have more or less of excitement in them. God's works are calm and peaceful, both in Nature, and in His word. Hence Wordsworth, who is above all men the poet of Nature, seldom excites the feelings, because he is so true to his subject.

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a.

Crimes sometimes shock us too much; vices almost always too little.

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As art sank at Rome, comforts increast. Witness the baths of Caracalla and Diocletian.

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We sever what God has joined, and so destroy beauty, and lose hold of truth.

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a.

It is quite right there should be an Inquisition. It is quite



right there should be *autos-da-fé*. The more the better, if they are but real ones. There should be an Inquisition and *autos-da-fé* in every country, yea, in every town, yea, on every hearth, yea, in every heart. The evil hitherto has been that they have been far too few. Every man ought to be an inquisitor; every man ought to perform *autos-da-fé*; often accompanied by death, not seldom by torture. Only his inquisition should be over himself; only his *autos-da-fé* should consist in the slaying of his own lusts and passions, in the fiery sacrifice of his own stubborn, unbelieving will.

These would be truly *autos-da-fé*. It is no act of faith for me to offer up another as a victim. On the contrary it is an act of unbelief. It shews I have no faith in my brother's spiritual nature. It shews I have no faith in the power of God to work upon his heart and change it. It shews I have no faith in the sword of the Spirit, but hold the sword of the flesh to be mightier.

Nor again can Faith exist in opposition to Love. Faith is the root of Love, the root without which Love cannot have any being. At times the root may be found, where the plant has not yet grown up to perfection. But no hatred, or other evil, malign passion can spring from the root of Faith. Wherever they are found, they grow from unbelief, from want of faith, — from want of faith in man, and from want of faith in God.

Moreover such *autos-da-fé* would be sure of effecting their purpose, which the others never can. They would be acceptable to God. They would destroy what ought to be destroyed. And were we diligent in performing them, there would be no need of any others.

This Inquisition should be set up in every soul. In some indeed it may at times be in abeyance. The happiest spirits are those by whom the will of God is done without effort or struggle. To this angelic nature however humanity can only approximate, and that too not at once, but by divers steps and stages, at every one of which new *autos-da-fé* are required.



Some people seem to think that Death is the only reality in Life. Others, happier and rightlier minded, see and feel that Life is the true reality in Death. U.

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*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* Is it indeed so? Alas then for England! For surely we profess to serve both; and few can doubt that we do indeed serve one of the two, as zealously and assiduously as he himself can wish. But how must it be with our service to the other? U.

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They who boast of their tolerance, merely give others leave to be as careless about religion as they are themselves. A walrus might as well pride itself on its endurance of cold.

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Few persons have courage enough to appear as good as they really are. a.

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The praises of others may be of use in teaching us, not what we are, but what we ought to be. a.

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Many people make their own God; and he is much what the French may mean, when they talk of *le bon Dieu*,—very indulgent, rather weak, near at hand when we want anything, but far away out of sight when we have a mind to do wrong. Such a god is as much an idol as if he were an image of stone.

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The errors of the good are often very difficult to eradicate, from being founded on mistaken views of duty. a.

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Truly a river is a very wilful thing, going as it will, and where it will.

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How should men ever change their religion? In its abasement honour prevents them, in its prosperity contempt. From their heights they cannot see, because they are so high, in their lowliness they dare not see, because they are too lowly.

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There is no being eloquent for atheism. In that exhausted receiver the mind cannot use its wings,—the clearest proof that it is out of its element.

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How different are summer storms from winter ones! In winter they rush over the earth with all their violence; and if any poor remnants of foliage or flowers have lingered behind, these are swept along at one gust. Nothing is left but desolation; and long after the rain has ceased, pools of water and mud bear token of what has been. But when the clouds have poured out their torrents in summer, when the winds have spent their fury, and the sun breaks forth again in its glory, all things seem to rise with renewed loveliness from their refreshing bath. The flowers glistening with rain-drops smell sweeter than before; the grass seems to have gained another brighter shade of green; and the young plants, which had hardly come into sight, have taken their place among their fellows in the borders; so quickly have they sprung up under the showers. The air too, which may previously have been oppressive, is become clear and soft and fresh.

Such too is the difference, when the storms of affliction fall on hearts unrenewed by Christian faith, and on those who abide in Christ. In the former they bring out the dreariness and desolation, which may before have been unapparent. The gloom is not relieved by the prospect of any cheering ray to follow it, of any flowers or fruit to shew its beneficence. But in the truly Christian soul, *though weeping endure for a night, joy comes in the morning*. A sweet smile of hope and love follows every tear; and tribulation itself is turned into the chief of blessings.

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a.

We never know the true value of friends. While they live, we are too sensitive of their faults; when we have lost them, we only see their virtues.

A.

So however ought it to be. When the perishable shrine has crumbled away, what can we see, except that which alone is imperishable?

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U.



How few are our real wants ! and how easy is it to satisfy them ! Our imaginary ones are boundless and insatiable. A.

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The king is the least independent man in his dominions,—the beggar the most so. A.

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*Multa fiunt eadem sed aliter*, Quintilian (II. 20. 10) has justly remarkt. I have spoken above (p. 387) of the efficacy of manner in oratory ; and every attentive observer must perpetually have noticed its inestimable importance in all the occasions and concerns of social life. So great indeed is its power, and so much more do people in general value what their friend feels for them, than what he does for them, that there are few who would not look on you more kindly, if you were to meet their request with an affectionate denial, than with a cold compliance.

Nay, even when the materials are the very same, and when they are arranged in the selfsame order, much will depend on the manner in which they are combined and group't into separate units. *An ice-house* is very different from *a nice house* ; and a dot will turn a million into one.

A like thought is exprest in the following stanza, which closes a poem prefixt by Thomas Newton to *the Mirror for Magistrates*.

Certes this world a stage may well be called,  
Whereon is plaid the part of every wight:  
Some, now aloft, anon with malice galled  
Are from high state brought into dismal plight.  
Like counters are they, which stand now in sight  
For thousand or ten thousand, and anon  
Removed stand perhaps for less than one.

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The mind is like a trunk. If well packt, it holds almost everything ; if ill packt, next to nothing.

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To say *No* with a good grace is a hard matter. To say *Yes* with a good grace is sometimes still harder, at least for men. With women perhaps it may be otherwise. I wonder how



many have married for no other reason, than that they had not the strength of mind to say *No*. U.

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Discipline, like the bridle in the hand of a good rider, should exercise its influence without appearing to do so, should be ever active, both as a support and as a restraint, yet seem to lie easily in hand. It must always be ready to check or to pull up, as occasion may require; and only when the horse is a runaway, should the action of the curb be perceptible. A.

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Many expressions, once apt and emphatic, have been so rubbed and worn away by long usage, that they retain as little substance as the skeletons of wheels which have made the grand tour on the Continent. They glide at length like smoke through a chimney, not even impinging against the roof of the mouth; and after a month's repetition they leave nothing behind more solid or more valuable than soot. Words gradually lose their character, and, from being the tokens and exponents of thoughts, become mere air-propelling sounds. To counteract this disastrous tendency, Boyle, it is said, never uttered the name of God, without bowing his head. Such practices are indeed liable to mischievous abuse: a superstitious value will be attacht to the outward act, even when it is separated from the inward and spiritual: and it is too well known that the eyes have often been ogling a lover, while the fingers have been telling Ave-Maries on a rosary. It may be too, that, among the educated, listlessness of mind is rather encouraged by any recurring formal motion of the body. Else there is a value in whatever may help us to preserve the freshness and elasticity of our feelings, and enable the heart to leap up at the sight of a rainbow in manhood and in old age, as it did in childhood. Even the faults of our much abused climate are thus in many respects blessings. They gave a liveliness to our enjoyment of a fine day, such as cannot be felt between the Tropics.

How then is our nature to be fitted for the joys of Paradise? How can we be happy unceasingly, without ceasing to be happy? How is satisfaction to be disentangled from satiety? which



now palls upon the heart and intellect, almost as much as upon the senses. A strange and potent transformation must be wrought in us. Our hearts must no longer be capricious: our imaginations must no longer be vagrant: our wills must no longer be wilful.

The process by which this transformation is to be brought about, is set forth by Butler in his excellent chapter, the most valuable perhaps in the whole *Analogy*, on a State of Moral Discipline; where he shews that, while passive impressions grow weaker by repetition, "practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts." So that the true preparation for heaven is a life of godliness on earth. At the same time we should remember how, as Milton says with characteristic grandeur in the first chapter of his *Reason of Church-Government*, "it is not to be conceived that those eternal effluences of sanctity and love in the glorified saints should be confined and cloyed with repetition of that which is prescribed, but that our happiness may orb itself into a thousand vagancies of glory and delight, and with a kind of eccentrical equation be, as it were, an invariable planet of joy and felicity." U.

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Whatever is the object of our constant attention will naturally be the chief object of our interest. Even the feelings of speculative men become speculative. They care about the notions of things, and their abstractions, and their relations, far more than about the realities. Thus an author's blood will turn to ink. Words enter into him, and take possession of him; and nothing can obtain admission except through the passport of words. He cannot admire anything, until he has had time to reflect and throw back its cold, inanimate image from the mirror of his Understanding, blind to every shape but a shadow, deaf to every sound but an echo. Inverting the legitimate process, he regards things as the symbols of words, instead of words as the symbols of things. U.

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Literary dissipation is no less destructive of sympathy with the living world, than sensual dissipation. Mere intellect is as



hard-hearted and as heart-hardening as mere sense ; and the union of the two, when uncontrolled by the conscience, and without the softening, purifying influences of the moral affections, is all that is requisite to produce the diabolical ideal of our nature. Nor is there any repugnance in either to coalesce with the other : witness Iago, Tiberius, Borgia. U.

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The body too has its rights ; and it will have them. They cannot be trampled upon or slighted without peril. The body ought to be the soul's best friend, and cordial, dutiful helpmate. Many of the studious however have neglected to make it so ; whence a large part of the miseries of authorship. Some good men have treated it as an enemy ; and then it has become a fiend, and has plagued them, as it did Antony. U.

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The balance of powers in the human constitution has been subverted by that divorce between the body and the mind, which has often ensued from the seductive influences of Civilization. The existence of one class of society has been rendered almost wholly corporeal, that of the other almost solely intellectual, — but intellectual in the lowest sense of the word, and so that the intellect has been degraded into a caterer for the wants and pleasures of the body, instead of devoting itself to its rightful purposes, the pursuit, the enforcement, and the exhibition of Truth. Moreover the pernicious, debilitating tendencies of bodily pleasure need to be counteracted by the invigorating exercises of bodily labour ; whereas bodily labour without bodily pleasure converts the body into a mere machine, and brutifies the soul. U.

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What a loss is that of the village-green ! It is a loss to the picturesque beauty of our English landscapes. A village-green is almost always a subject for a painter, who is fond of quiet home scenes, with its old, knotty, wide-spreading oak or elm or ash, its grey church-tower, its cottages scattered in pleasing disorder around, each looking out of its leafy nest, its flock of geese sailing to and fro across it. Where such spots are still



found, they refresh the wayworn traveler, wearied by the interminable hedge-walls with which "restless ownership," — to use an expression of Wordsworth's, — excludes profane feet from its domain consecrated to Mammon.

The main loss however is that to the moral beauty of our landscapes, that to the innocent, wholesome pleasures of the poor. The village-green was the scene of their sports, of their games. It was the playground for their children. It served for trapball, for cricket, for manly, humanizing amusements, in which the gentry and farmers might unite with the peasantry. How dreary is the life of the English husbandman now! "double, double toil and trouble," day after day, month after month, year after year, uncheered by sympathy, unenlivened by a smile, sunless, moonless, starless. He has no place to be merry in but the beershop, no amusements but drunken brawls, nothing to bring him into innocent, cheerful fellowship with his neighbours. The stories of village sports sound like legends of a mythical age, prior to the time when "sabbathless Satan," as Charles Lamb has so happily termed him, set up his throne in the land.

It would be a good thing, if our landed proprietors would try to remedy some of the evils which the ravenous lust of property has wrought in England during the last century. It would be well, if by the side of every village two or three acres were redeemed from the gripe of Mammon, and thrown open to the poor, — if they were taught that their betters, as we presume to call ourselves, take thought about other things, beside the most effectual method of draining the last drop from the sweat of their brows. Something at least should be done to encourage and foster the domestic affections among the lower orders, to make them feel that they too have a home, and that a home is the dearest spot upon earth. I do not mean, by instituting prizes for those whose cottages are the neatest, or by giving rewards for good behaviour to the best husbands and wives, the best sons and daughters. Such rewards, unless there be something of playful humour connected with them, as was the case with the old flitch of bacon, do far more harm than good, by



robbing virtuous conduct of its sweetness and real worth, turning it into an instrument of covetousness or of vanity. The only reward which is not hurtful, is a kind word, or an approving smile : for this, delightful as it is, is so slight and transient, it can never find place among the motives to exertion.

All that ought to be done, all that can be done beneficially, is to remove hindrances which obstruct good, and facilities and temptations to evil, and to afford opportunities and facilities for quiet, orderly, decorous enjoyment. When encouragement is given, it should be by immediate personal intercourse. The great Christian law of reciprocation extends to the affections also. Indeed with regard to them it is a law of Nature. We cannot gain love and respect from others, unless we treat them with love and respect.

The same reason which calls for the restoration of our village greens, calls no less imperatively in London for the throwing open of the gardens in all the squares. What bright refreshing spots would these be in the midst of our huge brick and stone labyrinth, if we saw them crowded on summer evenings with the tradespeople and mechanics from the neighbouring streets, and if the poor children, who now grow up amid the filth and impurities of the allies and courts, were allowed to run about these playgrounds, so much healthier both for the body and the mind ! We have them all ready : a word may open them. He who looks at the good which has been effected by the alterations in St James Park, he whose heart has been gladdened by the happiness derived from them by young and old, must surely think the widest extension of similar blessings most desirable : and the state of that Park shews that no mischiefs are to be apprehended.

At present the gardens in our squares are painful mementoes of aristocratic exclusiveness. They who need them the least monopolize them. All the fences and walls by which this exclusiveness bars itself out from the sympathies of common humanity, must be cast down. If we do not remove them voluntarily, and in the spirit of love, they will be torn and trodden down ere long perforce, in the spirit of wrath.

