THE PURITAN:

A SERIES OF ESSAYS,

CRITICAL, MORAL, AND MISCELLANEOUS.

BY JOHN OLDBUG, Esq.

Ecce Somniator venit!
Vulgate, *Gen.* xxxvii. 19.

VOL. II.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY PERKINS & MARVIN.
PHILADELPHIA:
HENRY PERKINS.

1836.

CONTENTS TO VOLUME II.

THE PURITAN.

No. 31.

—Find out moon-shine ; find out moon-shine.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

I HAVE illustrated the vagueness of general terms, (out of which general principles must be formed,) in instances brought from material objects ; because such exemplifications are most clear and convincing. But the remark is stronger when applied to intellectuals. Of these, the most specific parts are more dark than of tangible substances ; and of course general terms must increase the obscurity. "Indeed," says one of the greatest metaphysicians of our own country, "there is a vast indistinctness, and unfixedness in most, or at least very many of the terms used to express things pertaining to moral and spiritual matters. Whence arise innumerable mistakes, strong prejudices, inextricable confusion, and endless controversy!"

Now in forming general terms in politics or morals, the authors of them must have two objects in view—their *inclusiveness*, and their *clearness*. If a general term be very wide, it of course must be very inclusive; it must embrace all the cases, which the speaker wishes to cover; and the wider the general resemblances, the less the approximation to perspicuity in particular cases. I speak of a fish, for example; and I wish to include in that term, all the living creatures which inhabit the waters. But it may mean a large fish or a small one, a whale or a minnow, a shell fish or a fish with a skin, a halibut or an eel. Now it has been unfortunate, especially in immaterial things, that writers have been more intent on the *inclusiveness* of their general terms, than on their *clearness*. The question has not been so much, how much information will the term convey, as whether it covers the whole ground; and hence the accuracy of the philosopher has only been the darkness of the man. The fact is, that these two things hold an inverse ratio to each other. This is the misfortune of all generic philosophy. It only turns to us the darkest side of things. As you make a term inclusive, you must of course make it obscure. As a sun placed in a remote quarter of the heavens, becomes to a spectator on this earth, a twinkling star, shedding a feeble light, and only useful as a guide-mark to a wanderer on the wilderness or ocean, so a truth pushed to its highest generality, becomes less clear, even should its true-

ness not be lost. Or, it is like a candle in a room, which reflects much light when its rays are confined and returned by the walls; but remove the walls, and its straggling lustre, in the wide expanse of darkness around it, is in danger of being lost.

Let us illustrate this by an example. Suppose I am asking what is the nature of virtue. It is evident here that I wish to find some term, which will cover all the cases in which virtue can be found. If I leave out one instance, or class of instances, my definition is not complete. I fix my mind on this fact, and proceed with this fear before my eyes. In other words, it is obvious that I am attending to the inclusiveness of my definition. As if I were drawing out a piece of wax, to see how far its tenacity could be carried; it is certain I should not care how fine the thread was, provided it did not absolutely break. But I may stretch my wax so that the thread may become almost invisible; and I may make my definition so inclusive as to make its clearness almost lost. In either case, I may gain my object *on one side.* I may show how ductile the wax is, and how inclusive my terms are; but then, I lose on the other side, and the collective advantages, required in this world of experience and practice, are perhaps comparatively unseen. The definition of virtue, I affirm to be benevolence. This is a very general word, coming from the Latin *bene* and *volo—to wish well;* to have a *good will* to any person or object. In this definition, I am anxious to

include all the cases of virtue which can occur in imagination or practice. But any word placed in that position insensibly gets an enlarged character. It borrows its chief force from its place; it receives as much light from the thing it seems to illuminate, as it can possibly communicate to it. Two general principles, laid beside each other, are like two parallel lines; you may dispute endlessly, which is the primitive standard of comparison. The one has as much right to that term as the other.

If instead of saying that the foundation of all virtue is benevolence, I should say that it was *chamasish*—a word borrowed from the language of Nootka Sound—the hearer would immediately wish to know what this word means. I could only answer him by saying it means the soul and essence of all virtue; and this definition would be much more clear than benevolence; for the word chamasish has none of those more specific expressions which always cleave to a term, when we lift it up from common use, to generic regions; and cleave to it in spite of our definitions. But such a word shows at once, that our definition is reciprocal; and of course, lets in very little light on the region of truth.

There are two reasons, which make the terms of the widest generality proportionally obscure; and the maxims we form by them. In the first place, it is hard to know whether they are true; and secondly, supposing their truth, it is harder to make the specific

deductions; for both which reasons, I have always had a less value for broad maxims in politics and religion, than some seem to put on them. I say not that they are useless; but the light is so distant, as to shed very little radiance of any practical utility on my private and purblind path.

Yet it is precisely these principles, formed by the coldest philosophers in their closets, that have had the greatest agency in exciting the popular passions, and setting the world on fire. Robespierre kept all France in commotion, and the guillotine moving, by certain abstract principles, taken from Helvetius and Rousseau; and I have seen religious books which seem to make the very fate of the gospel depend on the definition of virtue, i. e. that it is impartial benevolence. New England is not the only country, in which a lens of ice, taken from a polar sea of philosophy, has become a glass to collect the rays of the sun to a focus, and pour them on the regions of the burning line of popular excitement. Why is it so? How can so much passion come from such inadequate means? How can you make men fight for a metaphysical abstraction? Nothing is more common; and the reason is because the mind admires the vast, the immense, the indefinite; and where the object is obscure, the passions will be proportionably inflamed.

The truth is, the value of a general principle depends almost wholly on the deductions you make from it. Spinoza taught that all things were but develop-

ments of God; confounding the author with his work, he made man, and all material things, but particles of the Deity; certain deductions were made of himself, or followers from this system, which struck mankind with horror. A pious divine of our own country, given too much perhaps to abstract speculation, approached very near to the same general principle. He too, taught, that all we see, and are, are in a sense but the developments of God. But his deductions were pious, and his general principles were embraced by a numerous class of devoted Christians. In the days of the French Revolution, thrones were overturned, churches robbed, the nobles chased from the land, property confiscated, and the sanctuary of private rights invaded by the rude hand of ruffian violence, under the shelter of the general principles of liberty and equality. I too, believe in liberty and equality; and adopt these words in what I conceive their most rigorous sense. I believe it is departing from the principles of equality, that our land is now suffering all the evils that open upon us, and will open us, until we learn to make wiser deductions from this noble principle. For what is liberty? Not the liberty to do wrong. What is equality? Not the equality of property, but of rights. Now when we can found our republic on strict equality, the only equality which justice allows—that is, when those men only vote in the disposal of property, who have property at stake; our frame of government may stand, and not

before. Universal suffrage is one of the grossest violations of political equality; and unless it is restrained, or modified, our liberty will be destroyed. But we see, at any rate, that the truth of the principle depends on the deductions we make from it. The light of the sun will be colored by the glass through which we permit it to enter our room.

THE PURITAN.

No. 32.

He could raise scruples dark and nice,
And after solve 'em in a trice;
As if divinity had catch'd
The itch, on purpose to be scratch'd;
Or, like a mountebank, did wound
And stab herself with doubts profound,
Only to show with how small pain
The sores of faith are heal'd again;
Although by woful proof we find,
They always leave a scar behind.

Hudibras, Canto I.

THUS we find the value of general principles have been vastly overrated; their inclusiveness diminishing their perspicuity, and leaving room for a diversity of deductions, according to the fancy or prejudices of the holder.

If we should suppose a candle placed before a female domestic, and ask what point of knowledge was most valuable to her, as to any use which she could apply it, we shall find, that what she needs to

know is, that the object is a candle; that is, a substance made of tallow, and a cotton wick, and that it will burn and give light on the application of fire or a match; and if you go higher in the generic scale, in proportion as you ascend, you communicate a kind of knowledge she is less and less interested to acquire. You may tell her that it is a compound of animal and vegetable matter; very well, the knowledge is of some importance; it may teach her the source from which candles are derived, but hardly how to light them: or, you may tell her that it is matter; very well, that teaches her to distinguish it from spirit: or, you may say it is a created substance; that will teach her not to be a Spinozaist. But every step you take in the ascending scale, you depart from those qualities which bear on practice, and constitute real knowledge. Just so it is in intellectual generalization; what we are most interested to know, is the nearest class to which they belong. It is a matter of gratitude, that the useful is most clear.

To illustrate the vagueness of the most general principles on which philosophy attempts to build her splendid but changing fabrics, it may be remarked, that though volumes have been written on politics, and the most comprehensive minds have encountered the theme, yet they have never been able to build up a consistent system as a legitimate deduction from first principles. This is one of the chief sources of the perplexity of the subject, and may be one reason

why men have been so long banded into parties. In every age, there are certain interminable questions which are always debated and never settled, and which will continue to employ the ingenuity, and excite the passions of mankind, until Infinite Perfection takes the reins of government into his own hands, and all debate is lost in the perfection of his sway. Respecting the origin of government, there appears to be two theories, the one or the other of which you must adopt, as there is seen no possible third supposition. You must either say, with Filmer and all high tories, that kings reign by a divine right, and all popular privileges are a concession from their goodness; or you must conclude, with Hooker and Locke, that all government is founded on consent; it originated from the people, and is a power held in trust; and if so, it may be abused, it may be forfeited, and the people may resume their rights. This lays a broad foundation for republicanism. Now whichever of these theories you adopt, you may make a train of deductions from them, by the strictest logic, which is utterly inconsistent with the welfare of mankind. If you say that kings reign by a divine right, accountable indeed to God, but to no lower power, why then, see! you establish tyranny; every invasion on the prerogatives of the most absolute despot, unless he consent, is an usurpation; and the people are nailed down to a servitude which no wisdom can soften, and no time remove. The Dey of Algiers must reign

forever; he must riot in blood, and the people must submit. If, on the other hand, you say that the chief magistrate holds his power in trust, and the people may resume their delegated rights, it then becomes a question,—when; how; in whose judgment; has the trust been forfeited, and who shall say when the power shall be resumed? If you answer with Dr. Paley, that each man must judge for himself, (and there appears on these principles no other answer possible,) why, then, see! what a string of consequences you open to mankind. Carry these principles out, and I see not how any government can stand. For as soon as its laws pinch on my interest, I denounce their justice; I say the trust is forfeited; I resume my original rights. The people are the judges in the last appeal, and I am one of the people. On these principles, popular commotions are vindicable; Lynch law becomes the last resource of justice; and as soon as the sovereign mob choose to say that magistrates are useless, and courts have abused their trusts, how will you cross their path by your general principles? They only teach that the sovereign people, free, enlightened, and competent to their high station, are the sources of all power, and were sent into the world to judge of their rulers, and not to obey them.

Such is the difficulty of founding politics on general principles, so clear, that no bad deduction can be made from them. You must take your choice between these two theories; and yet of these two

only schemes, the one leads to anarchy, and the other to despotism; the one is a river that stagnates and fills the atmosphere with putrefaction; the other is a torrent which roars to destruction.

Of all the great men who have looked down on the sphere of politics, from a throne of light, it appears to me that Edmund Burke was one who had his mind most stored with general principles. It is well known that this great man was charged with inconsistency; though, I suspect, that his was the inconsistency of the boatman, who leans to the one or the other side of his skiff, as he sees it incline by the passengers, or dip in the waves. When he considered the influence of the crown as too strong, he was on the side of liberty; and when he saw French principles breaking in like a torrent, he changed his ground only to meet the change of circumstances. This, I consider as the truest consistency. But perhaps part of that wise man's deviations in principles, is owing to the fact, that in politics, no general principles can be found which suit all occasions; and that God has decreed that we should feel our way through fragmentary knowledge; and that to complete a system, is a proof rather of the ambition, than of the wisdom of him who attempts it.

If the subject were not so delicate, I might show the same thing in theology. You must either admit or deny the foreknowledge of God; yet what a train of deductions can be made from either of the postulates of this dilemma!

There is one general principle that is now setting our land on fire. All men are born free and equal, have certain inalienable rights; and therefore it is wrong for man to hold property in man. Slavery is a sin, and ought immediately to be abandoned. But surely these principles, so clear in their abstraction, so congenial to the purest sentiments of liberty and religion, cannot be maintained, as justifying certain obvious deductions, independent of all the conditions of time and place. In Algiers, I may say, that all men are born free and equal; but if I proceed to strip the Dey of his usurped power, and restore the people to their original rights, without instruction, without preparation, I shall only change a government which accomplishes the objects of government imperfectly, for anarchy; and I shall fill the streets with blood. So with respect to the other part of these propositions. Slavery is a sin, and ought immediately to be abandoned. I suppose any rational man would say that the word *ought*, refers only to what is *possible;* for, *impossibilium nulla est obligatio*, there is no obligation which binds to impossibilities; and in a vast political movement, I take it, an impossibility is, that the instant removal of which will be attended with greater evils than the temporary continuance. At any rate, let a man beware, because a principle is clear in the abstract, that it is therefore equally clear in its application to every possible, practical case. The maintaining of which position has been the

source of half the political and moral delusions which have distracted our earth.

The object of these remarks, is not to prove the entire uselessness of general principles, even when they are most general. They certainly show an object on one side, or rather on one point, and will always be followed out by all analytic minds. I only wish to remind all lovers of them, that the most general side is always the darkest; that it teaches us the least of the nature of an individual thing; and that the value or worthlessness of general principles, always depend on the application a man makes of them; and he is never to be charged with an application which he disavows. O how much charity would this single recollection spread through the world! It would be oil to the breakers of a troubled sea.

We are living in a very excited age, and an excitement which comes, as usual, from some metaphysical principles. We are treading the old track, and are fighting because our maxims are too general to be fully understood. The cloud is dark, and is therefore surcharged with thunder. Would it not be well for us to remember the words of one of the wisest politicians that ever brought the dictates of philosophy to calm the passions of mankind. "I cannot," says *Edmund Burke*, "stand forward and give praise or blame to any thing which relates to human actions and human concerns, on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the

nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction. Circumstances (which with some gentlemen pass for nothing) give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing color and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind. Abstractly speaking, government, as well as liberty, is good; yet could I, in common sense, ten years ago, have felicitated France on her enjoyment of a government, (for she then had a government,) without inquiring what the nature of that government was, or how it was administered? Can I now congratulate the same nation upon its freedom? Is it because liberty in the abstract is to be classed among the blessings of mankind, that I am seriously to felicitate a madman, who has escaped from the protecting restraint and wholesome darkness of his cell, on his restoration to the enjoyment of light and liberty? Am I to congratulate a highwayman and murderer, who has broke prison, on the recovery of his natural rights? This would be to act over again the scene of the criminals condemned to the galleys, and then heroically deliver the metaphysic knight of the sorrowful countenance."*

If we must bring down these general principles to bear on our agitated land, let us, at least, endeavor to be as calm as those philosophic minds from which they are supposed to have originated.

---

* Reflections on French Revolution.

THE PURITAN.

No. 33.

I love to breathe where Gilead sheds her balm;
I love to walk on Jordan's banks of palm;
I love to wet my foot in Hermon's dews;
I love the promptings of Isaiah's muse:
In Carmel's holy grots I'll court repose,
And deck my mossy couch with Sharon's deathless rose.

Pierpont's Airs of Palestine.

HEBREW POETRY.

In the earliest ages of the world, poetry was a very serious employment. It was the first form in which the contemplative powers of man manifested themselves; and to it may be traced, as a germ, our history, our fiction, our philosophy, and our laws. Even the solemn attributes of the Deity, and the tremendous truths of religion, are supposed to have been first delivered to mankind, by the inspiration of the poet, through the melody of song.

The reason for this peculiarity in the history of

nations, must be sought for in the counsels by which God instructs his creatures. Men are slow in their movements; they are immersed in a material body, and distracted by its wants. In the earlier stages of society, life is but a struggle for subsistence; and it must be some glaring object, some powerful motive, which allures men over the bridge which separates action from thought. Matter will attract any one's attention, even a child's, when it is first shown. But when we disrobe it of its form and color, and attempt, without its impressions, to lead the unpractised mind into the intellectual world, it must be done by new arts, to excite interest. The speaker must have deep feeling; and clothe that feeling in measured language. This is the universal history of the literary dawn; when the object ceases to arrest the eye, it must take a new embodiment, and charm the ear. The people, who can no longer look, must make a new use of their eyes—they must be forced to weep.

But though mind is sluggish in its movements, and it takes all the art of the poet to rouse it to its first attention, it must not be supposed that, when the attention is once *up*, it acts with any feeble interest. It takes much, to make a savage pass the bounds from the world of matter to the world of intellectual forms; but when he is once there, the very indefiniteness of the objects, together with the newness of the scene, absorbs his whole soul; he feels an interest which he never felt before; he rises as to a new

creation, and surrenders himself to the guidance of the genius, under whose manuduction he was first led. It has often been inquired, why poetry and orations have lost so much of their interest; and why the best exertions of modern skill, never rise to that powerful despotism over the will, which, in ancient times, no man resisted or wished to resist. Surely the moderns have some advantages. Arts have been improved; knowledge has been increased; the passions have been analyzed; the fountains of the mind have been explored. Why should not equal genius with more materials, produce better success? The reason, however, is obvious. The power of a poet over his admirers, or of an orator over his audience, is to be estimated by a *ratio* between his genius and their sensibility. The percussion, and the object struck, must both be considered. In older times, the lack of knowledge, and the consequent want of refinement, was eminently favorable to increase the sensibility of the audience; every impression was fresh and new; every passion was incited by novelty, and prolonged, because the feelings of nature were unworn; every invention produced wonder; the rapture of the audience increased the inspiration of the speaker; there was a reciprocal influence; genius was warmed by its own effects; and the same powerful impulse which first forced the mind into the paradise which thought had made, gave sweetness to its flowers, and magnitude and beauty to its shades. Ingenuity, and

invention, melody, and voice, and action, may still exist; but the sensibility which increased them is lost forever.

These remarks might be suggested by speculation, but they are abundantly supported by the history of our race. Let us suppose the wandering story-teller and singer, whom, for the want of a more personal name, we call Homer, to be surrounded by a ring of barbarians, who, having no war on their hands, and their bellies full, require him to amuse them for an idle hour. He knows his audience; with all his superiority, he but just emerges above them; and indeed his very superiority consists in knowing how to act on such materials. He knows well that he must stir their passions, and draw their tears, or they will hear him with stupid indifference; indeed, the choice in such an audience, is between rapture and sleep. He begins with a prelude on the lyre;—

Ητοι ὅ φορμίζων ἀνεθάλλετο καλὸν ἀείδειν.

And thus fills their ears with unideal sounds. The wisdom of God seems to have made music as a kind of passage between sensuality and thinking. He then plunges into narrative; sings of wars; addresses the strongest propensities of the age; brings out (or rather, it breaks upon him) his moral instructions, as an accompaniment of the story; and thus forces his hearers to feel and think in the only way in which

feeling and thinking in such an age can be excited. There is no great art in all this; or, at least, it is an art forced upon him by the nature of his office, and the circumstances in which he is thrown. He teaches, to be sure, war, politics, navigation, the theology of heaven, and the sciences of earth; not because he designed to combine these various things, but because they naturally mingled in the only intellectual stream that was then running. His language is simple, because no other language could be understood; his figures are bold and striking, because he must strike the minds he addresses; his poetry is forcible, because no other would excite interest; and it has all the freshness of nature, because the book of nature is the only volume he has ever read. Thus the poet becomes excellent; and thus the earliest rhapsodies of all nations, reflect not so much the genius of the individual, as a picture of the age.

The Jews were a peculiar people; and their poetry is as peculiar. It was made the vehicle of teaching them the most awful truths; because, when God speaks to men, he uses the language of men. Truth itself may bear a majesty suitable to the mind from which it originated; but its garb must be as humble as the minds to which it is addressed.

In speaking, however, of the poetry of the Hebrews, we shall say nothing of that Supreme Mind, from which it is believed to have originated; we shall not assume, as the ground of our remarks, the inspiration

of the Scriptures. We believe, with Lowth and others, that, however infallible the oracles which the Hebrew prophet delivered, and in whatever way we explain the divine superintendence, which guided their thoughts, each author was left to the play of his own genius, and reflects the manners of his own nation and age. We leave to the divines, the sublime themes of theology; we shall consider Hebrew poetry as an effort of Hebrew genius; and we shall endeavor to compare its relative merits with the poetry of the west.

The waters of the Hellespont, except a few Greeks on the shores of Asia Minor, have always divided a people very different in their tastes and manners. We allude not now to the enterprise, the liberty, the hardihood of the Greeks, and the tyranny and effeminacy of the Asiatic nations. These are the effects of the relative states of empires; and the first Cyrus, who founded the Persian dynasty, was as great a warrior as Alexander, who conquered the last of his degenerate successors; he, perhaps, commanded an army of equal heroes. The permanent difference is, in their literary tastes. On the eastern side of the Hellespont, we find hereditary dogmas never disputed; a fixed philosophy; great authority, and great credulity; morality taught in apologues, sentences, and aphorisms; and in poetry, the wildest flights of enthusiasm, rapid transitions, bold personifications; the very language destitute of those particles, (the last

invention of acuteness,) which mark the slender shades and turnings of a finer mind. On the western side, we find all these things reversed. Whatever may have been the cause, whether it was, as Diodorus says, because their philosophers taught for reward, τῷ κατὰ τὴν ἐργολαβίαν κέρδος στοχαζόμενοι, or, such was the bent of nature, they questioned every thing; supported their discourses by proofs, and not by authority; gave us their systems in connected discourses, and even in poetry taught us to reason, while they compelled us to feel. The European nations have inherited the taste of the Greeks; their language is formed on the basis of the Greek tongue; and had it not been that the Bible, by being translated, has preserved among us some elements of orientalism, we should this day scarcely be capable of holding intercourse with more than half our race. The most literal translations would only throw darkness over the most beautiful page.

The Hebrew nation have for ages been remarkable for any thing rather than delicacy or refinement. We cannot conceive of a race of bipeds, more coarse, more callous, more boobyish, more trifling, than the whole race of Jewish literati, into whose hands the Scriptures have fallen. The Bible, with its native commentators around it, is like one of its own *islands* in the Babylonian desert; you pass over the blazing sand beneath the burning sun, before you reach the grateful shades, and the bubbling spring. But be-

cause this peculiar nation have shrivelled in captivity, we must not suppose that they were destitute of genius when they flourished in their glory. We might as well take a degenerate Roman as he was described by the Goths, as a semblance of Cicero, as to judge of an ancient Jew, by one of the Masorites. The minds of most men sink to the level of the estimation in which they are held. The despised man becomes despicable; the slave assumes a servile mind. Judea was once the seat of empire and glory. She had her city, her king, and her temple. She had all that expansive power which the mind feels when left to an open career. Her sons mounted up on wings like eagles; they ran and were not weary, they walked and were not faint. Then the architect labored, the warrior triumphed, and the poet sung. If she rivalled not some other nations in refinement, one excellence no one can deny her bards; and that is—they are always *idiomatic;* they have qualities and beauties pre-eminently their own.

No man can have read the prophets with attention, without observing that one of their chief charms is—they are exquisitely oriental. They write with a mode of thought, and a mode of connecting their thoughts, and with allusions, wholly impossible but to one placed on the spot. If a reader approaches the Hebrew poets with a standard formed in modern times, he will be greatly disappointed. Much has been said of the beauties of the Bible; nor are we

aware that its beauties have been overrated. But loosely declaiming on the beauties of the Bible, some fond critics have laid a snare for the reader's dissent. The Bible is beautiful like most other primitive books, in its own peculiar style of beauty. It has those very beauties which a nascent age produces, and of which its sacred subjects are susceptible. It cannot combine those artful images which are the invention of later ages; it cannot sympathize with the voluptuary at his bowls, or the warrior on the field of battle; it cannot introduce the lover, pouring out vows to his mistress; nor surround the trifles of life with the mythology of gods or fairies. It cannot address our imagination on the inflammable side of passion, or lead us through descriptions which pamper the heart. All these ends, the awful severity of its subjects refuses. But its beauties are the fruits of its theme. They are flowers of its own soil. They are implements to impress its own lessons. They are pictures of the age, and the men, and the subject. Passing from such a writer as Thomas More, for example, to the Bible, there is an amazing contrast; and the reader who has melted at the tawdry sentimentalism of the Irish bard, (not without his beauties, we confess,) would at first be shocked at the stern simplicity of Ezekial or Isaiah. But has the Bible therefore no beauties? Must every subject be ornamented alike? Must a colossal statue have the coloring of a miniature picture? It was no more to be expected that

the Bible should have these modern manners, than that the Jordan or the Euphrates, should reflect the trees or the shrubbery on the banks of the Ohio or the Tweed.

THE PURITAN.

No. 34.

But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone. but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made to appear, over all the kinds of lyric poesy, to be incomparable.

Milton against Prelaty, Book II., Introduction.

One of the pleasures of poetry, is the skill and facility with which the author overcomes certain difficulties, which the rules of the art impose upon him. It is not copying nature, or painting the passions solely, which gives us delight; but it is the adroitness with which these things are done, though the work was hampered by certain laws. In certain kinds of verse, this is the chief pleasure. It is peculiarly so in the Spenserian stanza, and in the sonnet; and in those artful involutions and balanced periods, which some writers use. For example, in these lines in

Pope's Windsor Forest, which he has copied from Ovid ;—

Not half so swift the trembling doves can fly,
When the fierce eagle cleaves the liquid sky ;
Not half so swiftly the fierce eagle moves,
When through the clouds he drives the trembling doves.

In this case, we admire not only the smooth versification, and the beautiful image, but the art with which the poet has involved his eagles and doves in the melodious illustration. The above is not, perhaps, the highest beauty ; it lacks simplicity, and is perfectly Ovidian. Nevertheless, in the simplest poetry of Cowper and Milton, there is a secret reference to the difficulties overcome ; and we never should admire nature or passion in poetry, (for these may exist in prose,) were there not a secret reference to the skill of the poet. In easy poetry, we admire that the bard can be so easy under so many restraints.

At first view, it might be supposed that there was very little of this beauty among the Hebrew bards. Nothing can be more simple than the structure of their sentences ; they have neither measure nor rhyme. They have only to pour out their rhapsodies; to communicate their feelings, and be admired. They have only to indulge in the rantings of McPherson, who has passed for Ossian ;—

—per audaces nova dithyrambos
Verba devolvit, numerisque fertur
Lege solutis.

They may have the praise of simplicity, but cannot aspire to the victories of art; and yet, I hope to show that a conquest over difficulties is one of the chief beauties of their admirable odes.

The Hebrew is one of the most material languages ever spoken. There is hardly an abstract term in its whole vocabulary. In its entire formation, it seems to be made by a people who are as far from spiritual ideas, as we can possibly conceive. It has no tenses, (those which have been called past and future, are certainly aorists;) no scientific or scholastic terms; no particles to express the nicest transitions of thought; very few adjectives, very few intellectual expressions of any kind. Almost all its words which express mental operations are material in their origin. Let us mention a few instances without the formality of quoting the original. The word *to judge*, comes from the *causative* of *to cut*. I seem to see a tribe of primitive hunters, who, having run down and taken a deer, appoint one of the wisest of their number, to *cause* it to be cut up in equal portions; and thus comes the idea of judging. The word *to mourn*, comes from the withering of a plant. The first man who hung down his head in sorrow, was likened to a plant blasted by the sun, and failing for want of water. These instances might be multiplied; but they are sufficient to show that the language was formed in very early times; it bears all the marks of the poverty and simplicity of a primitive age. It is

well worthy of being studied as a beautiful specimen of the infant efforts of men at expression and thought. It completely transfers you to the ancient world, and associates you with the intellectual habits of these primitive beings. Its lexicon is a magazine of material forms, and you might look in vain for such terms as *decorum*, *grace*, *legislation*, *magnanimity*, or any other word that expresses the nicest shades of thought. Le Clerc, in relating the dogmas of the Pharisees, shows that they could not believe in the fate of the Stoics, because there was no word in their language, even in that late age, which could express that notion.

Such was their speech—a tongue which seemed to be formed by beings immersed in the material world. Yet when we pass to their themes, we find them the most vast and intellectual that can possibly meet the human mind. When they engage in their subjects, they seem to leave sublunary nature behind them; and soar into the darkest regions of the closest thought. They describe not battles and cities; but the conflicts of mind; the agonies of conscience; the mysterious intercourse of man with his Maker. They paint the sorrows of repentance; the hopes of faith, and the windings and snares through which the errant soul returns to God. They are every where like painters with the pencil put into their hands, and compelled to draw only allegorical forms. They

must not go to the landscape, and copy its lilies and lakes. They are not to dwell on the

> Sweet interchange
> Of hill and valley, rivers, woods and plains,
> Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned,
> Rocks, dens, and caves.

They are to transcribe only the moral landscape—they speak to the inner man. They sometimes *pass the flaming bounds of space and time*, and deal with the mysterious essence of the Deity; and all this with a language which seems at first view, entirely inadequate to the object. It is impossible to conceive of a greater contrast, than the materialism of the Hebrew language, and the unembodied and exalted nature of their favorite themes.

This, then, was their difficulty; and they have conquered it nobly. This contrast, was a far greater obstacle to a Hebrew bard, than the hexameter verse was to the heroic poets among the Greeks. The critics have been in raptures at the invention of Homer; and all must allow that he has rolled through every melodious note in his own beautiful language; and laid a contribution on all the stores of nature, to enrich and adorn his theme. But every one must see that he had previous facilities prepared at hand. He collected his flowers in a garden; while the Hebrew poets collected them from a wilderness. What a rich language did he inherit! What charming

expressions! Every word a picture! He was indebted to those prior geniuses, who had invented these expressions; and thus prepared the field in which his mind was to play in its own unbounded luxuriance. We must take something from the glory of Homer, and divide it with those perished names, which, like unseen roots, nourished the tree on which this Bird of the Muses, sat and sung. He could hang *his apples of gold in a net-work of silver;* while the Hebrew bards were obliged to provide not only the song, but the lyre and its strings. By the learned reader who appreciates their language, the strains must be read with perfect astonishment.

Let us take an example. I have already remarked that their language had very few abstract terms; not even those which seem absolutely necessary to describe the character of the Deity. What would a modern theologian do, if he were compelled to discourse on God, without using the words omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence? These seem to be absolutely necessary to communicate our simplest conceptions of the great Jehovah. Yet not one of these words can be translated into Hebrew. There is not a term in that restricted language, which answers to these essential ideas. The truth is, an infant people never abstract; and when they first approach these mighty conceptions, they approach them by circumlocution. Let us see how completely

the royal poet manages to communicate the omnipresence of God.

> Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
> Whither shall I flee from thy face?
> If I ascend into heaven,
> There THOU—
> If I make my bed in the nether world,
> Behold THOU.
>
> I take the wings of the east,
> Or I dwell in the remotest west,
> There thy hand shall lead me;
> Thy right hand shall hold me up.
>
> *Ps.* cxxxix. 7—10.

Thus in the most beautiful and graphic poetry, the omnipresence of God is brought out to the dullest conception. We must remember that the upper, the nether, and the middle world, was the whole universe to a Hebrew mind.*

It is true the sacred poets gather their contributions from all the stores which nature has spread out before them; they make the exterior world an illustration of the operations of the mind; and thus they have all the beauties of description, without missing that moral dignity, which mere description never can attain. I allow the powers of Thomson; I admire that mighty genius, which, like Antæus, gathers strength whenever it touches the earth; and yet the reader of the

---

* See Exodus xx. 4.