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It is a blessed thing that we cannot enclose the sky. But who knows? Will not "restless ownership" long in time, like Alexander, for a new world to appropriate? and then a Joint-stock Company will be establisht to send up balloons for the purpose. Parliament too will doubtless display its boasted omnipotence by passing an Act to grant them a monopoly, commanding the winds to offer them no molestation in their enterprise, and enjoining that, if any planet be caught trespassing, it shall be impounded, and that all comets shall be committed forthwith for vagrancy.

U.

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*Quaerenda pecunia primum est ; Virtus post nummos.* But that *post* never arrives ; at least it did not at Rome, whatever may be the case in England. The very influx of the *nummi* retarded it, and kept *Virtus* at a distance. In fact she is of a jealous nature, and never comes at all, unless she comes in the first place. That which is a man's *alpha* will also be his *omega* ; and, in advancing from one to the other, his velocity is mostly accelerated at every step.

U.

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Messieurs, Mesdames, voici la vérité. Personne n'écoute. Personne ne s'en soucit. Personne n'en veut. Peut-être on ne m'a pas entendu. Essayons encore une fois. Messieurs, Mesdames, voici la véritable vérité. Elle vient exprès de l'autre monde, pour se montrer à vous. On passe en avant. On s'enfuit. On ne me regarde que pour se moquer de moi. Malheureux que je suis, on me laissera mourir de faim. Que faire donc ? Il faut absolument changer de cri. Messieurs, Mesdames, voici le vrai moyen pour gagner de l'argent. Mondieu ! Quelle foule ! Je ne puis plus. J'étouffe.

C'est une histoire que est assez commune.

U.

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One now and then meets with people on whose faces, in whose manner, in whose words, one may read a bill giving notice that they are *to be lett or sold*. They also profess to be furnisht : but everybody knows what the furniture of a ready-furnisht house usually is.

U.



Nothing hides a blemish so completely as cloth of gold. This is the first lesson that heirs and heiresses commonly learn. Would that equal pains were taken to convince them, that the having inherited a good cover for blemishes does not entail any absolute necessity of providing blemishes for it to cover!

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*Sauve qui peut!* Bonaparte is said to have exclaimed at Waterloo, along with his routed army. At all events this was the rule by which he regulated his actions, in prosperity as well as in adversity. For what is *Vole qui peut!* but the counterpart of *Sauve qui peut?* And who are they that will cry to the mountains, *Cover us*, and to the rocks, *Fall on us*, but they who have acted on the double-faced rule, *Vole qui peut*, and *Sauve qui peut?*

What an awful and blessed contrast to this cry presents itself when we think of Him of whom His enemies said, *He saved others: Himself He cannot save!* They knew not how true the first words were, nor how indissolubly they were connected with the latter, how it is only by losing our life that we can either save others or ourselves.

U.

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Few minds are sun-like, sources of light in themselves and to others. Many more are moons, that shine with a derivative and reflected light. Among the tests to distinguish them is this: the former are always full, the latter only now and then, when their suns are shining full upon them.

U.

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*Hold thy peace!* says Wisdom to Folly. *Hold thy peace!* replies Folly to Wisdom.

*Fly!* cries Light to Darkness: and Darkness echoes back, *Fly!*

The latter chase has been going on since the beginning of the world, without an inch of ground gained on either side. May we believe that the result has been different in the contest between Wisdom and Folly?

U.

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People have been sounding the alarm for many years past all



over Europe against what they call *obscurantism* and *obscurantists*; that is, against a supposed plot to extinguish all the new lights of our days, and to draw down the night of the middle ages on the awakening eyes of mankind. That such plans, mad as they may appear, are not too mad for those who live in a world of dreams, — that there are human bats, who, having ventured out into the daylight, fly back scared to their dark haunts, and would have all men follow them thither, — we know by sad recent examples. But, even without this special cause, the alarm is timely: indeed it can never be out of time. For the true *obscurantists* are the passions, the prejudices, the blinding delusions of our nature, warped by evil habits and self-indulgence; the real *obscurantism* is bigotry, in all its forms, which are many, and even opposite. There is the Pharisaic obscurantism, which would put out the earthly lights, and the Sadducean, which would put out the heavenly: and these, in times of peril, when they are trembling for their beloved darkness, combine and conspire. Nor has any class of men been busier in this way, than many of those who have boasted loudly of being the enlighteners of their age. In fact they who brag of their tolerance, have often been among the fiercest bigots, and worse than their opponents, from deeming themselves better.

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U.

If your divines are not philosophers, your philosophy will neither be divine, nor able to divine.

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No animal continues so long in a state of infancy as man; no animal is so long before it can stand. And is not this still truer of our souls than of our bodies? For when are they out of their infancy? when can they be said to stand? Yet, till they can, how much do they need a strong hand to uphold them!

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Alas for the exalted of the earth, that oversight is oversight!

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Many a man has lost being a great man by splitting into two



middling ones. Atone yourself to the best of your power ; and then Christ will atone for you.

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Be what you are. This is the first step toward becoming better than you are. U.

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Age seems to take away the power of acting a character, even from those who have done so the most successfully during the main part of their lives. The real man will appear, at first fitfully, and then predominantly. Time spares the chiseled beauty of stone and marble, but makes sad havock in plaster and stucco. μ.

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The truth of this remark has been especially evinced in France, owing to the prevalent artificialness of the French character. Hence the want of dignity in old age, noticed above (p. 433). Of course too this deficiency has been most conspicuous upon the throne of the *Grand Monarque*, even down to the present times. In this respect at least Bonaparte was a thorough Frenchman. Huge events succeeded each other in his life so rapidly, that he lived through years in months ; and adversity tore off the mask from him, which age cracks and splits in others.

We have the heavenly assurance that *the path of the just is to shine more and more unto the perfect day*. But this blessed truth involves its opposite, that the path of the wicked must grow darker and darker unto the total night . . . unless he give heed to the voice which calls him out of this darkness, and turn to the light which is ever striving to illumine it. U.

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Self-depreciation is not humility, though often mistaken for it. Its source is oftener mortified pride. α.

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The corruption and perversity of the world, which should be our strongest stimulants to do what we can to remove and correct them, are often pleaded by the religious as excuses for withdrawing from the world and doing nothing. How unlike is



this to the example of Him, who *concluded all under sin*, that He might have mercy upon all, that He might take their sinful nature upon him, to purify it from its sinfulness! a.

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How oft the heart, when wrapt in passion's arms,  
Reels, by the tumult stunned, or conscience-wounded,  
Or deafened with the trumpet-tongued alarms  
The victim's selfdevotedness has sounded!

What then remains? a gust of half-enjoyments,  
That, twisting memory to a vain regret,  
Prepares for age that saddest of employments,  
A desperate endeavour to forget.

Help, help us, Spirit of Good! and, hither gliding,  
Bring, on the wings of Jesus intercession,  
The fiery sword o'er Eden's tree presiding,  
To guard our tempted fancies from transgression.

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The devils, we are told, *believe and tremble*. Our part is to believe and love. But it is hard to convince people that nothing short of this can be true Christian faith. So, because they are sometimes terrified by the thought of God, they fancy they believe, though their hearts are far away from Him. a.

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At the end of a hot summer, the children in the streets look almost as pale and parcht as the grass in the fields: and every object one sees may suggest profitable meditations on the incapacity of all things earthly, be they human, animal, or vegetable, to support unmixt, uninterrupted sunshine . . . a truth which the sands of Africa teach as demonstratively, as the Polar ice teaches the converse. U.

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The story of Amphion sets forth how, whatever we may have to build, be it a house, a city, or a church, the most powerful of all powers that we can employ in building it, is harmony and love. Only the love must be of a genuine, lasting kind, not a spirit of weak compromise, sacrificing principles to expedients, and abandoning truths for the sake of tying a loveknot of errors, but strong from being in unison with what alone is true



and lasting, the will and word of God. Else the bricks will fall out, as quickly as they have fallen in. U.

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Philosophy cannot raise the bulk of mankind up to her level: therefore, if she is to become popular, she must descend to theirs. This she cannot do without a twofold grave injury. She will debase herself, and will puff up her disciples. She will no longer dwell on high, beside the primal sources of truth, uttering her voice from thence, pouring the streams of wisdom among the masses of mankind. She will come down, and set up a company to supply their houses with water at a cheap rate. Whereupon ensues the blessing of competition between rival Philosophies, each striving to be more popular, that is, more superficial than the others. In such a state of things, it is almost fortunate if the name of Philosophy be usurpt by Science, which, as dealing with outward things, may with less degradation be adapted to material wants, and from which it is easier to draw practical results, without holding deep communings with primary principles.

There is only one way in which Philosophy can truly become popular, that which Socrates tried, and which centuries after was perfected in the Gospel,—that which tells men of their divine origin and destiny, of their heavenly duties and calling. This comes home to men's hearts and bosoms, and, instead of puffing them up, humbles them. But to be efficient, this should flow down straight from a higher sphere. Even in its Socratic form, it was supported by those higher principles, which we find set forth with such power and beauty by Plato. In Christian Philosophy on the other hand, the latter has come down from heaven, and the angels are continually descending and ascending along it. Were this heavenly ladder withdrawn or cut off, our Philosophy,—that part of it which sallied beyond the pale of empirical Psychology and formal Logic,—would become mere vulgar gossip about Expediency, Utility, and the various other nostrums for diluting and medicating evil until it turns into good. U.

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In the lower realms of Nature, all things are subject to uniform, unvarying, calculable laws. To these laws they submit with unswerving obedience; so that with regard to the heavenly bodies we can tell what has been thousands of years ago, and what will be thousands of years hence, with the nicest precision. As we enter into the regions of Life, we seem almost to enter into the regions of Chance. We can no longer predicate with the same confidence concerning individuals, but are obliged to limit our conclusions to genera and species. Still there is a universal order, a manifest sequence of cause and effect, a prevailing congruity and harmony, until we mount up to man. But when we make man the object of our observations and speculations, whether as he exists in the present world, or as he is set before us in the records of history, inconsistencies, incongruities, contradictions are so common, that we rather wonder when we find an instance of strict consistency, of undeviating conformity to any law or principle. Disorder at first sight seems the only order, discord the only harmony. Yet we may not doubt that here also there is an order and a harmony, working itself out, although our faculties are not capable of apprehending it, and though the calculus has hitherto transcended our powers. At all events, to adopt the image used by Bacon in a passage quoted above (p. 314), if we hear little else than a dissonant screeching of multitudinous noises now, which only blend in the distance into a roar like that of the raging sea, it behoves us to hold fast to the assurance that this is the necessary process whereby the instruments are to be tuned for the heavenly consort. Though Chaos may only have been driven out of a part of his empire as yet, that empire is undergoing a perpetual curtailment; and in the end he will be cast out of the intellectual and moral and spiritual world, as entirely as out of the material.

U.

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It would be very strange, unless inconsistencies and contradictions were thus common in the history of mankind, that the operation of Mathematical Science, — emanating as it does



wholly from the Reason, and incapable of moving a step, except so far as it is supported by the laws of the Reason, — should have been, both in England and France, to undermine the empire of the power from which it proceeds, and which alone can render it stable and certain. Such however has been the fact ; and it has been brought about in divers ways.

Attempts were made to subject moral and spiritual truths to the selfsame processes, which were found to hold good in the material world, but against which they revolted as incompatible with their free nature. Then that which would not submit to the same strict logical formulæ, was treated as an outcast from the domain of Reason, and handed over to the empirical Understanding, which judges of expediency, and utility, and the adaptation of means to ends. Sometimes too this faculty, which at best is only the prime minister of Reason, its *Maire du Palais*, was confounded with and supplanted it.

Hence the name itself grew to be abused and wholly misapplied. A man who fashions his conduct so as to fit all the windings of the world, and who moreover has the snowball's talent of gathering increase at every step, is called a very *reasonable* man. He on the other hand, who devotes himself to the service of some idea breathed into him by the Reason, and who in his zeal for this forgets to make friends with the Mammon of Unrighteousness, — he who desires and demands that the hearts and minds of his neighbours should be brought into conformity to the supreme laws of the Reason, and that the authority of these laws should be recognized in the councils of nations, — is by all accounted most *unreasonable*, and by many pitied as half mad.

It may be that this was the natural, and for a time irrepressible consequence, when Mathematics enlisted among the retainers of Commerce, and when the abstractions of Geometry, being employed among the principles of Mechanical construction, could thus be turned to account, and were therefore eagerly embraced for purposes of trade. Profitable Science cast unprofitable Science into the background : she was ashamed of her poorer sister, and denied her. The multitude, the half-



thinking, half-taught multitude have always been idolatrous. In order to be roused out of their inert torpours, they require some visible, tangible effigy of that which cannot be seen or toucht: Thus the same perverseness, which led men to worship the creature instead of the Creator, led them also to set up Utility as the foundation of Morality, and to substitute the occasional rules and the variable maxims of the Understanding for the eternal laws and principles of the Reason. u.

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We ask, what is the use of a thing? Our forefathers askt, what is it good for? They saw far beyond us. A thing may seem, and even to a certain extent be useful, without being good: it cannot be good, without being useful. The two qualities do indeed always coincide in the end: but the worth of a criterion is to be simple, plain, and as nearly certain as may be. Now that which a man in a sound and calm mind sincerely deems good, always is so: that which he may deem useful, may often be mischievous, nay, I believe, mostly will be so, unless some reference to good be introduced into the solution of the problem. For no mind ever sailed steadily, without moral principle to ballast and right it.

Besides, when you have ascertained what is good, you are already at the goal; to which Utility will only lead you by a long and devious circuit, where at every step you risk losing your way. You may abuse and misuse: you cannot ungood. u.

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So far is the calculation of consequences from being an infallible, universal criterion of Duty, that it never can be so in any instance. Only when the voice of Duty is silent, or when it has already spoken, may we allowably think of the consequences of a particular action, and calculate how far it is likely to fulfill what Duty has enjoined, either by its general laws, or by a specific edict on this occasion. But Duty is above all consequences, and often, at a crisis of difficulty, commands us to throw them overboard. *Fiat Justitia; pereat Mundus.* It commands us to look neither to the right, nor to the left, but straight onward. Hence every signal act of Duty is altogether



an act of Faith. It is performed in the assurance that God will take care of the consequences, and will so order the course of the world, that, whatever the immediate results may be, His word shall not return to Him empty. U.