Seasons feels something wanting. He feels as the spectator at the theatre would, in seeing the shifting-scenes (most beautifully painted) of one of Shakspeare's tragedies, and none of the moral sentiments or actions with which these scenes should be filled. Let a man take one of Thomson's best descriptions, and compare it with one equally good in Milton, but where the description is made subservient to a higher result, and feel the difference.

> As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds
> Ascending, while the north-wind sleeps, o'erspread
> Heaven's cheerful face, the lowering element
> Scowls o'er the darkened landscape, snow or shower;
> If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet
> Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
> The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
> Attest their joy, that hill and valley ring.

Never was there a more beautiful or complete scene brought to view. Had the author's object been mere description, it could not have been more finished; and yet it is only an incidental gem, which he picks up in his path, without going one step out of the way to find it. He has a higher object than mere poetry; he wishes to illustrate the dawnings of transient hope on fallen minds. We have the same dignity in the writings of the Hebrews. They make the material world play around the pedestals of those awful images with which their minds are filled. In

the thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel, if it had been the sole object of the prophet to describe pastoral life, it could scarcely have been more beautiful. In this respect, his description might rival one of the best pastorals of Theocritus. But at the same time the deepest moral beauty is spread over the whole. God is the shepherd; and he is watching over his people.

In a word, the beauties of biblical poetry, like all the severe beauties, must be acquired by study. They are so simple, so unlike modern sentimentalism, that, when first seen, they strike the eye with disappointment. But look again, and your attention will be arrested—a third time, and you will admire; and once let the model impress your taste, and you will admire forever. It seems to me, for touching the deeper tones of the heart, the Hebrew poetry has an internal grandeur, compared with which, the songs of mythology, are cold and unmeaning.

THE PURITAN.

No. 35.

It is also obvious, that, though the description of a passion or affection may give us pleasure, whether it be described by the agent or spectator, yet, to those who would apply the inventions of the poet to the uses of philosophic investigation, it is far from being of equal utility with the passion exactly imitated. The talent of imitation, is very different from description, and far superior.

Richardson on Shakspeare.

MORALITY OF MACBETH.

I AM one of those who have no faith in the morality of the theatre. It is long since I have entered those dissolute walls; and I know not that I ever carried from a dramatic performance a salutary impression. A sarcastic friend tells me the fault was my own; he assures me, I wanted the finer feelings which these oblique instructions were designed to reach; and that it is only on the chords of a nicer sensibility, that the tones of the drama will act. He informs me that I never had wit enough to guess the riddle; and that

it was in the latent meaning of the well-wrought scene, that the best instruction was found. It may be so; if there was any deep moral instruction in the theatre, it was always latent to me; and therefore I have long since left the school from which no profit was derived. Yet I once listened to the public exhibition of the drama, with the deepest interest and delight. Though I never saw on our stage that perfection of art which we read of in Garrick; the art which is lost in nature, and leads the spectator to forget that it is acting which he sees; yet, I used to admire the fine tones of Cooper, the majesty of Fennel, and the simplicity of Mrs. Jones. Still I never saw a tragedy, (especially of Shakspeare's,) which I thought, on the whole, improved in the acting.*

*This very tragedy, (Macbeth,) is a striking example, of how completely the designs of the poet may fail in the public exhibition. There can be no doubt that the author meant that the appearance of the witches should be exceedingly solemn; he wished to thrill our blood, when these agents of the world of darkness meet their victim, and allure him to perdition, by their *metaphysical aid.* Yet I question, whether it is possible, to introduce three great strapping men on the stage, in the shape of women, with beards on their chins, and broomsticks in their hands, and not make the whole theatre laugh. The whole intended effect of such a scene, must be lost. Though it is many years since I have seen a play, yet I distinctly recollect that the cauldron-scene in the fourth act was, in its effect on the audience, a perfect farce. Not all the agonies which Cooper was accustomed to excite in himself, when the armed head arose, could make the audience sympathize with

Certain passages were, to be sure, elevated to a rant; an unexpected emphasis was given to certain lines; but the general tenor of the play was enfeebled; and its pathos and its moral, (if it had a moral,) were less striking on the public scene, than in the closet.

With little faith, then, in the charms of the theatre, and still less in its utility as a school of morals, I cannot help seeing that the dramatic form is the most striking mode of exhibiting the human heart; and that such exhibitions may be moral, so long as example is a motive to action. I assent to the proposition of the critics, that a good drama, is the highest effort of human genius; and, perhaps, no man can give a faithful analysis of human nature, without exhibiting truths, from which a moral inference may be drawn. The great masters of human nature, however corrupt their own designs may be, must sometimes be teachers. Their keen discernment leads to truth; and virtue is built on truth. Rousseau himself, with all his ravings, is often moral; and moral without meaning to be so. When we see something new in the structure of the human mind, we see more

---

him. We saw nothing but a company of ridiculous old women, talking mummery, while they were boiling a pot. When we read this play, we can imagine the existence of witchcraft, enough to feel its power; but when we see it acted, the dream is broken, and we cannot but laugh. Perhaps the effect becomes more ludicrous, from the sublimity of the design. We laugh at the farcical effect; and we laugh more at the contrast.

clearly the pivots on which the passions turn, and the foundations on which actions are built. We advance in self-knowledge. The corrupt writer, who explores the mind, is like the assassin, who rips open the body; in both cases, it was malice which urged the attempt; but the moralist may enlarge his knowledge from the one crime, and the anatomist from the other; and both may turn their discoveries to a good account.

Of all the dramatic writers, it seems to me that Shakspeare is the most moral, though such a design, when he sat down to write, was the farthest from his thoughts. He is moral, because he gave himself up to a kind of instinctive perception of what is true in human nature; and thus made his character just what God has made man—a moral being. His pictures are so true, his course of events is often (not always) so natural, that we receive the same impression from his drama, as from the living world. Now no one can doubt that the course of events is moral. If the life of any man, the worst that ever breathed, were written faithfully by some recording angel, it would be a fine moral lesson. Thus Shakspeare is the most instructive of the dramatic writers, because he painted the human heart just as God made it.

I have remarked, that he wrote without any moral design; and as a proof of the truth of this remark, I would adduce one of his most moral plays. Mac-

beth is one of the noblest productions of his genius. To say nothing of its fine language,—the charming *antique* of the expression,—the unity of the interest,—the change in the fortunes of the actors, and the solemn grandeur of the events;—we see there an amiable man, beginning the career of prosperity; with many excellent qualities, but corrupted by ambition,—tempted to crime,—dallying with the temptation,—yielding,—and going from step to step, until he dies in a misery as deep as his guilt was great. Never were the balancings of the mind between duty and transgression, brought out more fully; and never were the agonies of remorse more strongly painted. Every scene seems to say,—Resist the beginnings of evil; and beware, beware of those peculiar temptations, which are most powerful, because they are most adapted to your character. Yet we have reason to think that this fine play was written without any moral purpose. Shakspeare went through it with as much *non-chalance* as he wrote the filthy scenes in Love's Labor Lost. There is a passage in Burnet's History, which, I apprehend, explains the object of this play. The king (James I.) was once hunting at Theobalds in a very careless and unguarded manner. Sir Dudley Carlton told him, that "Queen Elizabeth was a woman of form, and was so well attended, that all the plots of the Jesuits to assassinate her, failed; but a prince, who was always in woods and forests, would be easily overtaken. The king sent for him

in private, to inquire more particularly into this; and he saw it made a great impression on him. But it wrought otherwise than as he intended. For the king, resolved to gratify his humor in hunting, and in a careless and irregular way of life, did immediately order all that prosecution (i. e. against the papists for the gunpowder-plot) to be let fall." The truth is, he lived in constant dread of assassination, and any production, which showed the agonies of a murderer of a king, would be grateful to him. Besides, he was a great advocate for witchcraft. Shakspeare knew his trade; and hence we owe, probably, the solemn incantations, and the fine moral of this tragedy to the same cause,—the desire to flatter a coward and a king.

We have, in the first place, presented before us, a man of a very amiable and excellent character, skilled in his profession, and warmly devoted to his country. His valor is unquestioned, and his good conduct has gained for him the confidence of his sovereign.

> O worthiest cousin,
> The sin of my ingratitude even now
> Was heavy on me; thou art so far before,
> The swiftest wing of recompense is slow
> To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved;
> That the proportion both of thanks and payment
> Might have been mine! only I have left to say,
> More is thy due than more than all can pay.

This testimony in his own favor, he is represented as

receiving with great modesty; and professing still greater devotedness to his king.

> Your highness' part
> Is to receive our duties; and our duties
> Are to your throne and state, children and servants;
> Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
> Safe towards your love and honor.

Nor is it in public stations alone, that the social virtues of this man are seen. His wife, who is his bosom friend, and is represented as possessing remarkable discernment and energy of character, draws his portrait, in lovely colors, which are stronger because she seems to blame them.

> Yet I do fear thy nature,
> It is too full of the milk of human kindness
> To catch the nearest way; thou wouldst be great;
> Art not without ambition; but without
> The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
> That thou wouldst holily; wouldst not play false
> And yet wouldst wrongly win.

It is evident, if such a man becomes abandoned, it must be through the influence of some strong temptation, addressed to some evil principle dormant in his heart, which may be the root alike of virtues or vices, as the occasion may be.

Accordingly, Macbeth is tempted by the powers of hell, and by his wife; and both of them, with great

art, suit their suggestions to the weak side of his character. The witches meet him on a blasted heath with predictions, which set before him his future honors without suggesting the means by which they should be obtained. This temptation is managed with great art, inasmuch as it involves one prediction which is immediately to be fulfilled; and that, too, without any crime or agency on the part of Macbeth. He becomes Thane of Cawdor without any guilt; and thus a possible door of hope is left open that he may reach the crown without soiling his hands in blood. But the case is doubtful; the king has sons,—is yet alive,—and a crown is a prize, which is seldom innocently obtained, except by the lawful heir. Macbeth is thrown into deep musings; and, though he does not resolve to commit a crime, he makes no resolution against it. The idea of murder crosses his mind; he is agitated; and these are no good symptoms.

> Why do I yield to that suggestion,
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
> Against the use of nature? Present fears
> Are less than horrible imaginings;
> My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man, that function
> Is smothered in surmise; and nothing is
> But what is not.

The last thought is most beautifully expressed; though the poet has pushed the energy of language

to its utmost limits. He means to say,—I am so lost in those ideal visions; the future honors of a kingdom have so absorbed my mind; that my imaginations have become realities, and my real state is nothing. Such was the strong desire of this ambitious heart to attain its end.

Now it may be laid down as a maxim, that, when some great prize is before us to be obtained by doubtful means, and we shuffle out of sight the means and think only of the end,—we are in a most dangerous state. The mind, whatever palliations it may offer to itself, is beginning to incline the wrong way. We are in the exact situation of our first parents, when they gazed at the forbidden fruit and forgot the command of God.

Thus far Shakspeare appears as a moralist. But he now rises almost to the standing of a theologian; and his instructions assume the awful solemnity which is found only in the Bible. One would hardly believe it possible, that such principles of the closest religion would be introduced on the stage with so little appearance of departing from the histrionic path. We have always been told by the teachers of religion, that the law of God,—a sacred regard to his authority,—is the only principle that can carry us through the crossing interests, which meet us in the shock of life. The virtue, which is based on interest, will vary as that interest varies; and the man, who *loves the praise of men more than the praise of God*, will act

only as his fellow creatures applaud or condemn. He will regard the outside of his character more than the state of his heart; and his seeming goodness is only ambition in a moral dress. Such characters abound in the world; such virtues deceive innumerable hearts. Human nature has often the sweetest flowers spread over its depravity, and, what is wonderful, these very posies are nourished by vice. Hence we find the man changes with circumstances. He is the same idolater, but he changes the image which is the object of worship; and it is useful, to tell the young and thoughtless, that that virtue which has no hold on futurity and no reference to God, is sure in time, to fall from its foundation. Christianity is a new passion; and it enables us to overcome the temptations of life, because we love something better. This is perfectly philosophic; the mind is like balances; and, if the temptations of life are powerful weights in one scale, they can only be overcome by a more powerful weight in the other,—supreme love to God.

Shakspeare has introduced Macbeth, in a soliloquy, in which the contending principles are at war in his heart. Behold a most interesting spectacle! Behold a sinner pausing on the brink of his crimes! It is an awful moment. What will be the result? Will the better principle prevail? Will his good Angel come down to drive away the suggestions, and break the passions, which impel him to crime? No; the battle is decided before it is begun. He is careful to inform

us that he lays religious principle out of the question; and such a man must fall. He is like a besieged city with batteries thundering at every gate, and provisions and powder exhausted. That man is sure to yield to temptation, who *jumps the life to come.*

> If it were *done* when 'tis done, then 'twere well
> It were done quickly; if the assassination
> Could trammel up the consequence, and catch
> With his surcease, success; that but this blow
> Might be the be-all and the end-all here,—
> But hereupon this bank and shoal of time—
> We'd JUMP THE LIFE TO COME.

Such was the theology of Shakspeare; he had no system, but it was forced upon him by his rapid and intuitive knowledge of the human heart. Though Macbeth is conscious that life is but *a bank and shoal,* he is willing to give up every principle for its transient and perishing rewards. Who now will say that a man's religious faith does not have some control over his actions? Believe it, ye licentious, on the authority of Shakspeare. Real faith is a mental view; and our mental views govern us. A man, who has eyes, is influenced in his walk, by the prospect before him; and, in moral things, that prospect is future truth.

But it seems that one lucid interval returns; Macbeth resolves not to commit the crime, and this resolution is grounded, not on religious principle, but on some *compunctious visitings of nature.* Even the good purposes that cross his mind rest upon no solid

base; they are the mere calculations of the same selfish spirit which urged him to murder the king. There are opposing principles in our hearts, to the greater crimes, which are not strictly virtuous. The dialogue between Macbeth and his wife, after the soliloquy, last alluded to, is the most striking in the whole play. Let the reader ponder the words well; and remember that they are the best purposes which arise in the murderer's mind during the whole transaction. He is talking of repenting and abstaining from his guilty design, and mark on what his best purposes are founded.

> We will proceed no farther in this business;
> He hath honored me of late; and I have bought
> Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
> Which should be worn now in their newest gloss,
> Not cast aside so soon.

Here is not one word said about the intrinsic depravity of the deed, no reference to a higher power, no regard to the law of God, or our obligation to obey it; the man shows himself as totally destitute of good principles, when he is entertaining purposes of amendment, as when he is pacing to his crime. It is all a calculation of selfishness; it is a striking exhibition of the great law of nature and doctrine of religion, that no man is safe who builds his outward virtues on false principles; who never reached a higher motive than the *golden opinions*, which he could buy of men.

We find the effect just what might be expected. A little sophistry from his wife overcomes him; and he soon enters into her design, not only with no reluctance, but with eagerness. He hears her detail the plan of treachery and murder; and bursts into the raptures of ambition.

> Bring forth men children only!
> For thy undaunted mettle should compose
> Nothing but males.

This is now the turning period of his character; he gives himself up to guilt; he expects all his pleasure from it; he passes the line from which there is no return; and whatever remorse he may feel, or however keen his perception of his own state, there remains *no more place for repentance, though he seek it carefully with tears.*

It is thought by some to be an extremely mystical doctrine, that no man can be good without a great change in the affections of his heart. But surely a reference to the principles of our nature will lead us to this conclusion; and we have Shakspeare on our side. Macbeth, in the outset, has every amiable principle of humanity; nor was there one new principle called into action when he proceeded to the last stages of guilt. All his crimes were grafted on the common propensities of the heart. But the poet has told us the secret; he was a mere man of the world; he had no regard to a future state, and no fear of God. He

was like thousands of specious characters, who are living at random, and are ready to receive the first temptation. No cord of law, no band of faith bound him to his duty. He was a bark on the sea, ready to be blown in any direction. He was a specimen of human nature, and from his mournful story, every man, who lives for this life only, may learn *to know himself.*

These truths have often been taught from the authority of revelation; but they have been disregarded. They are here repeated, in the hope that some may receive them on the authority of Shakspeare.

There is another theological truth, which Shakspeare has brought out and sanctioned in this remarkable tragedy; and that is, the distinction between repentance and remorse. Macbeth is in the deepest remorse ever after he committed the murder; though he is as far from repentance as the most desperate persistency in sin can place him. He knows his guilt; he knows the vanity of all his honors; he knows that not one moment's repose lies between him and the grave; and the prospect beyond he shuts up in darkness and unbelief. Yet he hugs the vain shadows of his dignity; and finds his hope in the exhausted rewards of ambition. He stands alone on the mount; and enjoys nothing but the playing of the sunbeams on its barren ice. There is one speech of his, where the regret of a hardened heart is brought out in the most striking language that tragedy can

show. I allude to the speech, in which the usurper, in the very bloom of his success, and on the throne of his power, turns to the victim he has murdered, contrasts his condition with his own, and envies him the repose of the tomb. No poet ever surpassed this; for a moment, our detestation for the wretch is lost in pity; and we own the deep anguish there is in mental punishment.

> Duncan is in his grave.
> After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;
> Treason has done his worst; nor steel, nor poison,
> Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
> Can touch him further!

I have long been convinced, that, when Christianity assumes or presupposes a distinction in human nature, a careful analysis of that nature will always show such distinctions to be just. I am, therefore, happy to find, in this important tragedy, that the Bible and Shakspeare agree. That great master of human nature, who had no theories to support, and hardly a prejudice to blind him, has come, by the powerful impulses of his genius, to a conclusion on which some of the most important truths of revelation are built. There is something very convincing in the careless discernment of an untutored mind. The man of theory makes observation warp to his system; but the voice of nature is always the voice of truth.

THE PURITAN.

No. 36.

How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.

Measure for Measure.

We read, in one of the gospels, that our Saviour began his conversation with one of the Jewish teachers, by declaring one of the mystical doctrines of the new religion, in the strongest language, namely, *That a man must be born again, to see the kingdom of God.*

In all ages, men have been led by experience, to appreciate the duties of morality. We go into the city for the purpose of making the purchase of certain articles, necessary or convenient for our use. We are partially ignorant of the nature of the commodity, or the state of the market; and feel ourselves exposed to be a prey to that cunning selfishness, which can take an advantage of our simplicity. What a treasure

it is, in such cases, to meet with an honest man, with whom we are confident that the bargain will be just! Or we are thrown by shipwreck on an unknown coast. The night is dark, our goods are scattered; the inhabitants come down with their torches; how comfortable it is to know that we have not fallen into such hands as have sometimes disgraced the shores of Cornwall or New Jersey! Honesty is beautiful; compassion is beautiful; and why need we look farther for true excellence, than external deeds? Jealous of human nature, why need we pry, for true virtue, into its seminal principles in the heart of man?

There has been a tendency, ever since the world existed, to depart from the central point of action, and find all goodness in external things; and it is curious to see, that as men's conceptions become grosser, they look for the existence of virtue in positions farther and farther from its real root. As it is in money, or rather the essence of property, it really exists in the things we can use, as the necessaries and comforts of life; but we first transfer it into gold and silver, and then into paper and bank bills, which are but the representation of a representation, until at last, a real miser prizes the shadow more than the substance. So it is with virtue; it really exists in a virtuous disposition; but as that is unseen, men proceed to set it in objects at a greater and greater distance from its source. First it is a good act combined with a good motive; then it is a moral act apart from the motive; then it passes

into some rite or ceremony, and at every step there is a fearful recession from the heart; until at last, religion degenerates into superstition; a dress is holiness; blowing an organ is praising God; profession is piety; and kneeling is devotion. Perhaps the greatest departure from the true centre, is among the Tartars, who nail their written prayers to a windmill, and thus send them up to heaven in a gale; or among the Hindoos, whose sins are removed and bodies made holy, by being sprinkled with the mud of the Ganges. So widely can the sensualized mind deviate from its first conceptions!

We smile, or (if we are benevolent men) we weep perhaps over these melancholy proofs of human degeneracy. But he must be very inattentive to the courses of his own mind, who does not see in himself the incipient vibrations to the same error. We are always departing from the pure to the incorporated; from the inward to the outward; from the *intention* to the *act;* and it is hard to chain the mind, in a materializing world, to first principles. The value of every action depends on the motive. From this maxim no man can escape. If I abstain from any sin without the love of God, or regard to his authority, it is certain, that I am neither a virtuous man nor a saint. Yet this principle we are always losing sight of. In others, external actions are all we see; and we too often make them the sole criterion of judging ourselves.

When our Saviour was on earth, these tendencies had gone to their last extreme. As some rivers hide their fountains in remote countries, and are to be explored only by the traveller whose curiosity and enterprise surpass his coequals, so in that age the heart was hid behind a host of externals. We find therefore that it was his object to turn the eye inward, to explore the intention; to make his hearers ferret out the motive; in a word, to make them, in a religious sense, acquainted with themselves. For this purpose, he declares, *Blessed are the pure in heart. Whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart. Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, is a murderer.* These are truths hard to be known when the case is our own; and finally, it was for this purpose, to throw our thoughts on the inner man; to make us enter the central chambers of our own souls, for the source of our sins, and the cure, that he pronounced the words to Nicodemus, so mysterious to those, who have not felt their power, and so consoling to those, who have.

The original fault of man is in his principles. He is not the creature of circumstances; for no circumstances can have any influence over us but from some conjunctive cause within. Joseph was chaste in circumstances where frailer virtue would have fallen; and the whole thing that make the circumstances of this world dangerous is, they *stand around* (circum stantes) a yielding, sinful heart. The fault, then, is

found, in all our failures and aberrations, in the last place where we are willing to see it—in our hearts. *They* are radically wrong; and need not only amendment but renovation. We have been *born* into this world of guilt and suffering; and we must be *born* into the kingdom of purity and peace.

"True conversion," says Pascal, "consists in annihilating ourselves before the Being whom we have so often offended, and who might justly destroy us at any moment; in acknowledging we have no power without him, and that we merit nothing but disgrace. It consists in knowing that there is an invincible opposition between us and God, and that without a Mediator we can never be reconciled." This definition comes from a member of the Romish church; and shows that true piety, whether among Catholics or Protestants, is precisely the same.

Addison, in his theological sentiments, was probably too favorable to human nature. He would talk of man's infantile innocence, and the purity of the heart which is uncorrupted by age or intercourse with the world; yet he has inadvertently left a strong testimony to the corruption of man. In his essay on the pleasures of the imagination, he says,—"there are very few who know how to be idle and innocent; or have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal: every diversion they take, is at the expense of some one virtue or another; and their first step out of business, is into vice or folly." What is this but saying that

the majority of men are so corrupt, that they sin whenever they find opportunity? Such beings need renovation.

Of all the minds that have grappled with moral difficulties, and shed light on the path which conducts an inquisitive mind from doubt to conviction, I know none greater than that of Bishop Butler.* No man saw a difficulty so far ahead; no man was more sagacious in anticipating an objection; no man ever came to his conclusions with more deliberation. Yet this great man bears his testimony to the same point. "Upright creatures may want to be improved; depraved creatures want to be renewed."

Shakspeare, Pascal, Addison, Butler!—these are illustrious names; they are mentioned, not to overbear the reader's mind by great authorities, but to induce him to look well within, before he rejects a doctrine confirmed by their united testimony.

---

* The vast superiority of Butler, to all other writers in spirituals and morals, has not, I think, been sufficiently noticed. As you read him for the fiftieth time, (and no man can begin fully to comprehend him until then,) you always find as you think deeper, he has been ahead, sounded all the depths and shoals of possible objection, and formed a clearer and more consistent conception of the distinctive nature of moral reasoning, than any other man. He is the Newton of the moral world. The only reason why he does not silence all infidels, I must think in charity, is, because they do not comprehend him.

THE PURITAN.

No. 37.

—He resolved in his heart not to commit disloyalty against his lady, Dulcenea del Tobaso, though queen Ginebra herself, with the lady Quintaniona, should present themselves before him.

Don Quixote.

No man rejoices more sincerely than I do at the progress of the cause of temperance. Though I have already confessed that I myself was once a seller of what some have strongly called the liquid poison; yet I have long since testified my repentance by a reformation. I never felt happy while it was my lot to draw certain liquors by pints and gills from my red casks; I never liked my customers; and I can assure my charitable readers, that I have carried away from that employment, as from all others, very little of the wages of unrighteousness. Ardent spirit has now no place among the articles of my family; and is likely never to return, my case being one of those in which poverty watches over virtue.

In our town we have had many addresses on this subject; and human ingenuity has exhausted all its arts to make an impression. One orator gave us a dialogue between a drunkard and a snake sticking his head out of a bottle; which snake I believe was the devil—though on that point the speaker was not very clear. Another painted to us the miseries of a neglected family; described a ruined house and farm. Some have showed the physical effects of intemperance, some the political, and some the moral; and all have given us a good spice of what is too often the chief ingredient in popular eloquence—exaggeration. I have been hoping my fellow-townsmen would choose me to address them on this subject; but hitherto they have neglected me; and I am determined that the burden which rests on my spirits, shall be removed; and the eloquence which might have inspired my voice, shall trickle from my pen.

Spirit of Decency! and Spirit of Truth! descend from the skies, and hover over my head with your mixed pinions, whose colors are composed of black and white, and every hue between them! Let my eloquence flow not in a pure crystal stream, for such streams are scarcely found in nature, and I am sure are seldom found in New England. But let the real waters of Mother Brooks or Mill River, flow from my mouth. I am the child of nature; I am the servant of truth; and to the children of nature, in the simplicity of truth, would I choose to speak. O ye

severer powers, who watch the weeds as well as the roses of our world, come, come from your homely abodes, your colleges, your taverns, your barns and your wigwams, to enlighten my perceptions and prompt my tongue!

Notwithstanding all the changes which have been run through on this subject, there is one point of light in which, though important, I have not yet seen it fully placed. I allude to the influence which the female sex may have on this cause. We have had a great deal of pathetic description of domestic suffering; and, in all these scenes, the woman has been introduced as the victim, and not in the smallest degree as the coadjutor in the blame. We have had pictured before our eyes, until our tears have flowed like rivers, the brutal husband, coming home from the tavern, to play the tyrant over his family; knocking down his wife; throwing his children into the fire; now whetting his knife to cut their throats, and thirsting for their blood almost as intensely as before he thirsted for his drink; raving, scolding, storming, and filling the whole house with distress and alarm; while his poor innocent partner sits by, dissolved in tears; an angel of perfection, introduced by the skilful painter for no other purpose than as a foil to set off the depravity of her husband, who is represented as nothing but the image of personified drunkenness. All the brutality and wrong are on one side, and all the innocence and suffering on the other. These

gentlemen seem to forget in their gallantry, that God has made of *one blood,* all the nations which dwell on the earth; that the same appetites are found in both sexes; that a female tippler is not absolutely an *ens rationis;* that often the wife *follows* the husband in the transgression, and has even been known to *lead* the way. Sin in one respect is like the great Being who abhors it—it is no respecter of persons; and will sometimes take up its abode in those gentle bosoms from which our imagination would wish it away. I think, I have read in a book which has as little romantic feeling in it, as any book I ever did read, of a man and his wife, who were once placed in a garden, in which there was one tree bearing hurtful fruit. It bore some analogy to *ardent spirit;* it was intoxicating and dangerous, liable to injure both themselves and family; and they were enjoined a *total abstinence* with respect to it. Well, who was it broke over this rule first? Who first violated the *temperance pledge* in the garden of Eden? The man did not go to this grog-shop of forbidden gratification, to make himself intoxicated with the essence of human depravity; and then go home to beat his poor wife, and turn her out from her beautiful abode into a wilderness of thorns and briers. No doubt this would have made a much more pathetic story than the dry repulsive facts as we now find them on the unimaginative page of the oldest of all books. But how was it? The WOMAN, *being deceived, was the first in the transgression.* When

THE WOMAN *saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat and gave also to her husband with her and he did eat.* Eve has generally been accounted a beautiful woman; she was certainly a wife, and she led her husband into sin; and hence I infer, from the Bible itself, notwithstanding all our fine imaginings, that the fair may be frail; that the grossest vice may deform and disgrace the tenderest sex.

The influence of females may be great in promoting temperance, and all its happy consequences.

The influence of woman has been great in all the departments of life. Her smiles cheer, her frowns depress, her counsels are heard, her tears are felt, and her example will be followed. It is true, her power is not like the thunder, which strikes and consumes, but it is like the blossom which silently perfumes the air. Solomon, the wisest of men, has represented the tenderness of maternal wisdom, pouring its counsel into the ears of a son; and it is generally supposed to be himself under a fictitious name. *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.* The wisdom of Solomon would have been useless without temperance, and temperance was taught from a mother's tongue. In Greece, the state of female manners was one of the most powerful

causes of the cold and heartless fashions of domestic life. Education was lavished on the harlot, while the wife, imprisoned at home, raised but a little above the domestic slaves, was denied all those accomplishments which would surround utility with the ornaments of the imagination, and give new attractions to the beauties of virtue. Female influence was felt in Roman history. It has been justly remarked, that most of their great revolutions are to be traced to the influence of woman on the public councils. The names of Julia, Lucretia, Virginia, Fulvia and Cleopatra, are proofs of what I say. Female influence never can be accounted as trifling, when it is recollected that two of the greatest events in which this world was ever interested, were accomplished by their instrumentality. By a woman sin entered our world, and by a woman a Saviour was born!

But especially in domestic life is their example felt. A garden is not more the proper place for some fair flower to unfold its leaves, and diffuse its sweetness, than domestic life is the place where a woman, by a constant action amidst quiet shades, is to accomplish the good which is not the less real, because it may never reach the public ear. It is the throne of her influence, the sphere of her duties, the paradise of her enjoyments. Take a man of the most decided character, of the most settled resolution, of the clearest views, and he will sometimes be influenced by his wife. Buonaparte was an example. The impetuous

temper of the warrior, before whom all Europe trembled, was guided and directed by the insinuating Josephine. What a beautiful example have we in Scripture. Manoah was afraid; he had seen a vision. The terrible countenance of the angel of God, had been uncovered to him; and he was afraid he should die; but what says his wife? If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering at our hands; neither would he have showed us all these things. Solomon, the wisest of men, was *beguiled by fair idolatresses;* and Samson, the Danite strong, lost his locks on the lap of her who conquered strength by the smiles of deceitful love. Over children, the power of a mother is immense. The influence of a woman on the world through the medium of her family, may be compared to the action of the gentle breeze on the trees of the forest. The breeze is invisible, the tree is a pillar, lofty and strong, apparently too firm to be moved by the varying air, in which its branches wave without resistance. But at the rising of the evening gale, every leaf trembles, and the whole vegetable phalanx derives its life and vigor from the apparently feeble agent which it seems to deride. St. Paul recognizes that influence as great, when he asks, *what knowest thou, O wife, but thou shalt save thy husband?* Yes, I exult in the strength of my examples, for they reach to salvation!

THE PURITAN.

No. 38.

At Bacchus' feast non shall her mete
  Ne at no wanton playe;
Nor gasing in an open street,
Nor gadding as astray;
  The modest mirth, that she doth use,
Is mixed with shamefastness;
All vice she doth wholly refuse,
  And hateth ungodleness.

Old song, of uncertain auctores.