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It is much easier to think right without doing right, than to do right without thinking right. Just thoughts may, and woefully often do fail of producing just deeds; but just deeds are sure to beget just thoughts. For, when the heart is pure and straight, there is hardly anything which can mislead the understanding in matters of immediate personal concernment. But the clearest understanding can do little in purifying an impure heart, the strongest little in straightening a crooked one. You cannot reason or talk an Augean stable into cleanliness. A single day's work would make more progress in such a task than a century's words.

Thus our Lord's blessing on knowledge is only conditional: *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them* (John xiii. 17). But to action His promise is full and certain: *If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God.* John vii. 17. U.

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One of the saddest things about human nature is, that a man may guide others in the path of life, without walking in it himself; that he may be a pilot, and yet a castaway. U.

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The original principle of lots is a reliance on the immediate, ever-present, all-ruling providence of God, and on His interposition to direct man's judgement, when it is at a fault. The same was the principle of trials by ordeal. But here, as in so many other cases, the practice long outlasted the principle which had prompted it. Although the soul fled ages ago, the body still cumpers the ground, and poisons the air. Duels, in which a point of honour is allowed to sanction revenge and murder, have taken the place of the ancient judicial combats; and, after losing the belief which in some measure justified the religious lotteries of our ancestors, we betook ourselves to mer-



cenary lotteries in their stead. The motive was no longer to obtain justice, but to obtain money, — the principle, confidence, not in all-seeing, all-regulating Wisdom, but in blind, all-confounding Chance.

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U.

The greatest truths are the simplest : and so are the greatest men.

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U.

There are some things in which we may well envy the members of the Church of Rome, — in nothing more than in the reverence which they feel for whatever has been consecrated to the service of their religion. It may be, that they often confound the sign with the thing signified, and merge the truth in the symbol. We on the other hand, in our eagerness to get rid of the signs, have not been careful enough to preserve the things signified. We have sometimes hurt the truth, in stripping off the symbols it was clothed in.

For instance, they can allow their churches to stand open all day long; and the reverence felt by the whole people for the house of God is their pledge that nobody will dare to rob or injure it. The want of such a reverence in England is perhaps in the main an offset from that superstitious hatred of superstition and idolatry which was so prevalent among the Puritans, through which they would drag the Communion-table into the middle of the nave, and turn it into a seat for the lowest part of the congregation, and would seem almost to have fancied that, because God has no regard for earthly beauty or splendour, He must needs look with special favour on meanness and filth, — that, as He does not respect what man respects, He must respect what man is offended by. The multitude of our sects too, which, if they agree in little else, are nearly unanimous in their hostility to the National Church, has done much to impair the reverence for her buildings; more especially since the practical exclusion of the lower orders from the ministry, while almost all the functions connected with religion are exercised by the clergy alone, has in a manner driven those among the lower orders, who have felt a calling to labour in the



work of the Gospel, into societies where they could find a field for their activity and zeal.

In fact this prejudice, as it is termed, has shared the same fate with our other prejudices, — that is, with those sentiments, whether evil or good, the main source of which lies in the affections, — and has been trampled under foot and crushed by the tyrannous despotism of the Understanding. Not that the Understanding has emancipated us from prejudices. Liable as it is to err, even more so perhaps than any of our other faculties, — or at all events more self-satisfied and obstinate in its errors, — our prejudices have only lost what was kindly and pleasing about them, and have become more inveterate, and consequently more hurtful; because the bias and warp which the Understanding receives, is now caused solely by selfishness and self-will; whereby it becomes more prone than ever to look askance on all things connected with the ideal and imaginative, the heroic and religious parts of our nature.

How fraught with error and mischief our present systems of Moral Philosophy are, may be perceived from the tone of feeling prevalent with regard to such matters, even among the intelligent and the young. I was at a party the other day, where the recent act of sacrilege in King's College Chapel (in 1816) became the subject of conversation. An opinion was expressed, that, if a man must rob, it is better he should rob a church than a dwelling-house. I looked on this as nothing else than one of those paradoxes, which ingenious men are ever starting, whether for the sake of saying something strange, or to provoke a discussion; and for which therefore their momentariness and unpremeditatedness are mostly a sufficient excuse. Still, deeming it a rash and dangerous intrusion on holy ground, I took up my parable against it. To my astonishment I found that the opinion of every person present was opposed to mine. It was their deliberate conviction, resting, they conceived, on grounds of the soundest philosophy, that to rob a church is better than to rob a dwelling-house. The argument on which this conviction was based, may easily be guessed: for of course there was but one, — on which all rang the changes, — that a man



who robs a dwelling-house runs a risk of being led to commit murder; whereas robbing a church is *only* robbing a church. *Only* robbing a church! Let us look, what is the real nature and tendency of the act, which is thus puft aside by the help of this little word, *only*.

In doing so I will waive all such considerations as are drawn mainly from the feelings. I will not insist on the cowardliness of plundering what has been left without defense, or on the treacherousness of violating that confidence in the probity of the people, which leaves our churches unguarded; although both these considerations add a moral force to the legal enactments against horse-stealing, and would justify them, if they wanted any further justification than their obvious necessity. Nor will I urge the moral turpitude of being utterly destitute of that reverence, which every Christian, without disparagement to his intellectual freedom, may reasonably be expected to entertain for objects sanctified by the holy uses they are devoted to. Notwithstanding my persuasion of the inherent wisdom of our moral affections, I will pass by all the arguments with which they would furnish me, and will agree to look at the question merely as a matter of policy, but of policy on the highest and widest scale, in the assurance that, if the affairs of men are indeed ordered and directed by an All-wise Providence, the paths of moral duty and of political expediency will always be found to be one and the same.

If however we are to test the evil of an act, not by that which lies in it, and which it essentially involves, — by the outrage it commits against our moral feelings, by its violation of the laws of the Conscience, — but by its consequences; at all events we should look at those consequences which spring from it naturally and necessarily, not at those which have no necessary, though they may have an accidental and occasional connexion with it, like that of murder with robbery in a dwelling-house. Now it is an axiom of all civil wisdom, which, confirmed as it is by the experience of ages, and by the testimony of every sage statesman and philosopher, it would be a waste of time here to establish by argument, that, without religion, no



civil society can subsist. That is to say, unless the great mass of a nation are united by some one predominant feeling, which blends and harmonizes the diversities of individual character, represses and combines the waywardness of individual wills, and forms a centre, around which all their deeper feelings may cluster and coalesce, no nation can continue for a succession of generations as one body corporate, or a single whole. There may indeed be many diversities, and even conflicting repugnances among sects; but there must be a religious feeling spreading through the great body of the people; and that religious feeling must in the main be one and the same: it must have the same groundwork of faith, the same objects of reverence and fear and love: else the nation will merely be a combination of discordant units, that will have no hearty, lasting bond of union, and may split into atoms at any chance blow. A proof of this is supplied by the dismal condition of Ireland: for, though the opposite forms of Christianity which have prevailed there, have so much in common, that, notwithstanding the further instance of Germany to the contrary, one cannot pronounce it impossible for them to coalesce into a national unity, the effect hitherto has only been endless contention and strife. Therefore whatever violates or shakes the religious feelings of a nation, is an assault on the very foundations of its existence. But that every act of sacrilege, unless it be visited by general abhorrence, must weaken and sap these religious feelings, will hardly be questioned. Wherever such feelings exist, an act of sacrilege must needs be regarded as an outrage against everything sacred, and must be reprobated and punished as such. Although it is not directly an outrage against human life, it is one against that which gives human life its highest dignity and preciousness, that without which human life would be worth little more than the life of other animals. Hence, of all crimes, it is the most injurious to the highest interests of the nation.

Besides, should sacrilege become at all common, — which may God in mercy to our country avert! — it would be necessary to station a watchman or sentry to guard all our churches,



or else to remove everything valuable contained in them, as soon as the congregation disperst. And what a brand of ignominy would it be to us among the nations of Christendom, that we are such inborn, ingrained thieves, as to be unable to restrain the itching of our hands even in the holy temples of our religion ! What a confession of shame would it be, that, in the consciousness of this incurable disease, we had been forced to legislate for the sake of checking the increase of this our bosom sin, and had taken a lesson from the pot-houses, to which the refuse of the people resort, and where the knives and forks are chained to the table ! that we should be unable to trust ourselves, to put the slightest trust in our own honesty, even when religion is superadded to the ordinary motives for preserving it ! Yet, if we have learnt any lesson from our own history, and from that of the world, it should be, that the most precious part of a nation's possessions, no less than of an individual's, is its character : wherefore he who damages that character, is guilty of treason against his country. The only protection which a nation, without signing its own shame-warrant, can grant to the altars of its religion, is by inflicting the severest punishment on those who dare to violate them. They ought to be their own potent safeguard. A dwelling-house is protected by its inmates ; and so ought a church to be protected by the indwelling of the Spirit whom the eye of Faith beholds there.

Moreover burglaries naturally work out their own remedy. Householders become more vigilant ; the police is improved ; the law is strengthened. But, when Faith is shaken, no outward force can set it up again as firmly as before ; and that which rests on it falls to the ground. The outrages committed against the visible building of the church, unless they are arrested, will also prove hurtful to the spiritual Church of Christ. Nine tenths in every nation are unable to distinguish between an object and its attributes, between an idea and the form in which it has usually been manifested, and the associations with which it has ever, and to all appearance indissolubly, been connected. Such abstraction, even in cultivated minds, requires



much watchfulness and attention. The bulk of mankind will not easily understand, how He, whose house may be plundered with impunity, can and ought to be the object of universal reverence, how He can be the Almighty.

I will not speak of the moral corruption which is sure to ensue from the decay of religion in a people. Among the higher and educated classes, we may have divers specious substitutes, in the cultivation of reason and the moral affections, the law of honour and of opinion, which may preserve a decorous exterior of life, even after the primal source of all good in the heart is dried up. But for the lower orders Religion is the only guardian and guide, that can preserve them from being swept along by blind delusions, and the cravings of unsatisfied appetites and passions. If they do not fear God, they will not fear King, or Parliament, or Laws. What does not rest on a heavenly foundation will be overthrown.

Thus, even if a burglary were necessarily to be attended by murder, it would be a less destructive crime to society than sacrilege. Human life should indeed be sacred, on account of the divine spirit enshrined in it. Take away that spirit ; and it is worth little more than that of any other animal. For the sake of any moral principle, of any divine truth, it may be sacrificed, and ought to be readily. He who dies willingly in such a cause, is not a suicide, but a martyr. To deem otherwise is *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*. U.

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So diseased are the appetites of those who live in what is called the fashionable world, that they mostly account Sunday a very dull day, which, with the help of a longer morning sleep, and of an evening nap, and of the Parks, and of the Zoological Gardens, and of looking at their neighbours' dresses, and at their own, they contrive, as it only comes once a week, to get through. Yet of all days it is the one on which our highest faculties ought to be employed the most vigorously, and to find the deepest, most absorbing interest.

With somewhat of the same feeling do the lovers of excitement regard a state of peace. It is so stupid ; there's no news :



no towns have been stormed, no battles fought. We want a little bloodshed, to colour and flavour our lives and our newspapers. How dull must it have been at Rome when the temple of Janus was shut! The Romans however were a lucky people; for that mishap seldom befell them.

It is sad, that, when so many wars are going on unceasingly in all parts of the earth, — the war waged by the mind of man against the powers of Nature in the fulfilment of his mission to subdue them, — the war of Light against Darkness, of Truth against Ignorance and Errour, — the war of Good against Evil, in all its numerous forms, political, social, and personal, — it is very sad that we should feel little interest in any form, except that which to the well-being of mankind is commonly the least important. U.

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When I hear or read the vulgar abuse, which is poured out if ever a monk or a convent is mentioned, I am reminded of what the Egyptian king said to the Israelites: *Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.* To those who know not God, the worship of God is idleness. U.

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Idolatry may be a child of the Imagination; but it is a child that has forgotten its parent. Idolatry is the worship of the visible. It mistakes forms for substances, symbols for realities. It is bodily sight, and mental blindness, — a doting on the outward, occasioned by the want of the poetic faculty. So that Religion has suffered its most grievous injury, not from too much imagination, but from too little.

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The bulk of mankind feel the reality of this world, but have little or no feeling for the reality of the next world. They who, through affliction or some other special cause, have had their hearts withdrawn from the world for a while, and been living in closer communion with God, will sometimes almost cease to feel the reality of this world, and will live mainly in the next. The grand difficulty is to feel the reality of both, so



as to give each its due place in our thoughts and feelings, to keep our mind's eye and our heart's eye ever fixt on the Land of Promise, without looking away from the road along which we are to travel toward it.

a.

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To judge of Christianity from the lives of ordinary, nominal Christians is about as just as it would be to judge of tropic fruits and flowers from the produce which the same plants might bring forth in Iceland.

a.

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The statue of Memnon poured out its song of joy, when the rays of the morning sun fell upon it: and thus, when the rays of divine Truth first fall on a human soul, it is scarcely possible that something like heavenly music should not issue from its depths. The statue however was of stone: no living voice was awakened in it: the sounds melted and floated away. Alas that the heavenly music drawn from the heart of man should often be no less fleeting than the song of Memnon's statue!

u.

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*Seeing is believing*, says the proverb; and most thoroughly is it verified by mankind from childhood upward. Though, of all our senses, the eyes are the most easily deceived, we believe them in preference to any other evidence. We believe them against all other testimony, and often, like Thomas, will not believe without seeing. Hence the peculiar force of the blessing bestowed on those who do not see, and yet believe.

Faith, the Scripture tells us, *comes by hearing*. For faith is an assurance concerning things which are not seen, concerning things which are beyond the power of sight, nay, in the highest sense, concerning Him whom no man hath seen, and whom His Son, having dwelt in His bosom, has declared to us. Its primary condition is itself an act of faith in a person, in him who speaks to us; whereas seeing is a mere act of sense.

u.

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All knowledge, of whatsoever kind, must have a twofold groundwork of faith, — one subjectively, in our own faculties,



and the laws which govern them,—the other objectively, in the matter submitted to our observations. We must believe in the being who knows, and in that which is known: knowledge is the copula of these two acts. Even Scepticism must have the former. Its misfortune and blunder is, that it will keep standing on one leg, and so can never get a firm footing. We must stand on both, before we can walk, although the former act is often the more difficult.