The influence of woman is felt by direct example; and the temperance cause is precisely the one in which it is most likely to be salutary and extensive. I am not sure that this sex have not been as deep in this sin as the other part of our race. I know it is pleasing to believe, that a delicate lady is above such low appetites; that a female heart, is the seat of refinement, and purity, and softness, and, at least, temperance. A lover, can hardly bear the idea that his mistress is given to eating; in some romances, they

never eat at all; they have the art of subsisting on love alone; he can hardly bear that she should prefer a glass of wine, to water. But it is shocking to him beyond measure, that she should keep a bottle of cordials in her closet, which is nothing but alcohol under a softer name; and that the hues on her cheek, red as the blushes of the morning, should not be the fresh paint of nature, but of *something else.* It is very pathetic when we see a miserable family, to suppose that the husband drinks all the rum, and the wife sheds all the tears. I have several pamphlets written in this very strain, which I have thoughts of sending in to our societies, which offer prizes for excitements to benevolent genius. But I am afraid, if we should establish a strict system of induction, and put down the result in those figures which cannot lie, we should find an alarming proportion of women, who have so much of flesh and blood, as actually to drink spirit; and if they do drink it, the consequence is inevitable—it will intoxicate their delicate brains, as well as those of the vilest drunkard that ever attempted in vain to walk the street. It is horrible to think of it; but perhaps if we were to take the world through, we should find an equal proportion of drunkards in one sex, as the other. True, they become so in very different ways. With man, it is a social vice; they become intemperate in company. With women, it is taken as a medicine. They have feebler constitutions; they are denominated the weaker vessels.

They are subject to unaccountable depression of spirits. They are confined to rooms; sit over warm fires; use little exercise; are pinched up in fashionable garments; have often little to do, and much to imagine. They find themselves sick, or sad, or perplexed, or gloomy; have lost their spirits or their appetites; and nothing seems to set them to rights so speedily as some precious cordial, in which alcohol lurks under some pleasing name. Man, becomes a drunkard, for the most part, in public; woman, in solitude. Man, takes his glass from the bar-room; woman, from the labelled bottle kept in the closet. Man, drinks to make himself more merry; woman, to remove her sadness. Man, often makes his crime too public; woman, conceals it even from herself. Man, drinks without an excuse, and a woman always has a very good one. Besides, the female sex pass more of their time alone; they use less exercise than their more vigorous counterparts; their hearts often slumber in inactivity, for the want of a motive; and he knows little of the course of temptation, who sees not, that solitude is no security against the creepings of this seductive vice. Such is its constant activity, that it comes upon us in company and alone.

I will only add that female intemperance is most prevalent in great cities, and in high places. The stately matron, imprisoned for hours in magnificent seclusion, is compelled to wear away the hours without a motive; and flies to the bottle for relief.

Thus a woman should promote temperance by example.

But there is a great deal of secondary influence she may employ. It begins in forming a connection for life. Here, I can say much that is honorable to the sex. I have known ladies who have dismissed very pleasing lovers, for persistency in this sad vice. If you suspect your friend; if his cheek looks too red, or his breath smells too strong; you had better allow your love to be checked by your prudence, and await until your suspicions are confirmed or removed. If he is sanable, set him some time for total abstinence, as a test of his love to morality and you; let the time be sufficiently long, and double it by the rule of geometrical progression every time he fails. Do not trust to your influence after marriage, nor dream that it will be greater than before. This is the rock on which thousands of credulous fair ones have made shipwreck of their happiness.

When married, if your husband is temperate, it should be your study to keep him so; and if not, to reclaim him. You know the seductive power of bad company. It should be your object, to induce him to spend as many evenings at home, as is consistent with his necessary engagements. Not that you should be jealous or chiding every time that business calls him away; but you must make home agreeable. I have no hesitation in saying it is your duty to be handsome. But what? can we control a quality

which is the gift of nature? Yes—you can; for the ugliest face that ever deformed the workmanship of God, comes from some bad passion corroding in the heart. I say again, it is your duty to be handsome. Not by paint or artifice; but by benevolence, good nature; a face arrayed in smiles, and an eye that sparkles with love; the beauty of expression, which is the best of all beauties. Let your person be arrayed in the neatest apparel; let your neck and face be perfectly clean; let there be a cheerful fire; a well-ordered parlor; a swept hearth and welcoming hand, whenever your husband returns home; and let him learn, that however the world may oppose or business perplex him, that there is one faithful heart, whose felicity is identified with his own. What a sweet path has a wife before her, in whose exertions for morality, duty is nothing but delight!

Be very punctual in all your engagements. If you are going out, be always ready at the hour; let your family move in the strictest order; let dinner and breakfast be ready at the expected time. Have a place for every thing, and let every thing be in its place.

One thing I deem important. That sentimental fool, Tom Moore, has infected the heads of some women with false notions; he has said,—*keep your tears for me!* But no husband will say so. I have asked a hundred husbands, if they were ever affected, or pleased, or made better by their wives' weeping;

and they all tell me—No!! Never, therefore, weep in your husband's presence. If you cannot restrain your grief; go up to some back closet, and there indulge it alone; for of all the disgusting objects in every day life, a snivelling woman is the most abominable.

I hope I am not fanciful in what I am about to say; but I will say it, because there are some little truths which will only be told by little men. *Good Bread*, then, is an important article in keeping men temperate. Half the dyspepsycal cases which exist in our cities, arise from bad bread. The profession of a baker is useless, and should be abolished. Some physicians have recently said, that drunkenness, is wholly a physical vice, originating from a disordered stomach or bad digestion. This is overstated; for physical causes never can be more than powerful temptations. But powerful temptations they are; and let every wife see to it, that her husband eats the manna, made by her own clean hands, or at least, under her careful supervision. Transfer your attention from pound cake and mince-pies, to the original gift of nature. No woman, rich or poor, has done her utmost to make or keep her husband temperate, until she knows how to make or cause to be made, without failure or intermission, GOOD BREAD.

There are moments, when every man puts his vigilance asleep, and resigns himself to the careless relaxation of a mind, dropping its purposes, and

floating at random like a chip on the sea. The greatest men are most prone to this; for the tension of business in important cases, leads to the most perfect remission. Then they are under the influence of a wife. In all common matters, they take her suggestions, and follow her rules. Now in such cases, if through ignorance or mistaken tenderness (or, perhaps, what is not impossible, a wish for countenance and good company,) she presents the dangerous liquor in the sparkling glass, she may become accessary to her own ruin; she may accuse herself, when she sees character gone, health undermined, poverty approaching, and destruction near.

But it is on the children, that a woman's influence will be most apparent. They are little images of plaster clay, put into her hand to be moulded into vessels of utility, or ruin. Some infants have been dosed with opiates and cordials, long before they had the power of choice. They have had the sin put into them by a physical infusion; the appetite has been created in the cradle. In a word, a mother should remember, that in training her children up to the practice of virtue, she has a double string in her hand, the body, and the mind; and if she is successful, she may be a blessing to future generations.

The state of female education has been very unhappy in our land, and many an artless girl has been sent into life, totally ignorant of the part she was to act. I have, in my own conception, a peculiar idea

of a republican lady; she is a plant which can grow only on our own soil. She must be more comprehensive in her aims, than the fickle beings who dance in the court of St. James; she must know how to preside in her parlor, and regulate her kitchen; to unite the plain utilities of life, with all that is graceful and lovely; and to resemble the conserve-rose, which retains its best qualities, when its beauty is lost. As fortunes are uncertain in our country, she must be prepared for exertion, even should she become poor. She must be prepared to meet and adorn all stations in life, and thus become the noblest specimen of human nature.

THE PURITAN.

No. 39.

Hypocrisy, of course, delights in the most sublime speculations; for, never intending to go beyond speculation, it costs nothing to have it magnificent.

Burke on French Revolution.

In my dear country and in this peculiar age, it is the fashion to get astride of some hobby, and spur him, until you have reached the utmost extremes of the lists, or he has tumbled down some precipice to rise no more. It is the age of total abstinence, and I expect soon we shall have a society formed for cutting off fingers, lest we should be tempted to steal. One of the extravagances of the day respects emulation in schools; and, as there is no great danger of being ridiculous without company, I also will show my opinion.

Whether emulation ought to be encouraged in schools, depends on the answer to the question, whether emulation is a good principle. What is

emulation? Our discourse must take its origin from a verbal discussion.

Mr. Locke, whose examination of principles showed him the necessity of nicely considering words, has told us, that language has a *twofold* usage; *civil* and *philosophical;* by the civil usage, he says, he means such a communication of thoughts and ideas by words, as may serve for upholding common conversation and commerce, about the ordinary affairs and conveniences of life; and by the *philosophical* use of words, he means such a use of them, as may serve to convey the precise notion of things, and to express in general propositions certain and undoubted truths, which the mind may rest upon and be satisfied with, in its search after true knowledge. These two uses, he says, are very distinct; and a great deal less exactness will serve in the one case than the other. Similar expressions we may find in almost all the metaphysical writers. They all sing a melancholy monody on the ambiguity of popular language; and plead the necessity of a new lexicon, compiled with far greater precision and suited to the purposes of metaphysicians alone.

I confess for one, that I doubt the correctness of these representations. I suspect—and it is certainly lawful to propose a suspicion even against high authority—that language, after all, is a practical analysis of the powers of the mind, and the properties of things, made according to the wants and observations

of men; and that these broad views, formed in the exigencies of real life, are more permanent and more useful, and have more relative truth in them, than the fine spun distinctions devised in the closet of the philosopher; and never to be understood until our thoughts are wrought into an artificial state. Men in common life never give names but where they can see distinctions; and when the names of these distinctions are found in all languages, and have floated down through all ages; we know they are founded on the common observation of mankind, they have the suffrage of the whole world in their favor. Besides, we give names for speculative and for practical purposes; and speculative names are often lost as soon as the speculator moves out of his abstract circle. The *a b c*, the *x y z*, of the algebraist, are of no use but for algebraical calculations. But it is remarkable that the common use of language is always given for practical purposes. It is the sign and the representation of that *outside* view of things, which men in active life always take. Let me illustrate my meaning by an example. In popular language, and in the broad views of the human mind, which men in all the stages of society have entertained, they have held such a conception and wanted such a word as *memory;* it is, I suppose, translatable into all languages; and if uttered to the savage, would be immediately understood. A late metaphysical writer,*

* Dr. Brown.

however, thinks that, for the analysis he has in view, it would be better to sink the word in a more comprehensive but accurate term—*suggestion.* For what is memory, says he, but the suggestion of an event, with the consciousness of its being past? Well, no doubt to throw away memory and to take suggestion, simplified his system, and increased the beauty of his arrangement. But if you were to go into Boston market, and leave your memory behind you, and take nothing with you but suggestion, how long would you make yourself understood? The truth is, all arrangement of things, all classification, and of course all language, has a reference to the practical perceptions of men. These they have always followed, and hence I suspect that language, popular language, is a safe light to guide us in finding the extent of their conceptions, and the principles of their knowledge. The civil use of language is always substantial and permanent; the philosophical (in Locke's sense of that word) is often shadowy, and like other shadows, passes away.

In tracing the history of all metaphysical reasoning, it is curious to see how much of its acuteness and ingenuity consists in innovations on language, and departures from the common usages of mankind. We are told by one, that all virtue depends on expediency. But what is expediency? Surely not what that word expresses in the light conversation of common parlance; as well might the eagle attempt to

support his flight to the sun, by the waving of a single feather, as for a moralist to build a solemn system of duty on such a sandy foundation; but expediency here, is something which can justify the assertion that it is the ground of all virtue. Then you have a wonderful discovery, a reciprocal definition, that all virtue is founded on expediency; and expediency is that which supports all virtue. When two abstract words are thus brought together, the one to define the other, with an attempted accuracy beyond the plainness of common speech, I am sure beforehand, that I am to have all the puzzle of philosophy without the light of truth. One column of smoke goes up to illuminate another column of smoke, and both these columns serve only to fill the air with darkness, and increase the number of sore eyes. Bishop Butler speaks of those, who trace all our actions up to selfishness; even the saint and the angel act from selfish principles, for they find delight in serving God, and doing good to man; as much delight as the epicure in his sensual pleasures; and that delight is as much their own delight, and therefore it is selfish. In this sense, no doubt, every action in every holy being is selfish. But then, as Butler remarks, *this is not the language of mankind.* I have often thought how many a fine system might be overthrown by the remark—THIS IS NOT THE LANGUAGE OF MANKIND. Seneca tells us that all anger is sinful. We must not merely rule it, but we must kill and purge from our hearts every seed

and sediment of that baneful passion. Aristotle had said that anger was necessary; it was one of the constituent principles of our moral composition; but we must govern it by reason; we must use it as a private soldier, and not as a general to lead the way. But no, says Seneca; if anger listens to reason, it ceases to be anger; it is to be called by another name; for what I understand by anger, is a principle unbridled and ungoverned. Very well; here we have a definition which makes anger a wrong thing, and then the sapient conclusion, that all anger is wrong.* Now what shall you oppose to Seneca's reasoning? Why, simply the remark of Butler—*this is not the language of mankind.* St. Paul came much nearer to that language when he said, *be ye angry and sin not.* Of all the writers who have apparently led us through new mazes of thought, and landed us on the shore of unknown conclusions, I remember none, who holds a more sparkling pre-eminence at the present day, than Coleridge. His language is beautiful and precise; his figures are the finest devices, stamped on the most shining metal; his thoughts are sometimes new, and his reasoning is sometimes just. His books have paragraphs in them finer and more eloquent than the English language can elsewhere show. Yet his *Friend* is the most misleading book that was ever written; he is the last guide that I should select to

* De Irâ, Lib. I., Sect. 9.

lead me to the temple of truth. And what is the difficulty? He is a mystic, with more truth and more power in him, than most other mystics; and when he has led you up the mount, in a path of sunshine, as far as he, perhaps, or any other mortal can go; then to fill you with greater astonishment, he plunges into the fogs which surround the top of his Ida or Olympus, and you lose him somewhere between earth and heaven. The reader is inclined to say at the close of some paragraph, splendid and dark, this is very eloquent and touching, and perhaps there is some truth in it, but *this is not the language of mankind.*— In short, you may define a metaphysician generally, as a man who makes a language of his own. When you see a startling paradox, you may be sure there has been tampering with the king's English; and metaphysics can prove any thing, (as some say,) because she is a sovereign mistress of language, and moulds its words to her own imperial will.

There is a kind of unconscious wisdom which, when men act from the impulse of the occasion, and without any elaborate theories, almost always leads them to a right course. Hence it has been remarked, that there is a wisdom in the common law, which deliberative assemblies have emulated in vain;—and hence I infer that the popular use of language, is often the best analysis of the composition of the passions and the operations of the mind. The instincts of man are the wisdom of God.

It becomes then, in my view, a matter of great importance, in seeking whether emulation be a good or an evil principle, to ask what is the usage of that word. For language in its civil use, is often but the soundings of the voice of nature. Now in all the languages with which I am acquainted, there is a word answering to our word emulation, which is supposed to express an ambiguous passion of the mind; and that passion is good or evil, as it is prompted by right or wrong motives, and is directed to salutary or pernicious objects. In Hebrew, the verb is קנא, and the corresponding noun, קנאה—a word so holy, as sometimes to be attributed to God himself, and sometimes so bad as to express one of the most hateful emotions of the human breast. Gen. xxxvii. 2. *His brethren envied him.* But Elijah says I have been very *jealous*, (which will bear to be translated very *emulous*,) for the Lord God of Hosts, because the children of Israel, &c. 1 Kings xix. 14. The word *Ζῆλος*, in Greek, is of the same character. It answers very nearly to our word emulation. It is a medium word, says Oecumenius, an old commentator of the middle ages, which may be used in a good or bad sense. It is a good emulation, says Chrysostom, one of the most pious and eloquent of the Greek fathers, when any one is emulous to imitate virtue. *Εστι ζῆλος ἀγαθὸς, ὅταν τις ὁύτω ζηλῶι, ὡς μιμησασθαὶ την ἀρητην.* See *Suicerus de hoc verbo.* Theophylactus says the same. The Apostle Paul uses this word in this double sense.

It is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing. Cicero remarks concerning the Latin word *Æmulatio*, that is used in two senses, good and bad. As to our English word, it is defined by Dr. Johnson to be *desire of superiority;* which may be a superiority in goodness as well as sin. In the examples which he quotes, we have not only the use but the definition of the word. 'Aristotle,' says Dr. Sprat, 'allows that some emulation may be good, and may be found in some good men; yet envy he utterly condemns, as wicked in itself, and only to be found in wicked minds.' 'The Apostle,' says Dr. South, 'exhorts the Corinthians to a holy and general emulation of the charity of the Macedonians, in contributing freely to the poor saints in Jerusalem.' The pious Cowper also uses the word in a good sense, whom I more willingly quote, as the sentence bears directly on the point in debate. In his Task, speaking of the decay of discipline in public schools, he says,

> Then study languished, EMULATION slept,
> And virtue fled.

Here we have not only the use of the word in a good sense, but the direct testimony of Cowper, that he considered it as a great evil to have all emulation extinguished in our public seminaries. He couples it with the decay of study and the flight of virtue. The translators of our Bible have used the word twice, once in a good sense, and once in a bad one. Rom.

xi. 14, and Galatians v. 20. In the first instance it is in a good sense. 'If by any means I may provoke to *emulation* them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.' In the second instance it is used in a bad sense. In enumerating the works of the flesh, he enumerates idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, *emulations*, &c. These instances may prove that it is the general suffrage of mankind, (for their language is a transcript of their thoughts,) that they believe they have found a good principle in the human breast which may be expressed by the term emulation; and that it bears so much resemblance to a bad principle, that it may be expressed by a common word. Now if a man is of a mind so to define emulation, as that the very existence of the principle must be wrong, no doubt he can do it; but then we reply to him in the words of Butler—*this is not the language of mankind.*

Let us next inquire what the good part of this principle is, which mankind have consented to express by so suspicious a word.

We find, when we nicely survey the works of God, that one part of creation is made to correspond to another; one thing is set over against another, as an apocryphal writer expresses it; objects are adapted to our eyes, and our eyes to objects; motives are made to move our minds, and our minds are made to be moved by motives. We find from what we can learn of the vast circle of existence, that nothing is alike; no two flowers are of equal fragrance; no two

stars are of equal brightness; there are ranks and degrees in heaven; archangels, angels, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers; even the glorified saints, sunk as they were in a common guilt, and redeemed as they are by a common blood, are not probably exalted to equal glory. In the parable of the talents, we find that those who had made the best improvement, were raised to the highest reward. On this earth we know there cannot be equality. Whether we rate men by their abilities or their estates, it is impossible to keep them equal for a single day. You might as well attempt to make all birds fly in the same altitude of air, or all fishes swim in the same fathoms of water. If you were to prostrate every throne, and break every gubernatorial chair, and turn out every member from his seat in congress, others would arise up to take their places; if you were to scatter all property, by the strictest agrarian law, the equality could not last—some would be rich, and others poor. In a word, if from the universal order of nature in this planet, and probably in all planets, we can collect the will of God, as it is manifested by all testimony of all times,—it is his holy will, that his creatures, in higher and lower circles, should stand around his throne, occupying all the gradations of being, from the highest archangel, of whose existence we trace no commencement, to the sightless insect, who flourishes only for an hour.*

* I hope no reader will suspect me of adopting Paley's dan-

Nor are these orders fixed. It is intended that all intellectual beings should rise; certainly it is so with man, or why do we mount from infancy to boyhood, from boyhood to the state of man, from private life to public, and finally, if holy, from this dying world to an immortal state? This vast universe seems made for progression. That ladder which the sleeping patriarch saw in his dream, is placed before every man, without a vision; its foot is supported by the earth, and its summit leans on the skies.

Such is the outer world. If we look within, we shall find a propensity, an impulse, which exactly corresponds to this external order of things. We all desire to rise. It rouses our activity and conquers our indolence, to look forward to some future state of greater influence, and greater power, when we shall receive that submission of opinion which we are now paying to others, and hand down the wisdom to future ages which we have received from those who have gone before us. This principle is born with us, and breathes in us; and it is in vain to try to suppress it; it is too much a law of nature. In short, it seems that a man's reputation for learning or invention, or ability of any kind, is an estate to which he has just

---

gerous notion, that Heaven and Hell differ only *by degrees;* that hell is only the base of the staircase of which heaven is the top; I speak only of the virtuous part of creation, in which, when the wicked are separated, there will doubtless always remain orders and ranks.

as much a right as the acres which he purchases with his money. To be sure, he must not covet more than he can justly claim. He must not set up for a factitious reputation. He must not claim to speak as well as Cicero, when he hardly equals Hortensius. But there is a place to which he is entitled, and there let him contentedly stand. The property of the mind, the estates of genius, are not the less real, because they cannot be fixed by deeds, nor measured by the surveyor's chain.

If the man has a right to this, why not the boy? Children have all the feelings of men, and a school is but an epitome of the world. If a boy comes into a school with twice the abilities of any other, and twice the industry,—why, he has a right to all the fruits of these powers. He has a right to take the standing which his Maker has given him. It is his estate, to which he can make out the best of all titles —the gift of God. If he can spell better than any one in the class, he has a right to the head of the class. If he is a better mathematician, or a better linguist, he is entitled so to rank in the estimation of all who would judge according to the truth. In a word, there ought to be justice in schools, and justice implies property; but in schools the only property is the tenements of the mind. Perhaps it is the best moral discipline to which a school can be subjected, to find the master dealing out reputation according to merit, and teaching his scholars to do the same.

Here, then, we have two indications of the will of

God; the external and internal world. Without, we find the whole universe ranked in orders and degrees, that a boundless field might be opened to enterprise, and that each individual might be incited to effort. Within, we find the irrepressible desire; a desire dangerous, I know, and to be controlled by higher principles; but still a desire which no attainments in religion will ever extinguish—to rise—to put forth all our powers, and to reach the highest station our abilities may be fitted for. Now it seems to me, that these two arrangements meet each other, and conspire to promote the harmony of the world; for as the old poets tell us in the ancient chaos, that when the particles separated, the fiery element flew up and formed the stars; the ethereal air went next; the grosser sunk still nearer to the earth, and *downward purged the black tartareous dregs*, and every element found its place;

> Ignea convexi vis sine pondere cœli
> Emicuit, summaque locum sibi legit in arce.
> Proximus est aer illi levitate, locoque:
> Densior his tellus.
>
> *Ovid Met., L. I., line 26.*

So it seems to me, in the moral world, that *that* degree of emulation in good things, which leads the man or boy to put forth all his strength, controlled by that principle which forbids him to ask any more reputation than is assigned by justice, that, that preserves the balance of the system. That is the law of nature; that is the wisdom of God.

THE PURITAN.

No. 40.

But thus it is for the most part with the venders of startling paradoxes. In the sense in which they are to gain for their author the character of a bold and original thinker, they are false even to absurdity; and the sense in which they are true and harmless, conveys so mean a truism, that it even borders on nonsense.

Coleridge's Friend, No. VI.

I AM not ignorant, that here it may be objected that emulation is a dangerous passion—the parent of ambition; the mother of crimes which have filled life with contests, and deluged the world in blood. I shall be told, perhaps, of the morbid sensibility which it awakened in the heart of Saul, whose peace of mind was forever destroyed, when the daughters of Israel sung—*Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands;*—of Haman, whose honors were nothing to him, and whose banquets were tasteless, so long as he saw a poor captive Jew *sitting at the king's gate.* I shall be pointed perhaps to Roman story; and told of Marius driven almost to distraction,

by the impress of a seal, in which was represented Jugurtha, delivered up to his rival, Sylla. I shall be called to look at all the heart-burnings and supplantings of political life; the party spirit, which has shaken nations, exalted the worthless, and tumbled the most deserving from the summit of their power. I shall be called to review the jealousies which have entered the gardens of philosophy, and disturbed the men of genius, amidst their laurels and their repose. I shall, finally, be called to review the principles of the gospel, which trace every sin to its earliest germination in the heart; which enjoins pure actions from pure motives; and commands us to lose every selfish regard for personal ambition, in a generous desire to advance the glory of Him who made us. The gospel enjoins purity of heart and deep humility; and how are these consistent with a spirit of emulation, cultivated even in our common schools?

These are timely suggestions, and, if they cannot be answered, I confess I must abandon my ground. But is it not plain, that as some minerals are fatal poisons when given in great quantities and alone, yet become salutary medicines when mixed in a compound and in proper proportions, so of some of the instincts of our nature, they are dangerous when left alone, uncontrolled by higher principles, yet they form the very beauty and perfection of the human character, when blended with the principles of our holy religion? For example, industry—what a dan-

gerous thing it is, left to run without direction, and toil to fill up the cravings of an unsanctified heart! What was Catiline's industry? What was the industry of Benedict Arnold? It was an industry prompted by their selfishness; and which exhausted their powers only in the works of treachery and blood. But how would you cure these men? Would you rob them of their activity and put them asleep? No; you would turn their industry into a better channel. Now emulation bears some resemblance to industry, of which it is often the most powerful spring. We may be emulous for good things; and we may be emulous, and yet satisfied with that portion of reputation, which truth and justice assign to us. I may put forth all my powers; I may resolve to do my best; and yet be satisfied, when, after a fair trial, another has gone beyond me; that is, I may value the possessions of the mind, and yet covet no more than my lawful possessions. Emulation is a very harmless principle, only let justice come in to control it; and is not this possible? Does the introduction of property necessarily imply the introduction of theft and extortion? No; the command, *thou shalt not steal*, necessarily supposes the existence of private property, and the command not to envy others, necessarily supposes a share of reputation, which justly belongs to each one of our species. Now it seems to me, you will not promote moral discipline, by denying the existence of this ideal, but not imaginary property, (that were a

vain attempt,) but you must allow the existence of it; and teach each one to be willing to receive his own proportion in due season. In curing vice, we must not war with nature.

Nor can I think a regulated emulation, so inconsistent with the principles of the gospel, as some seem to suppose. The gospel sets before us a new career of duty, and incites to action by the noblest of all motives—love to man and love to God. These, no doubt, should be the predominant principles in the Christian's heart. But do these motives exclude all regard to the original impulses of our nature? When it is said, if any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature; old things are passed away;* I would ask, with humble submission, what are these old things? It refers—does it not?—to the old sinful principles of our nature, and not to such as are natural and indifferent. Religion does not alter the constitution of a man's mind; nor the essential elements of human nature. I cannot but think that a part of humility itself, consists in having a sensibility to reputation, (and what is reputation, but our relative standing in life?) and yet a willingness to be surpassed by our superiors, in whatever pursuit is worthy of approbation. As patience implies the existence of pain, and a sense of suffering, so humility implies the existence of praise, and a sense of its value. Saint Paul was a penitent sinner, humbled in the dust before God; and yet he has not scrupled to say, that he

was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles; and he has taught us, according to the common reading, *to covet earnestly the best gifts.**

As to what is said respecting the morbid sensibility which this passion produces; the ravages which it made on the mind of a Saul or a Marius, I must be permitted to remark, that these evils result not from emulation alone. It was not the emulation of man, but of Marius, that made that insolent warrior frantic when he saw the signature of his rival. It was an emulation grown into ambition; swollen with vanity; woven into a cruel and unprincipled heart; an emulation not for good things, but a passion nursed in blood; it was a race between two rivals, to see which should outstrip each other in wasting their country, and in inflicting miseries on mankind. I take it, all our passions receive a tincture from the particular mind in which they spring up, and from the principles with which they are combined. It is sometimes

* After all, this question must be settled, if possible, from the Bible. Now, though our Lord has said (Luke xxii. 25.) *that the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors; but ye shall not be so;* see also Matthew xxiii. 8—12; the question still remains, whether this prohibits a desire for a just reputation, and a just desire for influence, when we compare ourselves with others. Certainly he did not mean to prostrate all civil authority among Christians, when he speaks of lordships; and, in the college of Apostles, we must remember, that, according to his own appointment, Peter was first, πρῶτος.

dangerous to argue from the individual to the species. It is fallacious to argue from a passion governed by principle, to the operation of that passion, uncombined with principle, and in its ungoverned state. It was not the fault of Saul or Marius that they had the sentiments of emulation in their breasts; but that they were totally destitute of higher principles, which should control them. Because a wild horse may run away with you, if you mount him without a bridle; it does not follow, that he may not be ridden with perfect safety, when tamed by discipline, and governed by the rein.

But perhaps you will ask, considering the inflammable character of the human heart; is it possible to address this principle, in any degree, without leading it to arise to excess? If you encourage it in your schools, will you not inevitably bring forward young Mariuses and young Cæsars, in whose breasts this principle shall absorb all others? Here are two boys, of nearly equal industry and talent. If you set them to comparing themselves with each other, and acting on that principle, will it not be inevitably bad? This is the very pinch of the question. If the use of the principle, like the use of alcohol, is necessarily connected with the abuse, why then every Christian moralist will conclude, whatever intellectual advantages it may be connected with, it should be abandoned by all those who set virtue higher than knowledge.

But I apprehend, that when a rule can be laid down, which a boy of an honest conscience may always apply—a rule which separates the lawful from the unlawful; the moderate from the excessive; in such cases, there is no necessity of connecting the use of a principle with the abuse. He knows when he reaches the line of justice; and he knows he ought not to pass over it. Let us suppose, for example, that the rooms of the treasurer's office in our State House were full of gold; and the legislature have passed a law, that every one of my readers shall take a portion of it exactly equal to the weight of his body. The proclamation is made; and here are the scales, moving with the truest beam, and adjusted with the nicest care. Certainly there need be no difficulty in distributing this gold; it will not necessarily be connected with scrambling, or with heart-burning, or bitterness, or recriminations. We have only to step into the balances, and take the gold answering to our weight, and depart, poorer probably than some, and richer than others. Now I must contend, that in a public school, and also in public life, there are these perfect balances, to weigh out the precious metal of reputation, according to each individual's mental gravity. Every scholar, every man, finds his level; fashion and party spirit, envy and personal dislike, may conceal a man's name for a time, as the clouds for a season may obscure the brightest stars in the nocturnal sky; but as the *fair*

weather winds are sure at length to arise, and brush away the clouds, and the hidden star shines out in all its original lustre and native beauty; so a clouded reputation is sure to be seen and admired at last. Take some single quality, to be sure, and you may sometimes wonder at the disproportion between a man's merit, and his fame; but when you look at the whole compound of his character, it is surprising to see how much justice there is in the public sentiment. In a public school, it is still more clear that every scholar finds his true point of elevation. For, if the master should be envious, or distrustful, or partial, the scholars will be sure to reverse his decrees. They recite together daily; they know each other's application and powers; and their opinions, founded on the most intimate knowledge, are generally correct. The truth is, they *must* judge of each other's standing; it would be impossible to prevent it. Now which is best, to attempt to suppress what it is impossible to suppress, or to allow at once nature to have her course, and to endeavor to regulate her impulses according to the rules of justice?

But perhaps you will ask another question. Suppose it should be granted that much of this principle will exist, and it is impossible to suppress it; should not all the influence of moral action lean the other way? Nature will certainly supply enough of it; you need not encourage it by excitements, holding a positive place in your systems of education. It may be

important that your boys should play and laugh; should jump and exercise; should *urge the rolling circle's speed, and chase the flying ball;* but we never saw these articles insisted on as duties, in the regulation of any school. There are many cases in which all the powers of moral discipline should lean against the impulses of nature; though the existence of these impulses, in every degree, may not be absolutely wrong.

In reply, I would remark, that the chief error on the subject of emulation has been, applying it to those minds for which it is least needed. It is of the nature of a stimulant, to be given, not to those who have already a feverish excitement to the love of station and of praise; but those doubtful and discouraged natures, who view the summits of learning, and despair of scaling them. In this view, it seems to me, it is needed; and it ought to have a place in our systems of discipline. In some instances, it is the only principle which can wake up the mind or infuse confidence. We are often incited to do ourselves, by viewing what others have done. We compare our weakness with their weakness; our difficulties with their difficulties; and learn to hope for ourselves, by observing what they have conquered. How naturally does a jaded horse quicken his pace when a chaise passes him. It is a law of universal nature, and was not given in vain. I have no hesitation in saying, that there are some people who have not emulation

enough. There are some hearts in which this quickening fire needs to be lighted up. What is the man, and what is the boy, that is lost to all sense of character, and is alike insensible to approbation or shame? There are, too, some gloomy, discouraged minds, who need only to compare their powers with those of others, and they will be excited to exertion, by believing in the possibility of success. I should be very sorry, I should esteem it hazardous, with all the varieties of human nature before me, with all its weakness and all its diseases, to be precluded from the use of this medicine of peculiar minds; in some cases, perhaps the only resort.