U.

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Nobody can be responsible for his faith. For how can any one help believing what his understanding tells him is true?

But all teachers of Christianity have believed the contrary.

That is, because they were all insolent and overbearing, and wanted to dogmatize and tyrannize over mankind. Now however that people are grown honester and wiser, and love truth more, they will no longer bow the knee to the monstrous absurdities which priestcraft imposed on our poor blind ancestors.

Bravo! you have hit on the very way of proving that a man's moral character has nothing to do with his faith. Plato's of course had nothing.

Why! his vanity led him to indulge in all sorts of visionary fancies.

Dominic's had nothing.

He was such a bloody ruffian, that he persuaded himself he might make people orthodox by butchering them.

Becket's had nothing.

He believed whatever pampered his own ambition, and that of the Church.

Luther's had nothing.

His temper was so uncontrolled, he believed whatever flattered his passions, especially his hatred of the Pope.

Voltaire's had nothing; nor Rousseau's; nor Pascal's; nor Milton's; nor Cowper's. All these examples,—and thousands more might be added; indeed everybody whose heart we could read would be a fresh one,—prove that what a man believes is intimately connected with what he is. His faith is shaped by his moral nature, and shapes it. Pour the same



liquid into a sound and a leaky vessel, into a pure and a tainted one, will the contents of the vessels an hour after be precisely the same?

In fact the sophism I have been arguing against,—mere sophism in some, half sophism, half blunder in others,—comes from the spawn of that mother-sophism and mother-blunder, which would deny man's moral responsibility altogether, on the ground that his actions do not result from any cause within the range of his power to determine them one way or other, but are wholly the creatures of the circumstances he is placed in, and follow the impulses of those circumstances with the same passive necessity, with which the limbs of a puppet are moved by its wires.

U.

The foundation of domestic happiness is faith in the virtue of woman. The foundation of political happiness is faith in the integrity of man. The foundation of all happiness, temporal and eternal, is faith in the goodness, the righteousness, the mercy, and the love of God.

U.

A loving spirit finds it hard to recognize the duty of preferring truth to love,—or rather of rising above human love, with its shortsighted dread of causing present suffering, and looking at things in God's light, who sees the end from the beginning, and allows His children to suffer, when it is to work out their final good. Above all is the mind that has been renewed with the spirit of self-sacrifice, tempted to overlook the truth, when, by giving up its own ease, it can for the moment lessen the sufferings of another. Yet, for our friend's sake, self ought to be renounced, in its denials as well as its indulgences. It should be altogether forgotten; and in thinking what we are to do for our friend, we are not to look merely, or mainly, at the manner in which his feelings will be affected at the moment, but to consider what will on the whole and ultimately be best for him, so far as our judgement can ascertain it.

a.

To suppress the truth may now and then be our duty to



others : not to utter a falsehood must always be our duty to ourselves.

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A.

A teacher is a kind of intellectual midwife. Many of them too discharge their office after the fashion enjoined on the Hebrew midwives : if they have a son to bring into the world, they kill him ; if a daughter, they let her live. Strength is checkt ; boldness is curbed ; sharpness is blunted ; quickness is clogged ; highth is curtailed and deprest ; elasticity is dampt and trodden down ; early bloom is nipt : feebleness gives little trouble, and excites no fears ; so it is let alone.

How then does Genius ever contrive to escape and gain a footing on this earth of ours ?

The birth of Minerva may shew us the way : it springs forth in full armour. As the midwives said to Pharaoh, *It is lively, and is delivered ere the midwives come in.*

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U.

Homebred wits are like home-made wines, sweet, luscious, spiritless, without body, and ill to keep.

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U.

If a boy loves reading, reward him with a plaything ; if he loves sports, with a book. You may easily lead him to value a present made thus, and to shew that he values it by using it.

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The tasks set to children should be moderate. Over-exertion is hurtful both physically and intellectually, and even morally. But it is of the utmost importance that they should be made to fulfill all their tasks correctly and punctually. This will train them for an exact, conscientious discharge of their duties in after life.

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U.

A great step is gained, when a child has learnt that there is no necessary connexion between liking a thing and doing it.

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a.

By directing a child's attention to a fault, and thus giving it



a local habitation and a name, you may often fix it in him more firmly ; when, by drawing his thoughts and affections to other things, and seeking to foster an opposite grace, you would be much more likely to subdue it. In like manner a jealous disposition is often strengthened, when notice is taken of it ; while the endeavour to cherish a spirit of love would do much toward casting it out.

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a.

I saw two oaks standing side by side. The one was already clothed in tender green leaves ; the other was still in its wintry bareness, shewing few signs of reviving life. Whence arose this ? The influences of the sun and air and sky must have been the same on both trees : their nearness seemed to bespeak a like soil : no outward cause was apparent to account for the difference. It must therefore have been something within, something in their internal structure and organization. But wait a while : in a month or two both the trees will perhaps be equally rich in their summer foliage. Nay, that which is slowest in unfolding its leaves, may then be the most vigorous and luxuriant.

So is it often with children in the same family, brought up under the same influences : while one grows and advances daily under them, another may seem to stand still. But after a time there is a change ; and he that was last may even become first, and the first last.

So too is it with God's spiritual children. Not according to outward calculations, but after the working of His grace, is their inward life manifested : often the hidden growth is unseen till the season is far advanced ; and then it bursts forth in double beauty and power.

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a.

You desire to educate citizens ; therefore govern them by law, not by will. What is individual must be reared in the quiet privacy of home. The disregard of this distinction occasions much of the outcry of the pious against schools. Religion must not be made an engine of discipline.

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A literal translation is better than a loose one ; just as a cast from a fine statue is better than an imitation of it. For copies, whether of words or things, must be valuable in proportion to their exactness. In idioms alone, as a friend remarks to me, the literal rendering cannot be the right one.

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Hence the difficulty of translations, regarded as works of art, varies in proportion as the books translated are more or less idiomatic ; for in rendering idioms one can seldom find an equivalent, which preserves all the point and grace of the original. Hence do the best French books lose so much by being transfused into another language : a large part of the spirit evaporates in the process. To my own mind, after a good deal of experience in this line, no writer of prose has seemed so untranslatable as Goethe. In dealing with others, one may often fancy that one has exprest their meaning as fully, as clearly, and as forcibly, as they have in their own tongue. But I have hardly ever been able to satisfy myself with a single sentence rendered from Goethe. There has always seemed to be some peculiar aptness in his words, which I have been unable to represent. The same dissatisfaction, I should think, must perpetually weigh upon such an attempt to translate Plato ; whom Goethe also resembles in this, that the unapproachable beauty of his prose does not strike us so much, until we attain to this practical conviction how inimitable it is. Richter presents difficulties to a translator, because he exercises such a boundless liberty in coining new words, whereas we are under great restraint in this respect. In attempting to render the German metaphysicians, we are continually impeded by the want of an equivalent philosophical terminology. But Goethe seldom coins words ; he uses few uncommon ones : his difficulties arise from his felicity in the selection and combination of common words.

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U.

Of all books the Bible loses least of its force and dignity and beauty from being translated into other languages, wherever the translation is not erroneous. One version may indeed ex-



cell another, in that its diction may be more expressive, or simpler, or more majestic: but in every version the Bible contains the sublimest thoughts uttered in plain and fitting words. It was written for the whole world, not for any single nation or age; and though its thoughts are above common thoughts, they are so as coming straight from the primal Fountain of Truth, not as having been elaborated and piled up by the workings of Abstraction and Reflexion.

One reason why the translators of the Bible have been more successful than others, is that its language, in the earlier and larger half, belongs to that primitive period, when the native unity of human thought and feeling was only beginning to branch out into diversity and multiplicity, when the chief objects of language were the elementary features of outward nature, and of the heart and mind, and when the reflective operations of the intellect had as yet done little in bringing out those differences and distinctions, which come forward more and more as we advance further from the centre, thereby diverging further from each other, and by the aggregate of which nations as well as individuals are severed. Owing to the same cause, the language of the Bible has few of those untranslatable idiomatic expressions, which grow up and multiply with the advance of social life and thought. In the chief part of the New Testament on the other hand, a like effect is produced by the position of the writers. The language is of the simplest elementary kind, both in regard to its nomenclature and its structure, as is ever the case with that of those who have no literary culture, when they understand what they are talking about, and do not strain after matters beyond the reach of their slender powers of expression. Moreover, as the Greek original belongs to a degenerate age of the language, and is tainted with many exoticisms and other defects, while our Version exhibits our language in its highest purity and majesty, in this respect it has a great advantage.

But does not the language of Homer belong to a nearly similar period? and has any writer been more disfigured and distorted by his translators?



True! The ground of the difference however is plain. The translators of Homer have allowed themselves all manner of liberties in trying to shape and fashion and dress him out anew after the pattern of their own age, and of their own individual tastes; and against this he revolted, as the statue of Apollo or of Hercules would against being drest out in a coat and waist-coat. Whereas the translators of the Bible were induced by their reverence for the sacred text to render it with the most scrupulous fidelity. They were far more studious of the matter, than of the manner; and there is no surer preservative against writing ill, or more potent charm for writing well. Perhaps, if other translations had been undertaken on the same principle, and carried on in a somewhat similar reverential spirit, they would not have dropt so often like a sheet of lead from the press.

At the same time we are bound to acknowledge it as an inestimable blessing, that our translation of the Bible was made, before our language underwent the various refining processes, by which it was held to be carried to its perfection in the reign of Queen Anne. For in those days the reverence for the past had faded away; even the power of understanding it seemed well-nigh extinct. Tate and Brady's Psalms shew that the Bible would have been almost as much defaced and corrupted as the Iliad was by Pope; though, as a translator in verse is always constrained to assume a certain latitude, there would have been less of tinsel when the translation was in prose.

Yet the less artificial and conventional state of our language in the age of Shakspeare was far more congenial to that of the Bible. Hence, when the task of revising our translation, for the sake of correcting its numerous inaccuracies, and of removing its obscurities, so far as they can be removed, is undertaken, the utmost care should be used to preserve its language and phraseology.

U.

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Philology, in its highest sense, ought to be only another name for Philosophy. Its aim should be to seek after wisdom in the whole series of its historical manifestations. As



it is, the former usually mumbles the husk, the other paws the kernel. U.

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Chaos is crude matter, without the formative action of mind upon it. Hence its limits are always varying, both in every individual man, and in every nation and age. U.

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A truism misapplied is the worst of sophisms.

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One of the wonders of the world is the quantity of idle, purposeless untruth, the lies which nobody believes, yet everybody tells, as it were from the mere love of lying,—or as though the bright form and features of Truth could not be duly brought out, except on a dark ground of falsehood. U.

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Not a few Englishmen seem to travel abroad with hardly any other purpose than that of finding out grievances. Surely such people might just as well stay at home: they would find quite enough here. *Coelum, non animus, mutant qui trans mare currunt.* U.

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The most venomous animals are reptiles. The most spiteful among human beings rise no higher. Reviewers should bear this in mind; for the tribe are fond of thinking that their special business is to be as galling and malicious as they can. U.

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Some persons think to make their way through the difficulties of life, as Hannibal is said to have done across the Alps, by pouring vinegar upon them. Or they take a lesson from their housemaids, who brighten the fire-irons by rubbing them with something rough. U.

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Would you touch a nettle without being stung by it? take hold of it stoutly. Do the same to other annoyances; and few things will ever annoy you. U.

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One is much less sensible of cold on a bright day, than on a cloudy. Thus the sunshine of cheerfulness and hope will lighten every trouble. U.

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Sudden resolutions, like the sudden rise of the mercury in the barometer, indicate little else than the changeableness of the weather. U.

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In a controversy both parties will commonly go too far. Would you have your adversary give up his error? be beforehand with him, and give up yours. He will resist your arguments more sturdily than your example. Indeed, if he is generous, you may fear his overrunning on the other side: for nothing provokes retaliation, more than concession does. U.

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We have all been amused by the fable of the Sun and the Wind, and readily acknowledge the truth it inculcates, at least in that instance. But do we practise what it teaches? We may almost daily. The true way of conquering our neighbour is not by violence, but by kindness. O that people would set about striving to conquer one another in this way! Then would a conqueror be truly the most glorious, and the most blessed, because the most beneficent of mankind. U.

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When you meet a countryman after dusk, he greets you, and wishes you *Goodnight*; and you return his greeting, and call him *Friend*. It seems as though a feeling of something like brotherhood rose up in every heart, at the approach of the hour when we are all to be gathered together beneath the wings of Sleep. In this respect also is Twilight "studious to remove from sight Day's mutable distinctions," as Wordsworth says of her in his beautiful sonnet. All those distinctions Death levels; and so does Sleep.

But why should we wait for the departure of daylight, to acknowledge our brotherhood? Rather is it the dimness of our sight, the mist of our prejudices and delusions, that separate and estrange us. The light should scatter these, as spir-



itual light does; and it should be manifest, even outwardly, that, *if we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another.*

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U.

Flattery and detraction or evil-speaking are, as the phrase is, the Scylla and Charybdis of the tongue. Only they are set side by side: and few tongues are content with falling into one of them. Such as have once got into the jaws of either, keep on running to and fro between them. They who are too fair-spoken before you, are likely to be foul-spoken behind you. If you would keep clear of the one extreme, keep clear of both. The rule is a very simple one: never find fault with anybody, except to himself; never praise anybody, except to others. U.

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Personalities are often regarded as the zest, but mostly are the bane of conversation. For experience seems to have ascertained, or at least usage has determined, that personalities are always spiced with more or less of malice. Hence it must evidently be our duty to refrain from them, following the example set before us by our great moral poet:

I am not one who much or oft delight  
To season my fireside with personal talk,  
Of friends who live within an easy walk,  
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight.

But surely you would not have mixt conversation always settle into a discussion of abstract topics. Commonly speaking, you might as well feast your guests with straw-chips and sawdust. Often too it happens that, in proportion as the subject of conversation is more abstract, its tone becomes harsher and more dogmatical. And what are women to do? they whose thoughts always cling to what is personal, and seldom mount into the cold, vacant air of speculation, unless they have something more solid to climb round. You must admit that there would be a sad dearth of entertainment and interest and life in conversation, without something of anecdote and story.