Then, too, consider the indolence of our nature. Consider with what difficulty boys are brought to make exertions necessary to success in learning; how little capable they are of appreciating distant good, or of feeling the refined motives which may be suited only to saintly minds. You must take human nature as it is; and though you are not to encourage its corruptions, you must move it, if you move it at all, according to its original laws.

If you were to expel all emulation from a school, and attempt to reduce to one dead level every mind, I question whether you would not make it so different from the world in which your pupils must act, that it would hardly be a place of salutary discipline; and perhaps the best thing about your plan would be, that such is the force of nature, it would be impossible

for you perfectly to succeed. The imperfections of your scheme would be its only redeeming qualities.

But while I would warn you from one extreme, I would also caution you on the other side. While I would not extinguish emulation, nothing can be more dangerous than to appeal to that principle alone. Perhaps the grand error of the present day is, paying the Christian religion the decent compliment of acknowledging its excellences, and then acting, in detail, as if it were not true. But the claims of that religion are as wide as the actions of men; it is a rule for practice. There is great emphasis in that passage of Scripture which commands us to *walk* by faith. The precepts of religion are the results of its doctrines, and both of them should influence every part of life. If any thing I have said goes to exclude the strictest principles of the gospel from our systems of education, I abandon my ground; for I agree with Augustine, *constat inter omnes veraciter pios, neminem sine vera pietate, id est, veri Dei vero cultu veram posse habere virtutem, nec eam veram esse, quando gloriæ servit humanæ.*—Civitate Dei, Lib. v. cxix.

It is the fault of our great cities, that every thing in education is conducted on a system of flattery. The young master is sent to the public exhibition to be admired; and the young miss is presented before the company to be admired. Our praises are demanded, and almost plundered from us, when she presents us the composition, that is not English;

the painting, which resembles nothing; and the music, of which the discords are the most pleasing parts. Emulation is taught even in frivolous attainments; and ambition is addressed as if it were a virtue. In the mean time, a religion, which knows nothing of humility, presides over the whole. The dangerous pride of the human heart is kept out of sight; kept out of sight did I say? nay; it is made the chief stock on which the social virtues are grafted; and by the nurture of its evil sap, they are expected to bloom and bear fruit.

The conclusion, then, to which we come, is—that it is not a question whether emulation is to be admitted into schools, for it will exist there whether we will or no. *Non scripta; sed nata lex; quam non didicimus, accepimus, legimus, verum ex natura ipsa arripuimus, hausimus, expressimus; ad quam non docti; sed facti; non instituti; sed imbuti sumus;*— that since nature has admitted its existence, we are to allow it; but always to apply it where most needed, and to endeavor to combine it with higher principles. Finally, to direct it only to worthy objects, and teach it to submit to the regulations of a sagacious justice. In a public school, every boy has a share of reputation, which can be measured out to him with almost mathematic certainty; let him take it, and therewith be content. Within these bounds, emulation may fire the genius (*Æmulatio alit ingenia*) without inflaming the passions or corrupting the heart.

If, however, experience must overthrow this theory*; if the existence of the thing is necessarily connected with the abuse; if, in the intellectual house, you cannot place on the hearth, the smallest spark of this fire, without wrapping the whole building in a conflagration, then, I confess, we must bend all our moral powers against it; for we must abhor that conventional morality, which calls to the aid of virtue, the incitements of vice. *Nunquam enim virtus vitio adjuvanda est, se contenta.* Experience must decide; but let it be a careful experience; let it not be based on a prejudiced observation, or a superficial insight into an inadequate number of facts.

* Hardly a theory, however, for the whole world has said so.

THE PURITAN.

No. 41.

Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

Gray's Bard.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

RETURNING home one evening, after having been employed, during a solitary walk, in reflecting on the illusiveness of human expectation, the vanity of human prospects, and the folly of the vast multitude, who live without virtue, and die without repentance; and, having revolved these melancholy reflections in my mind, until they had extorted the solemn aspiration—*What is man, that thou art mindful of him?* I retired to my pillow, and fell into the following vision.

I seemed to be standing on a desolate island, in a wide river; a place so excessively barren, that it

yielded neither fruit, nor shrub, nor plant, nor anything to delight the eye, or gratify the taste All around me was barren uniformity, and seemed strikingly to figure out the inanity of an infant mind. I was told that it was called the *Island of Nativity;* a most dreary, desolate spot, where no one wished to reside; that all who found themselves here, immediately launched in boats, which floated down from above, into the river of life, which was rolling its waters before me; that none ever returned to occupy their former residence, since of those, who thus ventured, some were landed in flowery gardens, on a happier shore; and as for the others, they perished down a tremendous cataract at the end of the river: I was told further, that the channel of the river was winding and intricate; crossed by many counter-currents and rocks, which increased the danger; that none of the navigators could be relied on as pilots, since none ever navigated it but once; and that, consequently, vast numbers ultimately perished. Amidst these dreary considerations, however, there was one comfort. A great Benefactor had, in compassion to the miserable voyagers, drawn an accurate chart of the river; by duly attending to which, all who wished, might escape destruction.

I had no sooner heard this, than I seized one of the boats, and launched off—little doubting of success, and receiving a chart, rather from the importunity of a friend, than for any essential benefit that I supposed it could bestow.

I had advanced but a small way into the river, when I perceived that it separated into two channels, one on the right hand, the other on the left. That on the right hand ran along a dark and desolate shore;—craggy clefts frowned terribly above, while the river rolled its turbid waters through a narrow channel below;—not a flower grew on the bank; not a grove or a valley gladdened the prospect. There were but few voyagers; and they appeared to pass their time between the awful agitations of doubtful hope, or settled despondency. I was told, that this was called the *bank of wisdom.* That on the other side presented a very different appearance. Flowers and fruits bordered the stream, and the yielding waters curled beneath the embraces of Arabian winds. The prospect was everywhere delightful; the channel was crowded with passengers, who sported and sung, without sorrow or care. All was beauty and hilarity. This side, I was told, was called the *bank of pleasure.*

On both sides, they appeared solicitous to make me of their party. They on the right hand, told me of the safety and happiness which they should gain at last; that though this channel appeared frightful and forbidding at a distance, yet those gloomy appearances vanished on a nearer approach, and that it was even more quiet and serene than that on the opposite side; whether more pleasant or not, it was the strait and narrow way, by which we must avoid the cataract, and arrive at bliss. They on the other side, told me

of the companions and pleasures I should enjoy on my passage—they pointed to their flowers, and invited me to partake of their sweets;—as for the dangerous cataract, they said, it was very doubtful whether there was one, or, if there was, it would be time enough to avoid it hereafter. They declared, that they themselves were steering for the shores of bliss, and only took a more circuitous course, to avoid the rocks that frowned on the opposite shore. One party addressed my senses, the other my understanding; one allured me with smiles, the other exhorted me with tears; one promised me a pleasant voyage, the other a profitable one.

I was a long time doubtful which course to take; but, finding that I was already nearest to the bank of pleasure, and that the current strongly set that way, I yielded to its impulse; firmly resolving, however, soon to change my course, and get over to the bank of wisdom. "At least," said I, "I may try it for a little while."

On joining my new companions, I found them all busy, cheerful, and apparently happy. Some were employed in cropping the flowers, that grew on the bank; some in angling for the golden fishes, that swam in the stream. Some spread out every sail, to catch the delicious gale; others found their happiness in toiling at the laborious oar. Some were employed in explaining to us the various windings of the river; and, in their anxiety to teach others the way, fre-

quently got on the rocks themselves. Others exerted all their eloquence to disprove the authenticity of our chart, though it was evident, that in their calmer moments, they dreaded the correctness of its delineations themselves. All were active about something; and all had much happiness, because they all were possessed of much hope.

By reason of the many meanderings of the stream, it was impossible for us to discern our course for any considerable distance before us. But one thing was very remarkable—we always found, that the scenery on our banks was less pleasant, as we approached it. The flowers, on a nearer inspection, had a fainter hue, and the trees a less pleasing verdure. Sometimes, when we were approaching a projecting promontory, on the further side of which we expected to see unusual fertility and beauty in the scene, we found the country still less pleasant than before, and sometimes, even a barren sand. I remember one in particular, which sorely disappointed us. As we approached it, there was a remarkable turn in the river, and we expected that Paradise was beyond it. We turned—but Paradise was not there. At that promontory, I was told, we had measured about one third of the stream.

One thing that struck me, was the remarkably slow manner in which we seemed to descend. I really feared that the waters would stagnate. On looking more narrowly, however, I found that the current

set with a fearful impetuosity, which no force could stop, or for a moment retard; and, what was still more alarming, the velocity of the stream seemed to accumulate at every stage of our progress.

Our hilarity was frequently interrupted by the solemn warnings and reproofs of those on the opposite side. They told us of our temerity, in hazarding the dangers of the cataract; they expatiated on its terrors, and the certainty of our own destruction, if we continued in our present course; they entreated us, as we loved our lives, to come over to them, and promised us safety if we would but join them. They frequently appealed to the chart, and showed the exact coincidence there was between that and the part of the river we had already passed; they talked of the fearful probability of the coincidence still to be found. We listened, hesitated, and persisted in our course. The timid sighed—the fearless laughed—and most of us went on as before.

I observed, however, that in the earlier part of our course, now and then one would go over from the *bank of pleasure* to the *bank of wisdom*. The number of these grew less and less continually, as we got further down the stream. One thing was remarkable—many of our party went over to them; but none, that fairly got over to them, ever returned to us.

Many of us were split to pieces on untimely rocks, and whirled beneath the waters down the stream. I was sailing, in full glee, with a companion by my

side. His bark struck a rock, and I saw the waters close over his head. I started—and, for once, resolved to steer over to the other side. I turned my bark, fixed my oars, and had already reached the dividing line. I saw them beckon me with smiles—I was almost there—but a violent current set strong against me—my companions drew me back, and I found myself again on the stream of pleasure.

Finding this attempt fruitless, I resolved on another expedient. I perceived there were many who seemed to take a middle course, so that we knew not to which party they belonged. Sometimes they were *very near* the bank of wisdom, and sometimes they were on the bank of pleasure. They wished to be numbered with the voyagers on each side, though they, in fact, incurred the suspicion of both. I tried their course for a while, but found it more unpleasant than any other. There were so many counter-currents and eddies, that it was impossible to steer straight. I was told, moreover, that these doubtful beings generally perished, down the cataract, with the rest.

As we proceeded on, I perceived that the banks on the opposite side grew more pleasant, and ours grew more dreary; their countenances became more cheerful, and ours more sad. We were no longer fanned by fragrant winds, or exhilarated by nutritious fruits. The eye saw nothing but sterility around us; the ear heard nothing but noises of alarm. We saw the cataract delineated on our chart, as just before us.

Some disbelieved, and threw away their chart; many hesitated; all feared.

The stream still descended, and we went on. We caught hold of the reeds and rushes to retard our progress, but they broke, and we still went on. The song of youth was heard no more, or héard with disgust. We looked back on the flowery field by which we had passed, saw others tasting their sweets, but they were beyond our reach. Our comforts were gone, and our hopes, like a tropical twilight, grew darker fast.

While I was surveying this mournful change, I heard a voice address me—"Thoughtless mortal! thou hast spent the day of probation—the day that departs, but does not return. With life and death before thee, thou hast chosen the latter; the votaries of folly have beguiled thee by their flatteries, and the streams of pleasure have caught thee in their vortex. Behold destruction before! Who shall struggle with these conflicting elements? Who shall survive the cataract of destruction?"

I started up, and heard the dashing of waters, and the shrieks of perishing wretches. The waves were already heaping around me—I was on the tremendous brink, when—I awoke, glad to find a respite from that destruction, which is not the dream of the moment, but an endless death!

THE PURITAN.

No. 42.

Beneath a sable vale, and shadows deep,
Of unaccessible and dimming light,
In silence, ebbing clouds more black than night,
The world's GREAT MIND his secrets hid doth keep,
Through whose thick mists when any mortal wight
Aspires, with halting pace, and eyes that weep
To pry, and in his mysteries to creep,
With thunders he, and lightnings blasts their sight.
O Sun invisible! that dost abide
Within thy bright abysmes, most fair, most dark,
When with thy proper rays thou doest thee hide,
O ever shining, never full seen mark,
To guide me in life's night, thy light me show,
The more I search of thee, the less I know!

Drummond.

OF no subject have we had so much romance instead of reason, as of solitude; that power of which so many have written and so few have improved. All the misses at our boarding-schools, think it necessary to write, at least, one paper on solitude, in which the lady pours out the effusions of her fancy, in lines

which belie every wish of her heart; in which the gayest and most superficial will be most sentimental. Indeed, woman, from her earliest hours to her last, is a bundle of contradictions. At least you cannot predict her course of conduct by her literary exercitations. I have known a young lady to read Sherlock on Death, when she was going to a ball; and Mr Hitchcock's Essay on Eating, with a pound of wedding-cake in her hand. If you see before a pair of bright eyes, Enfield's Philosophy, you may conclude she is going to take a walk with an empty-pated lover; and if she is studying Zimmerman on Solitude, it is clear she is just about to be married. Whatever women may say or sing about solitude, it is certain their sphere is society; and therefore I heartily advise them to let alone a subject, on which they cannot utter a word without acting the part of affected, little hypocrites.

Solitude is by no means, as has been said, a test of virtue. We retire for very different objects. A shopkeeper, when he goes alone, goes to cast up his accounts; the miser, to reckon his money; the battered beau and libertine, to put on his plasters, to dress his sores and take his medicines; and the ambitious man, to lay his schemes for advancement and power. Some retire to write idle books, and some to read them; and some in solitude fill their imaginations with images of voluptuousness, more exquisite and more seductive than any that are found in real

life. I hardly know a more sensual wretch than Rousseau. Indeed, it seems to me when the Prince of Darkness raised up advocates for his cause, and patrons of infidelity, it was a master-piece of policy, to commit it to two such men as Rousseau and Voltaire; they were perfect correlatives. Voltaire took all the laughers, and Rousseau all the weepers. Voltaire was all sarcasm and satire, and Rousseau all romance and sentiment; and thus between them both, they swept the board. They have done more than any others to undermine the religious principles of mankind; and, to this hour, reign without rivals, the giants of licentious principles on the continent of Europe. Yet Rousseau was a lover of solitude. He even once attempted to establish a plan of seclusion for life, though he found that his fancy had imposed on his feelings. Hear how he exposes his singular views. "Sometimes," says he, speaking of Madame de Warrens, who, by the way, was one of the chastest harlots that ever departed from virtue, through the sublimest of principles, "Sometimes I quitted this dear friend, that I might enjoy the uninterrupted pleasure of thinking of her; this is a caprice I can neither excuse nor fully explain; I only know this was really the case, and therefore avow it. I remember that Madame de Luxembourg told me one day, in raillery, of a man, who used to leave his mistress, that he might enjoy the satisfaction of writing to her. I answered, I could have been this man. I

might have added, that I had done the very same." In another place, he describes, in his own glowing language, how he filled up his solitary moments, when he lived as a kind of amorous dependent on this peculiar lady. "If all this, (i. e. his happiness,) consisted in facts, actions or words, I could somehow or other convey an idea of it. But how shall I describe what was neither said or done, nor even thought; but enjoyed, felt, without my being able to particularize any other object of my happiness than the bare idea. I rose with the sun and was happy; I walked and was happy; I saw Madame de Warrens and was happy; I quitted her and was still happy! Whether I rambled through the woods, over the hills, or strolled along the vallies, read, was idle, walked in the garden, or gathered fruits, happiness still accompanied me; it was fixed on no particular object; it was within me, nor could I depart from it a single moment." Such was the solitude of Rousseau. I only wish, in the abundance of his communicativeness, he had informed us, whether this happiness, which he thinks so mystical, did or did not, in any part of it, arise, in addition to Madame de Warrens' charms, from opium or brandy.