Doubtless. But this is very different from personality. Conversation may have all that is valuable in it, and all that is



lively and pleasant, without anything that comes under the head of personality. The house in which, above all others I have ever been an inmate in, the life and the spirit and the joy of conversation have been the most intense, is a house in which I hardly ever heard an evil word uttered against any one. The genial heart of cordial sympathy with which its illustrious master sought out the good side in every person and thing, and which has found an inadequate expression in his delightful *Sketches of Persia*, seemed to communicate itself to all the members of his family, and operated as a charm even upon his visitors. For this reason was the pleasure so pure and healthy and unmixt; whereas spiteful thoughts, although they may stimulate and gratify our sicklier and more vicious tastes, always leave a bitter relish behind.

Moreover, even in conversation whatever is most vivid and brightest is the produce of the Imagination, — now and then, on fitting occasion, manifesting some of her grander powers, as Coleridge seems to have done above other men, — but usually, under a feeling of the incongruities and contradictions of human nature, putting on the comic mask of Humour. Now the Imagination is full of kindness. She could not be what she is, except through that sympathy with Nature and man, which is rooted in love. All her appetites are for good; all her aspirations are upward; all her visions, — unless there be something morbid in the feelings, or gloomy in past experience, to overcloud them, — are fair and hopeful. This is the case in poetry: the deepest tragedy ought to leave the assurance on our minds that, though *sorrow may endure for a night*, even for a long, long polar night, *joy cometh in the morning*. Nor is her working different in real life. Looking at men's actions in conjunction with their characters, and with the circumstances whereby their characters have been modified, she can always find something to say for them; or, if she cannot, she turns away from so painful a spectacle. It is through want of Imagination, through the inability to view persons and things in their individuality and their relations, that people betake themselves to exercising their Understanding, which looks at objects in their insulation,



and pries into motives, without reference to character, and rebukes and abuses what it cannot reconcile with its own narrow rules, and can see little in man but what is bad. Hence, to keep itself in spirits, it would fain be witty, and smart, and would make others smart. U.

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What is one to believe of people? One hears so many contradictory stories about them.

Exercise your digestive functions: assimilate the nutritive; get rid of the deleterious. Believe all the good you hear of your neighbour; and forget all the bad. U.

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Sense must be very good indeed, to be as good as good nonsense. U.

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Who does not think himself infallible? Who does not think himself the only infallible person in the world? Perhaps the desire to be delivered from the tyranny of the pope within their own breasts, or at least of that within the breasts of their brethren, may have combined with the desire of being delivered from the responsibility of exercising their own judgement, in making people readier to recognize and submit to the Pope on the Seven Hills. At all events this desire has been a main impelling motive with many of the converts, who in various ages have gone back to the Church of Rome. U.

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All sorrow ought to be *Heimweh*, homesickness. But then the home should be a real one, not a hole we run to on finding our home closed against us. U.

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Humour is perhaps a sense of the ridiculous, softened and meliorated by a mixture of human feelings. For there certainly are things pathetically ridiculous; and we are hard-hearted enough to smile smiles on them, much nearer to sorrow than many tears.

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If life was nothing more than earthly life, it might be sym-



bolized by a Janus, with a grinning Democritus in front, and a wailing Heraclitus behind. Such antitheses have not been uncommon. One of the most striking is that between Johnson and Voltaire.

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U.

The craving for sympathy is the common boundary-line between joy and sorrow.

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U.

Many people hurry through life, fearful, as it would seem, of looking back, lest they should be turned, like Lot's wife, into pillars of salt. Alas too! if they did look back, they would see little else than the blackened and smouldering ruins of their vices, the smoking Sodom and Gomorrah of the heart.

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U.

Γνωθὶ σεαυτὸν, they say, descended from heaven. It has taken a long journey then to very little purpose.

But surely people must know themselves. So few ever think about anything else.

Yes, they think what they shall have, what they shall get, how they shall appear, what they shall do, perchance now and then what they shall be, but never, or hardly ever, what they are.

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U.

It is a subtle and profound remark of Hegel's (Vol. x. p. 465), that the riddle which the Sphinx, the Egyptian symbol for the mysteriousness of nature, propounds to Edipus, is only another way of expressing the command of the Delphic Oracle, γνῶθι σεαυτὸν. And, when the answer is given, the Sphinx casts herself down from her rock: when man does know himself, the mysteriousness of Nature, and her terrors, vanish also; and she too walks in the light of knowledge, of law, and of love.

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U.

The simplicity which pervades Nature results from the exquisite nicety with which all its parts fit into one another. Its multiplicity of wheels and springs merely adds to its power; and, so perfect is their mutual adaptation and agreement, the





effect seems inconceivable, except as the operation of a single law, and of one supreme Author of that Law. u.

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*The exception proves the rule*, says an old maxim, which has often been greatly abused. As it is usually brought forward, the exception in most cases merely proves the rule to be a bad one, to have been deduced negligently and hastily from inadequate premisses, and to have overreached itself. Naturally enough then it is unable to keep hold of that, on which it never laid hold. Or the exception may prove that the forms of the Understanding are not sufficiently pliant and plastic to fit the exuberant, multitudinous varieties of Nature; who does not shape her mountains by diagrams, or mark out the channels of her rivers by measure and line.

In a different sense however, the exception does not merely prove the rule, but makes the rule. The rule of human nature, the canonical idea of man is not to be taken as an average from any number of human beings: it must be drawn from the chosen, choice few, in whom that nature has come the nearest to what it ought to be. You do not form your conception of a cup from a broken one, nor that of a book from a torn or foxt and dog's-eared volume, nor that of any animal from one that is maimed, or mutilated, or distorted, or diseased. In every species the specimen is the best that can be produced. So the conception of man is not to be taken from stunted souls, or blighted souls, or wry souls, or twisted souls, or sick souls, or withered souls, but from the healthiest and soundest, the most entire and flourishing, the straightest, the highest, the truest, and the purest. u.

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Men ought to be manly: women ought to be womanly or feminine. They are sometimes masculine, which men cannot be; but only men can be effeminate. For masculineness and effeminacy imply the palpable predominance in the one sex, of that which is the peculiar characteristic of the other.

Not that these characteristic qualities, which in their proper place are graces, are at all incompatible. The manliest heart



has often had all the gentleness and tenderness of womanhood, nay, is far likelier than the effeminate to have it. In the *Life of Lessing* we are told (i. p. 203,) that, when Kleist, the German poet, who was a brave officer, was discontented at being placed over a hospital after the battle of Rossbach, Lessing used to comfort him with the passage in Xenophon's *Cyropedia*, which says that the bravest men are always the most compassionate, adding that the eight pilgrims from Bremen and Lubeck, who went out to war against the enemy, on their first arrival in the Holy Land took charge of the sick and wounded. On the other hand the most truly feminine heart, in time of need, will manifest all the strength and calm bravery of manhood. Among the many instances of this, let me refer to the fine stories of Chilonis, of Agesistrata, and of Archidamia, in Plutarch's *Life of Agis*. Thus too, amid the miserable spectacle just exhibited by the downfall of royalty in France, it is on the heroic fortitude of two illustrious women that the eye reposes with comfort and thankfulness, the more so because it is known that in both cases the fortitude sprang from a heavenly source. In the history of the former Revolution also the brightest spots are the noble instances of female heroism, arising mostly from the strength of the affections.

That quality however in each sex, which is in some measure alien to it, should commonly be kept in subordination to that which is the natural inmate. The softness in the man ought to be latent, as the waters lay hid within the rock in Horeb, and should only issue at some heavenly call. The courage in the woman should sleep, as the light sleeps in the pearl.

The perception of fitness is ever a main element in the perception of pleasure. What agrees with the order of Nature is agreeable; what disagrees with that order is disagreeable. Hence our hearts, in spite of their waywardness, and of all the tricks we play with them, still on the whole keep true to their original bent. Women admire and love in men whatever is most manly. Thus Steffens, in one of his Novels, (*Malkolm* ii. p. 12), makes Matilda say: "We women should be in a sad case, if we could not reckon with confidence on the firmness



and steadfastness of men. However peacefully our life may revolve around the quiet centre of our own family, we cannot but be aware that in the wider relations of life many things are tottering and insecure, and can only be upheld by clearness of insight, by vigorous activity, and by manly strength; without which they would fall and injure our own quiet field of action. The place which in earlier times the rude or the chivalrous bravery of men held in the estimation of women, is now held by firmness of character, by cheerful confidence in action, which does not shrink from obstacles, but stands fast when others are troubled. The manyheaded monsters which were to be conquered of yore, have not disappeared in consequence of their bearing other weapons; and true manly boldness wins our hearts now, as it did formerly." Hence it was only in a morbid, corrupt state of society, that a Wertherian sentimentalism could be deemed a charm for the female heart. Notwithstanding too all that has been done to pamper the admiration of talents into a blind idolatry, no sensible woman would not immeasurably prefer steadiness and manliness of character to the utmost brilliancy of intellectual gifts. Indeed she who gave up herself to the latter, without the former, would soon feel an aching want. Othello's wooing of Desdemona is still the way to the true female heart.

On the other hand that which men love and admire in women, is whatever is womanly and feminine, that of which we see such beautiful pictures in Imogen and Cordelia and Miranda, in

The gentle lady married to the Moor,  
And heavenly Una with her milkwhite lamb.

Among a number of proofs of this I will only mention the repugnance which all men feel at the display of a pair of blue stockings.

One of the few hopeful symptoms in our recent literature is, that this year (1848) has been opened by two such beautiful poems as *the Saint's Tragedy* and *the Princess*; in both of which the leading purpose, though very differently treated, is to exhibit the true idea and dignity of womanhood. In the latter



poem this idea is vindicated from the perversions of modern rhetorical sophistry ; in the former, from those of the rhetorical and ascetical sophistry of the middle ages, not however with the idle purpose of assailing an exploded error, but because this very form of error has lately been reviving, through a sort of antagonism to the other. In a year when so many frantic delusions have been spreading with convulsive power, casting down thrones, dissolving empires, uprooting the whole fabric of society, it is a comfort to find such noble assertions of the true everlasting ideas of humanity.

U.

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What should women write ?

That which they can write, and not that which they cannot. This is clear. They should only write that which they can write well, that which accords with the peculiar character of their minds. For thus much I must be allowed to assume, — it would take too long here to argue the point, — that, as in their outward conformation, and in the offices assigned to them by Nature, and as in the bent and tone of their feelings, so in the structure of their minds there is a sexual distinction. Some persons deny this ; those, for instance, who are delighted at hearing that the minds of all mankind, and of all womankind too, are sheets of white paper, and who think the easiest way of building a house is on the sand, where they shall have no obstacles to level and remove in digging for the foundations ; those again who are incapable of mounting to the conception of an originating power, and who cannot move a step, unless they can support themselves by taking hold of the chain of cause and effect ; those who, themselves being the creatures of circumstances, or at least being unconscious of any power in themselves to withstand and controul and modify circumstances, are naturally prone to believe that every one else must be a similar hodge-podge. But as the whole history of the world is adverse to such a notion, as under every aspect of society it exhibits a difference between the sexes, varying indeed, to a certain extent, according to their relative positions, but markt throughout by a pervading analogy, which is reflected from the face of actual life by an unbroken



series of images in poetry from the age of Homer down to Tieck and Tennyson, there is no need of combating an assertion, deduced from an arbitrary hypothesis, by the very persons who are the loudest in proclaiming that there is no ground of real knowledge except facts.

Now to begin with poetry, — according to the precedence which has always belonged to it in the literature of every people, — some may incline to fancy that, while prose, from its connexion with speculation, and with action in the whole sphere of public life, belongs especially to men, poetry is rather the feminine department of literature. Yet, being askt many years ago why a tragedy by a lady highly admired for her various talents had not succeeded, I replied, — though, I trust, never wanting in due respect to that sex which is hallowed by comprising the sacred names of wife and sister and mother, — that there was no need to seek for any further reason, beyond its being written by a woman. For of all modes of composition none can be less feminine than the dramatic. They who are to represent the great dramas of life, the strife and struggle of passions in the world, should have a consciousness of the powers, which would enable them to act a part in those dramas, latent within them, and should have some actual experience of the conflicts of those passions. They also need that judicial calmness in giving every one his due, which we see in Nature and in History, but which is utterly repugnant to the strong affectionateness of womanhood. A woman may indeed write didactic dialogues on the passions, as Joanna Baillie has done with much skill ; but these are not tragedies. Nor is epic poetry less alien from the genius of the female mind. So that, of the three main branches of poetry, the only feminine one is the lyrical, — not objective lyrical poetry, like that of Pindar and Simonides, and the choric odes of the Greek tragedians, — but that which is the expression of individual, personal feeling, like Sappho's. Of this class we have noble examples in the songs of Miriam, of Deborah, of Hannah, and of the Blessed Virgin.

The same principle will apply to prose. What women write best is what expresses personal, individual feeling, or



describes personal occurrences, not objectively, as parts of history, but with reference to themselves and their own affections. This is the charm of female letters: they alone touch the matters of ordinary life with ease and grace. Men's letters may be witty, or eloquent, or profound; but, when they have anything beyond a mere practical purpose, they mostly pass out of the true epistolary element, and become didactic or satirical. Cowper alone, whose mind had much of a feminine complexion, can vie with women in writing such letters as flow calmly and brightly along, mirroring the scenes and occupations of common life. In Bettina Brentano's there is an empassioned lyrical eloquence, which is often worthy of Sappho, with an exquisite naivety peculiarly her own. Rachel's, with a piercing intuitive discernment of reality and truth, which is peculiarly a female gift, have an almost painful subtilty in the analysis of feelings, which was forced into a morbid intensity, partly by her position as a Jewess, in the midst of a community where Jews were regarded with hatred and contempt, and partly by the acutest nervous sensitiveness, the cause of excruciating sufferings prolonged through years.

Memoirs again, when they do not meddle with the intrigues of politics and literature, but confine themselves to a simple affectionate narrative of what has befallen the authoress and those most dear to her, are womanly works. Of these we have a beautiful example in those of the admirable Lucy Hutchinson; and there is a pleasing grace in Lady Fanshawe's. Madame Larochejacquelein's also are delightful; but these, I have understood, were made up out of her materials by Barante.

Moreover, as women can express earthly love, so can they express heavenly love, with an entire consecration of every thought and feeling, such as men, under the necessity which presses on them of being *troubled about many things*, can hardly attain to; as we see for instance in the writings of Santa Teresa, of St Catherine of Sienna, of Madame Guyon.

Books on the practical education of children too, and story-books for them, such as Miss Lamb's delightful *Stories of Mrs Leicester's School*, lie within the range of female authorship.



But what say you to female novels?

Were I Tarquin, and the Sibyl came to me with nine wagon-loads of them, I am afraid I should allow her to burn all the nine, even though she were to threaten that no others should ever be forthcoming hereafter. One may indeed meet now and then with happy representations of female characters and of domestic manners, as in Miss Austen's novels, and in Frederika Bremer's. But the class is by no means a healthy one. Novels which are works of poetry, — novels which transport us out of ourselves into an ideal world, another, yet still the same, — novels which represent the fermenting and contending elements of human life and society, — novels which, seizing the follies of the age, dig down to their roots, — novels which portray the waywardnesses and self-delusions of passion, — may hold a high rank in literature. But ordinary novels, which string a number of incidents, and a few common-place pasteboard characters, around a love-story, teaching people to fancy that the main business of life is to make love and to be made love to, and that, when it is made, all is over, are almost purely mischievous. When we build castles, they should be in the air. When we indulge in romantic dreams, they should lie in the realms of romance. It is most hurtful to be wishing to act a novel in real life, most hurtful to fancy that the interest of life resides in its pleasures and passions, not in its duties; and it mars all simplicity of character to have the feelings and events of common life spread out under a sort of fantasmagoric illumination before us.

U.

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*Written in the Album of a lady, who, on my saying one evening, I was not well enough to read, replied, "Therefore you will be able to write something for me."*

*You cannot read . . . therefore, I pray you, write :*

The lady said. Thus female logic prances:

From twig to twig, from bank to bank it dances,

Heedless what unbridged gulfs may disunite

The object from the wish. In wanton might,

Spring-like, you tell the rugged skeleton,

That bares its wiry branches to the sun,

*Thou hast no leaves . . . therefore with flowers grow bright.*



*Therefore!* Fair maiden's lips such word ill suits.  
 From her it only means, *I will, I wish.*  
 She scorns her pet, — unless he puts on boots,  
 Straight plunges through the water at the fish,  
 Nor lets *I dare not* wait upon *I would:*  
 For what's impossible must sure be good.  
*Therefore!* With soft, bright lips such words ill suit.  
 Man's hard, clencht mouth, whence words uneath do slip,  
 May wear out stones with its slow ceaseless drip.  
 But ye who play on Fancy's hope-strung lute,  
 Shun the dry chaff that chokes and strikes her mute.  
 Yet grieve not that ye may not cleave the ground,  
 And hunt the roots out as they stray around:  
 'T is yours to cull the blossoms and the fruit.  
*Therefore* could never yet link earth to heaven:  
*Therefore* ne'er yet brought heaven down on earth.  
 Where *therefore* dies, Faith has its deathless birth:  
 To Hope a sphere beyond its sphere is given:  
 And Love bids *therefore* stand aside in awe,  
 Is its own reason, its own holy law.

U.

1834.

Female education is often a gaudy and tawdry setting, which cumpers and almost hides the jewel it ought to bring out. A.

Politeness is the outward garment of goodwill. But many are the nutshells, in which, if you crack them, nothing like a kernel is to be found. A.

With what different eyes do we view an action, when it is our own, and when it is another's! A.

We seldom do a kindness, which, if we consider it rightly, is not abundantly repaid; and we should hear little of ingratitude, unless we were so apt to exaggerate the worth of our better deeds, and to look for a return in proportion to our own exorbitant estimate. A.

A girl, when entering on her teens, was observed to be very serious; and, on her aunt's asking her whether anything was the matter, she said, she was afraid that reason was coming.

One might wish to know whether she ever felt equally seri-



ous, after it had come. If so, she differed from most of her own sex, and from a large part of the other. But the shadows in the morning and evening are longer than at noon.

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Eloquence is speaking out...out of the abundance of the heart, — the only source from which truth can flow in a passionate, persuasive torrent. Nothing can be juster than Quintilian's remark (x. 7, 15), "*Pectus est, quod disertos facit, et vis mentis: ideoque imperitis quoque, si modo sint aliquo affectu concitati, verba non desunt.*" This is the explanation of that singular psychological phenomenon, Irish eloquence; I do not mean that of the orators merely, but that of the whole people, men, women, and children.

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It is not solely in the Gospel that people go out into the desert to gaze after new spiritual incarnations. They have sometimes been sought in moral deserts, often in intellectual.

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The book which men throw at one another's head the oftenest, is the Bible; as though they misread the text about the Kingdom of Heaven, and fancied it took people, instead of being taken, by force.

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Were we to strip our sufferings of all the aggravations which our over-busy imaginations heap upon them, of all that our impatience and wilfulness embitters in them, of all that a morbid craving for sympathy induces us to display to others, they would shrink to less than half their bulk; and what remained would be comparatively easy to support. a.

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In addition to the sacrifices prescribed by the Law, every Israelite was permitted to make freewill-offerings, the only limitation to which was, that they were to be according as the Lord had blest him. What then ought to be the measure of our freewill-offerings? ought they not to be infinite? e.

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Many persons are so afraid of breaking the third com-



mandment, that they never speak of God at all; and, to make assurance doubly sure, never think of Him.

Others seem to interpret it by the law of contraries; for they never take God's name except in vain. So apt too are people to indulge in self-delusions, that many of these have rankt themselves among the stanch friends and champions of the Church.

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U.

On ne se gêne pas dans cette vie : on ne se presse pas pour l'autre.

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U.

A sudden elevation in life, like mounting into a rarer atmosphere, swells us out, and often perniciously.

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U.

What would become of a man in a vacuum? All his members would bulge out until they burst. This is the true image of anarchy, whether political or moral, intellectual or spiritual. We need the pressure of an atmosphere around us, to keep us whole and at one.

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U.

Pantheism answers to ochlocracy, and leads to it; pure monotheism, to a despotic monarchy. If a type of trinitarianism is to be found in the political world, it must be a government by three estates, *tria juncta in uno*.

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U.

A strong repugnance is felt now-a-days to all *a priori* reasoning; and to call a system an *a priori* system is deemed enough to condemn it. Let the materialist then fall by his own doom. For he is the most presumptuous *a priori* reasoner, who peremptorily lays down beforehand, that the solution of every intellectual and moral phenomenon is to be sought and found in what comes immediately under the cognisance of the senses.

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U.

What is *sansculotterie*, or the folly of the *descamisados*, but man's stripping himself of the fig-leaf? He has forgotten that there is a God, from whom he needs to hide himself; and he



prostitutes his nakedness in the eyes of the world. Thus it is a step in the process which is ever going on, where it is not counteracted by conscience and faith, of bestializing humanity.

U.

It is a favorite axiom with our political economists,—an axiom which has been far more grossly abused by the exaggerations and misapplications of its advocates, than it ever can be by the invectives of its opponents,—that the want produces the supply. In other words, poverty produces wealth; a vacuum produces a plenum.

Now Πενία, it is true, in the Platonic Fable, is the mother of Ἔρως. But she is not the mother of Πόρος. On the contrary it is, when impregnated by Πόρος, that she brings forth Ἔρως, who then, according to the chorus of the Birds, may become the parent of all things. This Greek fable, which is no less superior to the modern system in profound wisdom than in beauty, will enable us to discern the real value of the above-mentioned axiom, and the limits within which it is applicable, and at the same time to expose the fallacy involved in its extension beyond those limits.

*Want* is an ambiguous term. It means mere destitution; and it means desire: it may be equivalent to Πενία, or to Ἔρως. These two senses are often confounded; or a logical trickster will slip in one instead of the other. Mere destitution cannot produce a supply: of itself it cannot even produce a desire. There is no necessity by which our being without a thing constrains us to wish for it. We are without wings; but this does not make us want to have them; nor would such a want cause a pair to shoot out of our shoulders. The wishing-cap of Fortunatus belongs to the cloud-land of poetical, or to the smoke-land of philosophical dreamers.

The wants which tend to produce a supply, are of two kinds, instinctive and artificial. The former seek after that, a desire of which has been implanted in us by Nature; the latter after that, which we have been taught to desire by experience. Thus, in order that Ἔρως should spring from Πενία, it is neces-



sary that she should have been overshadowed by *Πόρος*, either consciously or unconsciously. The light must enter into the darkness, ere the darkness can know that it is without light, and open its heart to desire and embrace it.

Even with reference to Commerce, from which our axiom has been derived, we may see that, though the want, when created, tends to produce a supply, there must have been a supply in the first instance to produce the want. Thus in England at present few articles of consumption are deemed more indispensable than potatoes and tea ; and vast exertions are employed in supplying the want of them. But everybody knows that these wants are entirely artificial, and that they were produced gradually, and very slowly by the introduction of these articles, which now rank among the prime necessities of our economical life.

If we take the principle we are speaking of in this, its right sense, it has indeed been very widely operative, in the moral and intellectual, as well as in the physical history of man. In fact it is only the witness borne by the whole order of Nature to the truth of the divine law, that they who seek shall find. Our constitution, and that of the world around us, have been so exquisitely adapted to each other, that not only did they harmonize at the first, but all the changes and varieties in the one have called forth corresponding changes and varieties in the other. It is interesting to trace the adjustments by which accidental deficiencies are remedied, to observe how our bodily frame fits itself to circumstances, and seems almost to put forth new faculties, when there is need of them. The blind learn, as it were, to see with their ears ; the deaf, to hear with their eyes. Let both these senses be taken away : the touch comes forward and assumes their office. In like manner the physical characters of men, in different stages of society are modified and moulded by the wants which act on them. Savages, for example, have a strength and sharpness of perception, which in civilized life, being no longer needed, wears away.

Thus, if a want is of such a kind as to give rise to a demand, it will produce a supply, or some sort of substitute for it. In other words, the nature and extent of the supply will depend in



great measure on the nature and extent of the demand. But when the same axiom is applied, as it often has been, to prove the uselessness of those great national institutions, which are designed to elevate and to hallow our nature, — when it is contended, for instance, that our Universities are useless, because the want of knowledge will produce the best supply, without the aid of any endowments or privileges conferred or sanctioned by the State, — or that the want of religion will produce an adequate supply, without a national Establishment, — the ground is shifted; and the argument, if pusht to an extreme, would amount to this, that *omnia fiunt ex nihilo*.

Here is a double paralogism. It is true indeed, as I have admitted above, that, if a want be felt, so as to excite a desire and a demand, it will produce a supply of some sort or other. This however is itself the main difficulty with regard to our intellectual and moral, above all, our spiritual wants, to awaken a consciousness and feeling of them, and a desire to remove them. Where a certain degree of supply exists, such as that of knowledge in the educated classes of society, custom and shame and self-respect will excite a general demand for a somewhat similar amount of knowledge. But, if it is to go beyond those limits in any department, it can only be through the influence of persons who have attained to a higher eminence; so that here too the supply will precede the demand. On the other hand they who have had any concern with the education of the lower classes, will be aware of the enormous power which the *vis inertiae* possesses in them, and what strong stimulants are required to counteract it. As to our spiritual wants, though they exist in all, they are so feeble in themselves, and so trodden under foot and crusht by our carnal appetites and worldly practices, you might as well expect that a field of corn, over which a regiment of cavalry has been galloping to and fro, will rise up to meet the sun, as that of ourselves we shall seek food for our spiritual wants. Even when the Bread of Life came down from heaven, we turned away from it, and rejected it. Even when *He came to His own, His own received Him not*.

Moreover, if we suppose a people to have become in some



measure conscious of its intellectual and its spiritual wants, so that an intellectual and spiritual demand shall exist among them, they in whom it exists will be very ill fitted to judge of the quality of the supply which they want. They may distinguish between good tea and bad, between good wine and bad, though even that requires some culture of the perceptive faculty. But with regard to knowledge, especially that of spiritual truth, they will be at the mercy of every impudent quack, unless some determinate provision is made by the more intelligent part of the nation, whereby the people shall be supplied with duly qualified guides and instructors.

That such institutions, like everything else here on earth, are liable to corruption and perversion, I do not deny. Even solar time is not true time. But correctives may be devised; and in all such institutions there should be a power of modifying and adapting themselves to new wants that may spring up. This however would lead me too far. I merely wisht to point out the gross fallacy in the argument by which such institutions are impugned.

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U.

The main part of the foregoing remarks was written many years ago, on being told by a friend, that he had heard the argument here refuted urged as quite conclusive against our Universities and our Church-establishment, by certain Scotch philosophers of repute. The fallacy seemed to me so glaring, that I could hardly understand how any persons, with the slightest habit of close thinking, could fail to detect it. Hence I was a good deal surprised at reading in a newspaper several years after, that Dr. Chalmers, in the Lectures which he delivered in London in 1838, had complained at great length and with bitterness, of some one who had purloined this reply to the economical argument from him, and who had deprived him of the fame of being the discoverer. As these Lectures are printed in the collection of his Works, this complaint must have been greatly mitigated, and is degraded into a note. Honour to the great and good man, who, having been bred and trained in an atmosphere charged with similar sophisms, was the first, as it



would seem, to detect this mischievous one, or at least to expose it! But surely, of all things, the last in which we should lay claim to a monopoly or a patent, is truth. Even in regard to more recondite matters, it has often been seen that great discoveries have, so to say, been trembling on the tongue of several persons at once; and he who has had the privilege of enunciating them, has merely been the Flugelman in the army of Knowledge. If others utter a truth, which we fancy we have discovered, at the same time with ourselves, or soon after, and independently, we should not grudge them their share in the honour, but rather give thanks for such a token that the discovery is timely, that the world was ready for it, and wanted it, and that its spies were gone out to seek it. U.

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*Amo*, or some word answering to it, is given in the grammars of most languages as an example of the verb; perhaps because it expresses the most universal feeling, the feeling which is mixt up with and forms the key-note of all others. The disciples of the selfish school indeed acknowledge it only in its reflex form. If one of them wrote a grammar, his instance would be:

Je m'aime.

Nous nous aimons.

Tu t'aimes.

Vous vous aimez.

Il s'aime.

Ils s'aiment.

Yet the poor simple Greeks did not know that *φιλεῖν* would admit of a middle voice. U.

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The common phrase, *to be in love*, well expresses the immersion of the soul in love, like that of the body in light. Thus South says, in his Sermon *On the Creation* (vol. i. p. 44): "Love is such an affection, as cannot so properly be said to be in the soul, as the soul to be in that." U.

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Man cannot emancipate himself from the notion that the earth and everything on it, and even the sun, moon, and stars, were made almost wholly and solely for his sake. Yet, if the Earth and her creatures are made to supply him with food, he



on his part is made to till the Earth, and to prepare and train her and all her creatures for the fulfilment of their appointed works. If he would win her favours, he must woo her by faithful and diligent service. There should be a perpetual reciprocation of kind offices. As the Earth shared in his Fall, so is she to share in his redemption, waiting, with all her creatures, in earnest expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God. At present, if he often treats her insultingly and domineeringly, the Earth in revenge has the last word, and silences and swallows him up.

U.

Two streams circulate through the universe, the stream of Life, and the stream of Death. Each feeds, and feeds upon the other. For they are perpetually crossing, like the serpents round Mercury's Caduceus, wherewith *animas ille evocat Orco Pallentes, alias sub Tartara tristia mittit*. They began almost together; and they will terminate together, in the same unfathomable ocean; after which they will separate, and take contrary directions, and never meet again.

U.

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If roses have withered, buds have blown:  
 If rain has fallen, winds have dried:  
 If fields have been ravaged, seeds are sown:  
 And Wordsworth lives, if poets have died.

For all things are equal here upon earth:  
 'Tis the ashes of Joy that give Sorrow her birth:  
 And Sorrow's dark cloud, after louring awhile,  
 Or melts, or is brightened by Hope to a smile.

Where the death-bell tolled, the merry chime rings:  
 Where waved the cypress, myrtles spread:  
 When Passion is drooping, Friendship springs,  
 And feeds the Love which Fancy bred.

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The consummation of Heathen virtue was exprest in the wish of the Roman, that his house were of glass: so might all men behold every action of his life. The perfection of Christian goodness is defined by the simple command, which however is the most arduous ever laid upon man, not to let the left hand



know what the right hand does. For the eye which overlooks the Christian, is the eye which sees in secret, and which cannot be deceived, the eye which does not need glass as a medium of sight, and which pierces into what no glass can reveal. u.

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Hardly any dram is so noxious as praise ; perhaps none : for those whom praise corrupts, might else have wrought good in their generation. Like Tarquin, it cuts off the tallest plants. Be sparing of it therefore, ye parents, as ye would be of some deadly drug : withhold your children from it, as ye would from the flowers on the brink of a precipice. Whatsoever you enjoin, enjoin it as a duty ; enjoin it because it is right ; enjoin it because it is the will of God ; and always without reference to what man may say or think of it. Reference to the opinion of the world, and deference to the opinion of the world, and conference with it, and inference from it, and preference of it above all things, above every principle and rule and law, human or divine, — all this will come soon enough without your interference. As easily might you stop the east wind, or check the blight it bears along with it. Ask your own conscience, reader ; probe your heart ; walk through its labyrinthine chambers ; and trace the evils you feel within you to their source : do you not owe the first seeds of many of your moral diseases, and the taint which cankers your better feelings, to your having drunk too deeply of this delicious poison ?

At first indeed it may seem harmless. The desire of praise seems to be little else than the desire of approbation : and by what lodestar is a child to be guided, unless by the approving judgement of its parent ? But, although their languages on the confines are so similar as scarcely to be distinguishable, you have only to advance a few steps, and you will find that you are in a foreign country, happy if you discover it to be an enemy's, before you become a captive. Approbation speaks of the thing or action : *That is right. What you have done is right.* Praise is always personal. It begins indeed gently with the particular instance, *You have done right ;* but it soon fixes on lasting attributes, and passes from *You are right,* through *You*



*are a good child, You are a nice child, You are a sweet child,* to that which is the cruelest of all, *You are a clever child.* For God in his mercy has hitherto preserved goodness from being much fly-blown and desecrated by admiration. People who wish to be stared at, seldom try hard to be esteemed good. Vanity takes a shorter and more congenial path : and the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is still, in a secondary way, one of the baits which catch the greatest number of souls. When a child has once eaten of that fruit, and been told that it is worthy to eat thereof, it longs for a second bite ; not however so much from any strong relish for the fruit itself, as from the hope of renewing the pleasing titillations by which the first mouthful had been followed. This longing in time becomes a craving, the craving a gnawing ravenousness : nothing is palatable, save what pampers it ; but there is nothing out of which it cannot extract some kind of nourishment.

Yet, alas ! it is on this appetite that we rely, on this almost alone, for success, in our modern systems of Education. We excite, stimulate, irritate, drug, dram the pupil, and then leave him to do what he pleases, heedless how soon he may break down, so he does but start at a gallop. Nothing can induce a human being to exert himself, except vanity or jealousy : such is our primary axiom ; and our deductions are worthy of it. Emulation, emulation, is the order of the day, Emulation in its own name, or under an *alias* as Competition : and only look at the wonders it has effected : it has even turned the hue of the Ethiop's skin : it has set all the blacking-mongers in England emulating and competing with each other in white-washing every wall throughout the country. Emulation is declared to be the only principle we can trust with safety : for principle it is called : although it implies the rejection and denial of all principle, of its efficacy at least, if not of its existence, and is a base compromise between principle and opinion, in which the things of eternity are made to bow down before the wayward notions and passions of the day. Nay, worse, this principle, or no principle, is adopted as the main spring and motive in a scheme of National, and even of Religious Edu-



cation, by the professing disciples of the Master who declared, that if any man desires to be first, he shall be last, and whose Apostle has numbered Emulation among *the works of the flesh*, together with adultery, idolatry, hatred, strife, and murder. We may clamour as we will about the unchristian practices of the Jesuits : the Jesuits knew too much of Christianity, ever to commit such an outrage against its spirit, as to make children pass through the furnace of the new Moloch, Emulation.\*

But let me turn from these noisy vulgar paradoxes, to look at wisdom in her quiet gentleness, as in Wordsworth's sweet language she describes the growth of her favorite,

A maid whom there were none to praise,  
And very few to love.

The air of these simple words, after the hot, close atmosphere I have been breathing, is as soft and refreshing as the touch of a rose-leaf to a feverish cheek. The truth however, so exquisitely exprest in them, was equally present to persons far wiser than our system-makers, the authors of our popular tales. The beautiful story of Cinderella, among others, shews an insight into the elements of all that is lovely in character, seldom to be paralleled in these days.

Ought not parents and children then to be fond of each other ?

You, who can interrupt me with such a question, must have a very fond notion of fondness. Whatever is peculiar in fondness, whatever distinguishes it from love, is faulty. Fondness may dote and be foolish : Love is only another name for Wisdom. It is the Wisdom of the Affections, as Wisdom is the Love of the Understanding. Fondness may flatter and be flattered : Love shrinks from flattery, from giving it or receiving it. Love knows that there are things which are not to be seen, that there are things which are not to be talkt of ; and it shrinks equally from the thought of polluting what is visible by its gaze, and of

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\* This was written in 1826. Since then the worship of Emulation has been assailed in many quarters ; and the system of our National Schools has been improved. Still the idol has not yet been cast down ; and what was true in matter of principle then, is just as true now.



profaning what is unutterable by its prattle. Its origin is a mystery: its essence is a mystery: every pulsation of its being is mysterious: and it is aware that it cannot break the shell, and penetrate the mystery, without destroying both itself and its object.\* For the cloud, which is so beautiful in the distance, when the sunbeams are sleeping on its pillow, if you go too near and enter it, is only dank and dun: you find nothing, you learn nothing, except that you have been trickt. Often have we been told that Love palls after fruition; and this is the reason. When it has pluckt off its feathers for the sake of staring at them, it can never sew them on again: when it is swinish, it is in a double sense guilty of suicide. Its dwelling is like that of the Indian God on the lotus, upon the bosom of Beauty, rising out from the playful waters of feelings which cannot be fixt: and it cannot turn up the lotus to look under it, without oversetting and drowning itself; it cannot tear up its root, to plant it on the firm ground of scientific conviction, but it withers and dies. Such as love wisely therefore, cherish the mystery, and handle the blossom delicately and charily; for so only will it retain its amaranthine beauty.

There is no greater necessity for a father's or mother's love to vent itself in bepraising their child, than for the child's love

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\* Since the above was written, I have met with the same thoughts in a pamphlet written by Passow, the excellent lexicographer, during the controversy excited by the attempt to introduce gymnastic exercises as an instrument of education. "If our love for our country is to be sincere, without ostentation and affectation, it cannot be produced immediately by instruction and directions, like a branch of scientific knowledge. It must rest, like every other kind of love, on something unutterable and incomprehensible. Love may be fostered: it may be influenced by a gentle guidance from afar: but, if the youthful mind becomes conscious of this, all the simplicity of the feeling is destroyed; its native gloss is brusht off. Such too is the case with the love of our country. Like the love for our parents, it exists in a child from the beginning; but it has no permanency, and cannot expand, if the child is kept, like a stranger, at a distance from his country. No stories about it, no exhortations will avail, as a substitute: we must see our country, feel it, breathe it in, as we do Nature. Then history may be of use, and after a time reflexion, consciousness. But our first care ought to be for institutions, in which the spirit of our country lives, without being uttered in words, and takes possession of men's minds involuntarily. For a love derived from precepts is none." *Turnziel*, p. 142.



to vent itself in bepraising its father and mother. The latter is too pure and reverential to do so: why should the former be less reverential? Or can any object be fitter to excite reverence, than the spirit of a child, newly sent forth from God, in all the loveliness of innocence, with all the fascination of helplessness, and with the secret destinies of its future being hanging like clouds around its unconscious form? On the contrary, as, the less water you have in your kettle, the sooner it begins to make a noise and smoke, so is it with affection: the less there is, the more speedily it sounds, and smokes, and evaporates, talking itself at once out of breath and into it. Nay, when parents are much in the habit of showering praises on their children, it is in great measure for the sake of the pleasing vapour which rises upon themselves. For the whirlpool of Vanity sucks in whatever comes near it. The vain are vain of everything that belongs to them, of their houses, their clothes, their eye-glasses, the white of their nails, and, alas! even of their children.

Equally groundless would be the notion that children need to be thus made much of, in order to love their parents. Such treatment rather weakens and shakes affection. For there is an instinct of modesty in the human soul, that instinct which manifests itself so beautifully by enabling us to blush; and, until this instinct has been made callous by the rub of life, it cannot help looking distrustfully on praise. Thus Steffens, in his *Malkolm* (i. p. 379), represents a handsome, manly boy, whom a number of ladies treated with vociferous admiration, caressing and kissing him, and calling him *a lovely child, quite an angel*. "But he was very much annoyed at this, and at length tore himself away impatiently, prest close to his mother, and complained aloud and vexatiously: *Why do they kiss and caress me so? I can't bear it.*" A beautiful contrast to this is supplied by Herder's recollections of his father, as related by his widow (*Erinnerungen aus Herders Leben*, i. p. 17). "When he was satisfied with me, his face grew bright, and he laid his hand softly on my head, and called me *Gottesfriede* (*God's peace*: his name was *Gottfried*). This was my greatest, sweetest re-



ward." This exemplifies the distinction drawn above between praise and approbation.

The very pleasure occasioned by praise is of a kind which implies it to be something unexpected and forbidden, and not more than half deserved. Besides, as I have already said, the habit of feeding on it breeds such an insatiable hunger, that even a parent may in time grow to be valued chiefly as ministering to the gratification of this appetite. Hence would spring a state like that described by Robert Hall in his sermon on *Modern Infidelity* (p. 38): "Conceive of a domestic circle, in which each member is elated by a most extravagant opinion of himself, and a proportionable contempt of every other, — is full of little contrivances to catch applause, and, whenever he is not praised, is sullen and disappointed."

Affection, to be pure and durable, must be altogether objective. It may indeed be nursed by the memory of benefits received; but it has nothing to do with hope, except the hope of intercourse and communion, of interchanging kind looks and words, and of performing kind deeds. Whatever is beside this, is not love, but lust, it matters not of what appetite, nor whether of the body or of the mind. U.

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What a type of a happy family is the family of the Sun! With what order, with what harmony, with what blessed peace, do his children the planets move around him, shining with the light which they drink in from their parent's face, at once on him and on one another! U.

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How great is the interval between gamboling and gambling. One belongs to children, the other to grown up people. If an angel were looking on, might he not say? *Is this what man learns from life? Was it for this that the father of a new generation was preserved from the waters of the Flood?* U.

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O that old age were truly second childhood! It is seldom more like it than the berry is to the rosebud.

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Few things more vividly teach us the difference between the living objects of Nature and the works of man's contrivance, than the impressions produced, when, after a lapse of years, we for the first time revisit the home of our childhood. On entering the old house, how strangely changed does everything appear! We look in vain for much that our fancy, unchecked by the knowledge of any other world than that immediately around, had pictured to itself; and we turn away in half incredulous disappointment, as we pass from room to room, and our memory calls up the various events connected with them. It almost seems to us as though, while our minds have been expanding at a distance, the familiar chambers and halls must have been growing narrower, and are threatening, like the prison-tomb in Eastern story, to close upon all the joys of our childhood, and to crush them for ever.

But, when we quit the house of man's building, and seek for fellowship with the past among the living, boundless realities of Nature, all that we had lost is regained; and we find how faithful a guardian angel she has been, and how richly she restores us a hundredfold the treasures we had committed to her keeping. The waters of the peaceful river, winding through the groves where the child delighted to wander, speak to us in the same voice now, in which they spoke then; and, while we listen to them, the confiding lilies upborne no less lovingly on their bosom, than when in early days we vainly tried to tear them from it, are an emblem of the happy thoughts which we had cast upon them, and which they have preserved for us until we come to reclaim them. The bright kingfisher darting into the river recalls our earliest visions of beauty; and the chorus of birds in the groves seem not only to welcome us back, but also to reawaken the pure melodies of childhood in its holiest aspirations. In like manner, as we walk under the deep shade of the stately avenues, the whisperings among the branches seem to flow from the spirits of the place, giving back their portion of the record of our childish years; and we are reminded of the awe with which that shade imprest us, and of the first time we felt anything like fear, when, on a dark evening, the



sudden cry of the screech-owl taught us that those trees had other inhabitants, beside the birds to which we listened with such delight by day.

Thus the whole of Nature appears to us full of living echoes, to which we uttered our hopes and joys in childhood, though the sound of her response only now for the first time reaches our ears. Everywhere we, as it were, receive back the tokens of a former love, which we had too long forgotten, but which has continued faithful to us. Hence we shall return to our work in the world with a wiser and truer heart, having learnt that this life is indeed the seed-time for eternity, and that in all our acts, from the simplest to the highest, we are sowing what, though it may appear for a time to die, only dies to be quickened and to bear fruit.

ε.

May we not conceive too, that, if a spirit, after having past through the manifold pleasures and cares and anxieties and passions and feverish struggles of this mortal life, and been removed from them by death, were to revisit this home of its antemortal existence, it would in like manner shrink in amazed and sickening disappointment from the narrow, petty, mean, miserable objects of all its earthly aims and contentions, and would at the same time be filled with wonder and adoration, as it contemplated the infinite wisdom and love, manifested both in the whole structure and order of the Divine Purposes, and in their perfect correspondence to its own imperfectly understood wants and desires?

υ.

As well might you search out a vessel's path  
Amid the gambols of the dancing waves,  
Or track the lazy footsteps of a star  
Across the blue abyss, as hope to trace  
The motions of her spirit. Easier task  
To clench the bodiless ray, than to arrest  
Her airy thoughts. Flower after flower she sips,  
And sucks their honied fragrance, nor bedims  
Their brightness, nor appears to spoil their stores;  
And all she lights on seems to grow more fair.

Fuller, in his *Good Thoughts in Worse Times*, has a passage



on Ejaculations, in which he introduces the foregoing image so prettily, that I will quote it. "The field wherein bees feed is no whit the barer for their biting. When they have taken their full repast on flowers or grass, the ox may feed, the sheep fat, on their reversions. The reason is, because those little chemists distill only the refined part of the flower, leaving the grosser substance thereof. So ejaculations bind not men to any bodily observance, only busy the spiritual half, which maketh them consistent with the prosecution of any other employment." U.

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When we are gazing on a sweet, guileless child, playing in the exuberance of its happiness, in the light of its own starry eyes, we are tempted to deny that anything so lovely can have a corrupt nature latent within ; and we would gladly disbelieve that the germs of evil are lying in these beautiful blossoms. Yet, in the tender green of the sprouting nightshade, we can already recognize the deadly poison, that is to fill its ripened berries. Were our discernment of our own nature, as clear as of plants, we should probably perceive the embryo evil in it no less distinctly.

---

μ.

A little child, on first seeing the Thames, and being told it was a river, cried, *No, it can't be a river: it must be a pond.* His notion of a river had been formed from a little brook near his home ; and the largest surface of water he was familiar with was a pond. Happy will it be for that child, if, when all his notions are modified by long experience, he still retains such simplicity and reverence for the past, as to maintain the claim of the little brook to the name, which, he once supposed, especially belonged to it.

In the infancy of our spiritual consciousness how much do we resemble this child ! Every thought and feeling, in the little world in which our spirits move, becomes all-important : each "single spot is the whole earth" to us : and everything beyond is judged of by its correspondence to what goes on within it. If we perceive anything in others different from what we deem to be right, we are apt to exclaim, like the little



child, that it cannot be right or true: and thus our minds grow narrow and exclusive, at the very time when they have received the first impulse toward their enlargement. Such a state requires much gentleness and forbearance from those who are more advanced in their course, and have learnt to mistrust themselves more, and to look with more faith for the good around them, whatever its form may be. For the mind, when it is first "putting forth its feelers into eternity," is peculiarly sensitive, and needs to be led gradually, and to be left much to the workings of its own experience. If it is met repulsively, by an assumption of superior wisdom, it may either be driven back into a mere worship of self, in its various petty modes and forms; or, should the person be of a bolder temper, he will cast off all faith in that, which he once accounted so precious, and, instead of recognizing the germ of manhood in his infant state, and waiting for its gradual development, will be tempted to deny that there was any kind of life or light in it.

If, in the birth and growth of the outward man, the imperfect substance is so sacred in the eyes of Him who forms it, that all our members are written in His book, and that He looks not at what it is in its imperfection, but at what it is to be in its perfection, how infinitely more precious and sacred should we esteem the development of the inner man! with what love and reverence should we regard each member, however imperfect at first, and shelter it from everything that might check or distort its growth!

---

It is a scandal that the sacred name of Love should be given by way of eminence to that form of it, which is seldome found pure, and which very often has not a particle of real love in it.

---

In those hotbeds of spurious, morbid feelings, sentimental novels, we often find the lover, as he is misnamed, after he has irreparably wronged and ruined his mistress, pleading that he was carried along irresistibly by the violence of his love: and I am afraid that such pictures are only representations of what



occurs far more frequently in actual life. Not that this absolves the writers. For, instead of allaying and healing the disease, they irritate and increase it. They would even persuade the victim of it that it is inevitable, nay, that it is an eruption and symptom of exuberant health. If however there be any case, in which it is plain that Violence is only Weakness grown rank, the bastard brother of Weakness, it is this. Such love is not the ethereal, spiritual, self-consuming, self-purifying flame, but the darkling, smouldering one, that spits forth sparks of light amid volumes of smoke, being crushed and almost extinguished by the damp, black, crumbling load of the sensual appetites. So far indeed is sensual love from being the same thing with spiritual love, that it is the direct contrary, the hellish mask in which the fiend mimics and mocks it. For, while the latter enjoins the sacrifice of self to its object, and finds a ready obedience, the former is ravenous to sacrifice its object to self.

U.

---

“It is strange (says Novalis) that the real ground of cruelty is lust.” The truth of this remark flashed across me this morning, as I was looking into a bookseller’s window, where I saw *Illustrations of the Passion of Love* standing between two volumes of a *History of the French Revolution*. The same connexion is pointed out by Baader in his *Philosophical Essays* (i. p. 100). “This impotence of the spirit of lies, his inability to realize himself or come into being, is the cause of that inward fury, with which, in his bitter destitution and lack of all personal existence, he seizes, or tries to seize upon all outward existences, in order to propagate himself in and with them, but with and in all, being merely a destroyer and devourer, like a fierce flame, only brings forth a new death and new hunger, instead of the sabbatical rest of the completed, successful manifestation and incarnation. Hence the real spirit and purpose of murder and lust is one and the same, in every stage of being.” Again, in another passage, he says (p. 192): “*He who is not for Me is against Me*; and where the spirit of love does not dwell, there dwells the spirit of murder. This is



proved even by those manifestations of sin or hatred, which seem the furthest removed from the desire of destruction or murder; as for instance in the case with which the impulse of lust transforms itself into that of murder, whether the latter displays itself merely physically, or psychically, in what the French call *perdre les femmes*." The same terrible affinity is exprest by Milton in his catalogue of the inmates of hell.

Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons. —  
 Peor his other name, when he enticed  
 Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,  
 To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.  
 Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged  
 Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove  
 Of Moloch homicide; lust hard by hate.

U.

What is meant by Universal Philanthropy? Love requires that its object should be something real, something positive and definite; as is proved by all mythologies, in which the attributes of the Deity are impersonated, to satisfy the cravings of the imagination and of the heart: for the abstract God of philosophy can never excite anything like love. I can love this individual, or that individual; I can love a man in all the might of his strength and of his weakness, in all the blooming fulness of his heart, and all the radiant glory of his intellect: I can love every particular blossom of feeling, every single ray of thought: but the mere abstract, bodiless, heartless, soulless notion, the logical entity, Man, "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything," affords no home for my affections to abide in, no substance for them to cling to.

But, although reality and personality are essential to him whom we are to regard with affection, bodily presence is by no means necessary to the perception of reality and personality. Vain and fallacious have been the quibbles of those sophists, who have contended that no action can take place, unless the agent be immediately, that is, as they understand it, corporeally present. Homer and Shakspeare have not ceased to act, and will not so long as the world endures. Nor does this action at all depend on the presence of their works before us. They



cannot put forth all the energies of their genius, until they have purged themselves from this earthly dross, and become spiritual presences in the spirit. For nothing can act but spirit: matter is unable to effect anything, save by the force it derives from something spiritual. The golden chains, by which Anaxagoras fabled that the sun was made fast in the heavens, are only a type of that power of Attraction, or, to speak at once more poetically and more philosophically, of that power of golden Love, which is the life and the harmony of the universe.

True love is not starved, but will often be rather fed and fostered, by the absence of its object. In Landor's majestic language, in the Conversation between Kosciusko and Poniatowski, "Absence is not of matter: the body does not make it. Absence quickens our love and elevates our affections. Absence is the invisible and incorporeal mother of ideal beauty." Love too at sight, the possibility of which has been disputed by men of drowsy hearts and torpid imaginations, can arise only from the meeting of those spirits which, before they meet, have beheld each other in inward vision, and are yearning to have that vision realized.

---

U.

Life has two ecstatic moments, one when the spirit catches sight of Truth, the other when it recognizes a kindred spirit. People are for ever groping and prying around Truth; but the vision is seldom vouchsafed to them. We are daily handling and talking to our fellow-creatures; but rarely do we behold the revelation of a soul in its naked sincerity and fervid might. Perhaps also these two moments generally coincide. In some churches of old, on Christmas Eve, two small lights, typifying the Divine and the Human Nature, were seen to approach one another gradually, until they met and blended, and a bright flame was kindled. So likewise it is when the two portions of our spiritual nature meet and blend, that the brightest flame is kindled within us. When our feelings are the most vivid, our perceptions are the most piercing; and when we see the furthest, we also feel the most. Perhaps it is only in the land of Truth, that spirits can discern each other; as it is when they



are helping each other on, that they may best hope to arrive there.

---

U.

The loss of a friend often afflicts us less by the momentary shock, than when it is brought back to our minds some time afterward by the sight of some object associated with him in the memory, of something which reminds us that we have laughed together, or shed tears together, that our hearts have trembled beneath the same breeze of gladness, or that we have bowed our heads under the same stroke of sorrow. So may one behold the sun sink quietly below the horizon, without leaving anything to betoken that he is gone; while the sky seems to stand unconscious of its loss, unless its chill blueness in the East be interpreted into an expression of dismay. But anon rose-tinted clouds,—call them rather streaks of rosy light,—come forward in the West, as it were to announce the promise of a joyous resurrection.

---

U.

There are days on which the sun makes the clouds his chariot, and travels on curtained behind them. Weary of shining before a drowsy thankless world, he covers the glory of his face, but will not quite take away the blessing of his light; and now and then, as it were in pity, he withdraws the veil for a moment, and looks forth, to assure the earth that her best friend is still watching over her in the heavens; like those occasional visitations by which the Lord, before the birth of the Saviour, assured mankind that he was still their God.

---

U.

Nothing is further than Earth from Heaven; nothing is nearer than Heaven to Earth.

---

U.

*I will close this Volume with the following Ode to Italy, written by my Brother nearly thirty years ago, in November, 1818. What would then have been deemed a very bold, rash guess, may now perhaps be regarded as a prophecy about to receive its fulfilment. The interest which every scholar, every lover of poetry and art, every reverent student of history, must*



*feel in the fate of Italy, was deepened in my brother by his having been born at Rome.*

## ITALY.

Strike the loud harp; let the prelude be,  
     Italy, Italy!  
 That chord again, again that note of glee . .  
     Italy, Italy!  
 Italy! O Italy! the very sound it charmeth;  
 Italy! O Italy! the name my bosom warmeth;  
     High thoughts of self-devotions,  
     Compassionate emotions,  
     Soul-stirring recollections,  
     With hopes, their bright reflexions,  
 Rush to my troubled heart at thought of thee,  
 My own illustrious, injured Italy.

    Dear queen of snowy mountains,  
     And consecrated fountains,  
 With whose rocky heaven-aspiring pale  
     Beauty has fixt a dwelling  
     All others so excelling,  
 To praise it right, thine own sweet tones would fail,  
     Hail to thee! Hail!  
 How rich art thou in lakes to poet dear,  
 And those broad pines amid the sunniest glade  
     So reigning through the year,  
 Within the magic circle of their shade  
     No sunbeam may appear!  
     How fair thy double sea!  
     In blue celestially  
 Glittering and circling! — but I may not dwell  
     On gifts, which, decking thee too well,  
 Allured the spoiler. Let me fix my ken  
     Rather upon thy godlike men,  
 The good, the wise, the valiant, and the free,  
 On history's pillars towering gloriously,  
 A trophy reared on high upon thy strand,  
     That every people, every clime  
     May mark and understand,  
 What memorable courses may be run,  
 What golden never-failing treasures won,  
     From time,  
     In spite of chance,  
     And worse ignorance,  
 If men be ruled by Duty's firm decree,  
 And Wisdom hold her paramount mastery.



What art thou now? Alas! Alas!

Woe, woe!

That strength and virtue thus should pass

From man below!

That so divine, so beautiful a Maid

Should in the withering dust be laid,

As one that — Hush! who dares with impious breath

To speak of death?

The fool alone and unbeliever weepeth.

We know she only sleepeth;

And from the dust,

At the end of her correction,

Truth hath decreed her joyous resurrection:

She shall arise, she must.

For can it be that wickedness has power

To undermine or topple down the tower

Of virtue's edifice?

And yet that vice

Should be allowed on sacred ground to plant

A rock of adamant?

It is of ice,

That rock, soon destined to dissolve away

Before the righteous sun's returning ray.

But who shall bear the dazzling radiancy,

When first the royal Maid awaking

Darteth around her wild indignant eye,

When first her bright spear shaking,

Fixing her feet on earth, her looks on sky,

She standeth like the Archangel prompt to vanquish,

Yet still imploring succour from on high!

O days of wearying hopes and passionate anguish,

When will ye end!

Until that end be come, until I hear

The Alps their mighty voices blend,

To swell and echo back the sound most dear

To patriot hearts, the cry of Liberty,

I must live on. But when the glorious Queen

As erst is canopied with Freedom's sheen,

When I have prest, with salutation meet,

And reverent love to kiss her honoured feet,

I then may die,

Die how well satisfied!

Conscious that I have wateht the second birth

Of her I've loved the most upon the earth,

Conscious beside

That no more beauteous sight can here be given:

Sublimar visions are reserved for heaven.







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