The good man, too, loves occasional solitude. He is very happy when alone; and he is not in the least perplexed to tell the cause of his happiness. It arises from a conscious sense of the presence of God, and a contemplation of his infinite perfections. When he

enters the shades, he feels himself to be in the bosom of his Father and friend. He hears his voice in the passing breeze, and sees his glory in the stars of the sky. Whether he prostrates himself in humble penitence before the throne of mercy, or rises to a view of the wonders of creation and redemption; whether he looks on God, or himself; whether he surveys his past life, or looks on to future emancipation and glory; his emotions are high, though his passions are at peace. He tastes many a precious drop from the river of life, and returns from retirement to the world, more strengthened for duty, and more prepared to fulfil all the engagements of a social being. No hours are more profitable to the Christian, than those which he passes alone

It may be a serious question then, to each one of my readers, not whether he loves solitude; for that is ambiguous; but how he fills up the profitable or pernicious hours, which to solitude are given. Do you reflect;—look inward;—meditate—pray—commune with God and commune with yourself, when you retire from the haunts of business and activity? Is your solitude a root to bear the branches of benevolent exertion? Or do you retire to fill ——————? But I must close my paper with a

SONNET.

I love the shade; I love the lonely walk,
Where, while the zephyrs whisper peace around,
And the bat flies o'er grass by trees imbrowned,
Descending spirits, seem to meet and talk,

And giant-shadows in procession stalk;
While the low sun in glory, though profound,
Sprinkles his pearls o'er all the dewy ground,
In hues, which fancy soothe, but reason balk.
Father of nature! Father of our race!
Of the refulgent sun—the rain—the dew!
Who hear'st the hungry ravens when they cry;
O let me here thy secret footsteps trace;
Thou God of nature, ocean, earth, and sky,
Subdue my soul and be my father too!

THE PURITAN.

No. 43.

The love of popularity, is the all-tainting vice of a republic.

Dr. Channing.

Nothing is more deceiving, than judging of theories, without an eye to their operation in practice; and especially is it so in politics. I have often suspected, and indeed the suspicion is almost ripened into a confirmed belief, that all the boasted forms of government, which have been most admired for their excellence, have little value in the abstract, and are only wise in reference to the past history of the people. They were expedients, which their present habits and prejudices rendered necessary. Take the British constitution, as an example. They have three independent powers, each of which has a negative on each other. In theory, then, we may say, that each may perpetually resist the other, put a negative on all its proceedings, and the whole government must per-

petually stand still. It is easy to put a drag-chain on your waggon, when preparing to descend the hill, which shall perfectly stop it; but the great question is, how shall it move, and move with the requisite moderation? In theory, therefore, the British constitution provides not a particle of remedy for these evils; but they are found in their past history. Having suffered the commotions of two revolutions, and an obstinate family having been twice driven from the throne, all parties feel the necessity of proceeding by compromise. The parliament is careful of presenting an offensive bill to the king; and the king, for years, has not exercised the power of the veto; and thus, by accommodating their abstract constitution with a moral power which corrects its evils, the government proceeds, with some jarring, to accomplish the imperfect objects at which government aims.

Our own constitution was made with the utmost care; and, I have no doubt, was intended to be so completely finished, that it should go, like perpetual motion, of its own accord. But such is the impossibility of anticipating all possible exigencies in previous speculation, that our constitution, formed as it was in a later age, and by the wisest men, after the maturest experience, yet in its adaptation to practicable life, owes its feasibility to certain expedients, for which its luminous sections have made no provision.

Much has been said about our caucuses; and that American word has been thought to express—an assembly, where selfishness and faction meet, to plan their devices, and exercise their violence. Dr. Dwight somewhere describes a caucus, as a place where the party-man and the demagogue come, to plot for deceiving the people, and to control the lawful assemblies. To say that a man figures at a caucus, is to insinuate everything bad of him, as a politician. Yet I see not how it would be possible to go along with our elections, without these previous assemblies. They were not brought in by faction, but by necessity; and in condemning them, we are acting the part of the bigots of the middle ages, who condemned all usury, and the Jews as brokers and usurers, who always existed, though always persecuted, because it was impossible for commerce to exist, without money's being lent on trust, and the lender's being rewarded for that trust.

Let us consider, for a moment, how it is in the election of governor. The constitution makes provision for the act of voting; it requires a hundred thousand people and more to come together on a set day, and cast their votes for a chief magistrate. "Those persons, who shall be qualified to vote for senators and representatives, within the several towns of this commonwealth, shall, at a meeting to be called for that purpose, on the first Monday of April, annually, give in their votes for a governor, to the select-

men, who shall preside at such meetings; and the town-clerk, in the presence and with the assistance of the selectmen, shall, in open town-meeting, sort and count the votes, and form a list of the persons voted for, with the number of votes for each person against his name; and shall make a fair record of the same in the town-books, and a public declaration thereof in the said meeting; and shall, in the presence of the inhabitants, seal up copies of the said list, attested by him and the selectmen, and transmit the same to the sheriff of the county," &c.* This is all that is said, respecting the choice of governor. Now, how are a hundred thousand people to coincide in one man, or hope or expect such a miracle, without some concert? There must be some previous nomination; there must be some effort, to bring up men, well qualified, before the public eye, and fasten their merits on the public attention. As there are no legal assemblies for this, it is done in voluntary meetings, called caucuses; and it seems to me, an honest citizen may go to them, without the imputation of being a lover of faction, or a follower of demagogues.

If these nominations were not made in these caucuses, they must be made by single citizens, or editors of newspapers, which would be infinitely worse.

---

* Constitution of Massachusetts, Chap. II., Art. i., Sec. 3.

As caucuses seem to be necessary, so it seems to me, some of them are managed with singular wisdom. I see nothing which the most dreaming theorist could desire to mend. Take the usual method in which a governor is nominated, as an example. The members of the legislature, previous to the next election, assemble on some evening, to consult on this important point. They are supposed to be the wisest men in the commonwealth; they come from all parts of the State; they stand in a responsible situation, and their characters are well known. Such nominations are as little likely to fail either from want of wisdom, or want of virtue, as any that can be devised.

Respecting the lower caucuses, more might be said; they too often fall into the hands of busy and irresponsible men. No government can be worse, than that which is managed by secret agents, behind a curtain. But the defect of these caucuses, happens through the negligence of our best citizens. They have imbibed such a prejudice for the word, and have such a perfect detestation of a meeting called for the purposes of violence and faction, that they often stay away from them; and leave their purposes to be forestalled by agents of less virtue, but more activity. It should be remembered, that the caucus is the most important meeting; there resides the spirit of the election, and in the other only the form. Here, minds are compared, wills are united, and the proceedings here fix the election, as the planting of the seed decides the character of the tree.

It may be asked, whether caucuses should be confined to men of one party, as is now generally the case? or whether a general meeting of free citizens, should be invited? In times of high excitement, I apprehend the exclusive mode is the best. If in an informal meeting, you were to bring two parties together, there would be danger of a tumultuous assembly, and no decision. But in calmer times, it would perhaps be best to collect all, and to adjust differences by a mutual compromise.

It is an evil, that caucuses are held in the evening. A man is not the same being by candle-light, that he is in sunshine; no, not the wisest and best. It is true, it will be said on the other side, that the evening is the season of leisure; and that it would be difficult for artisans and men of business to leave their work, during earlier hours. How far these evils counterbalance those of nocturnal deliberations, deserves to be considered. But I am sure no man ought to allow himself to make any important decision, after ten o'clock at night. He will be apt to find it a work of darkness, in more senses than one. Late sessions, late courtships, late meetings, are the ruin of our welfare, in politics, love, and religion.

One evil of caucuses is, that there is often a *first cause before the first;* a caucus before the caucus, where a number of busy men have already anticipated the decisions of the meeting. It is as hard to trace things to their first causes in politics, as it is to find

the end of the little fibrous roots of a tree, which run deep in the ground. To prevent this, I could wish that a caucus could always hold two sessions. Let them first meet to discuss matters, interchange opinions, hear speeches, (which should be short, and not inflammatory,) and run over a list of candidates. Let them choose a large committee of nomination, and then adjourn; for *it is an excellent thing to sleep, after a debate, before a decision.* Let them come together, to hear the report of their committee, and fix on their candidates. All this should not be considered as a subsidiary part of an election. It seems to be essential to a union of efforts, and a wise result.

Republicanism is a car, which can only accomplish its journey, by going slow enough. The people will generally be right, if you can only keep them in pause long enough to think. For this reason, in all our proceedings, we should avoid hasty decisions. A great deal has been said about long speeches, irrelevant repetition, and a needless consumption of time, in our State legislature. This is a preservative evil in republicanism. I had rather be vexed with long speeches, than ruined by rash legislation. I have sometimes thought it would be wise, to hire ten long-winded tribunes, to consume the day for the preservation of our laws, and to save us from the evils of perpetual innovation.

THE PURITAN.

No. 44.

For though most hands dispatch apace,
And make light work (the proverb says),
Yet many different intellects
Are found t' have contrary effects;
And many heads t' obstruct intrigues,
As slowest insects have most legs.

Hudibras.

YOUTHFUL recollections are not easily effaced; and I look back with some pleasure on the eloquence I heard, and the scenes I witnessed, in former days, at our Bundleborough town-meetings.

In the first place, a half sheet of fools-cap paper, with all the articles to be debated, written out in a fair hand, was pasted up at the porch-door of the meeting-house, and other conspicuous places in town, signed by the selectmen, warning all good citizens worth sixty pounds in money, to come and vote on their municipal affairs. Sometimes it was to choose a governor, sometimes representatives to the State

legislature, and sometimes to raise monies to defray the expenses of the town; and if any one wished to have a birds-eye view of politics and politicians, he might have seen it *there.* There were dupes and knaves, demagogues and gulls, management and jealousy, art and deception, rustic shrewdness and rustic eloquence; all the tricks and knaveries of social life played off to perfection, so that what our primer was to other books, our town-meetings were to more dignified assemblies. I am an impartial judge of politics, for I began life by looking down on its operations from a gallery; and I must own, from that day to this, I have seen little in the science to enamor me with its beauties.

On the appointed day, the meeting-house was thrown open; and in the great pew immediately under the pulpit, a little elevated above the rest of the audience, were collected the town-clerk, the selectmen, and whoever had a right to that dignified seat. The first business was to choose a moderator, to regulate the meeting—a very needful officer; and here the choice almost invariably fell upon squire Wilson, whose silver tongue, and cautious wisdom, made him the hero of our town. How often have I seen him walk to the chair, with all the dignity of a speaker in the house of commons, taking off his three-cornered hat, showing on his back the circle, which the club of his powdered wig had made on his coat, every step firm and deliberate, every look a thunderbolt of

wisdom! Then came his handsome apologies—He felt "wholly incompetent to discharge the arduous duties imposed upon him; it was a violent constraint on his conscious sense of inability to take that exalted chair; he should need all the candor and indulgence of his fellow townsmen, to conduct the business of this important meeting; but relying on their good sense and generosity, the proofs of which, on many trying occasions, he had so often received, he would, according to his poor abilities, endeavor to discharge the duties of a Bundleborough moderator." All this appeared to me, in those days, as the very topmost flights of modesty and eloquence. I had heard the names of Demosthenes and Cicero, but what they could do more or better, I could not imagine.

In every age, it seems that peculiar modesty on the superficies is required of the man, who presides over a deliberative assembly. Demosthenes had it in his orations, and always takes care to hoist it into notice in the beginning of his speech; Cicero mixes it with all his vanity; and it is well known how the speaker of the house of commons, was accustomed to plead with and petition the king, to set aside his election and excuse him from an honor, for which he panted with all his heart. "Till Sir Fletcher Norton was elected speaker," says the editor of Blackstone's Commentaries, "on 29th Nov. 1774, every gentleman, who was proposed to fill that honorable office, affected great modesty, and if elected, was almost forced into

the chair, and at the same time, he requested permission to plead, in another place, his excuses and inability to discharge the office, which he used to do on being presented to the king." He goes on to say, a little after, "Sir John Cust was the last speaker who addressed the throne in the language of diffidence, of which the following sentence may serve as a specimen; 'I am now a humble suitor to your majesty, that you would give your faithful commons an opportunity of rectifying this, the only inadvertent step which they can ever take, and be graciously pleased to direct them to present some other to your majesty, whom they may not hereafter be sorry to have chosen, nor your majesty to have approved.'" See Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. I. page 181, note. But all this I had seen without going to England, in Bundleborough, my dear native town.

Our sharpest debates, as in the British parliament, used to be about money matters. This was wont to call forth all the eloquence of *the house*, and sometimes exhaust the whole session of six hours. Sometimes Dr. Snivelwell would want to have his salary raised; for the whole town was but one parish. Sometimes our schools must be multiplied, and sometimes a new road was to be laid out. In all these debates, there were two parties, the savers and the spenders; and each of them guided, notwithstanding their professions, a little by private interest. Those gentlemen, whose property was invisible and paid the

smallest taxes, in proportion to their wealth, were always most ready to vote away the town's money; whereas the farmer, whose purse was small and whose lands must be taxed, was invariably the most parsimonious and saving.

I remember I used to compare our venerable clergyman to the king; his church to the house of lords; and the people, in town-meeting assembled, to the commons. Our reverend king was very willing to have his salary increased; the church were not *very* adverse to it, or, at least, less so than the lower house; but the commons were always griping the purse-strings. Thus we had deep management and warm debates.

It was curious sometimes to notice the mistakes made by rustic eloquence. Great liberties were often taken with the king's English, and we used to show that we were true freemen, by violating the laws of language. I recollect the discussion was once respecting continuing our schools throughout the year; when one gentleman remarked that we were an ancient, growing town, and needed two *annual* schools; when an honest farmer started up, and said, "that for his part, he never went to an *animal* school, nor his father before him; and he did not see why our children should need *animal* schools. He thought we had better save our money, and leave *animal* schools to the Boston fops, who needed them." On another occasion, it was objected to an agricultural gentleman,

who had made a speech rather inconclusive in its reasoning, that his ground was not tenable. "Not *tillable*, Mr. Moderator," said he; "I own as much *tillable* ground as any other man; I pay the largest tax of any one in town; and, Sir, is it to be objected to me, that my ground is not *tillable?*" So the worthy man, like some logicians, found his mistake to be an *error in terminis*.

There was one famous speaker in our rustic senate, who was accustomed to attract great attention. He went by the name of the *learned cobbler*. He had a thin person, a loud voice, a meagre and haggard look, and as much brass in his face, as prevented him from ever being abashed. He was always in the opposition; and had he been in the British parliament, would soon have been in the ministry. His gesticulation was very vehement; and I remember a part of his speech against raising our minister's salary. "Turn your eyes," said he, "my fellow-townsmen, to Bunker Hill." [Which, by the way, was far enough out of sight, but he obviously meant the eyes of the imagination.] "On that consecrated ground, our fathers poured out their blood, in crimson torrents, for the cause of liberty; for liberty they faced their British foes; for liberty they fought and for liberty they bled. For liberty, Warren lay a breathless corps on the cold ground, sprinkled by the dews of the night, and making the green sod his immortal pillow. For liberty they resisted the stamp-act. Yes, liberty

was the goddess at whose shrine they poured the sacrifice of their blood, and the incense of their prayers. Yes.—They did—and shall we now be slaves?" This speech must appear very beautiful, when we remember it was made on a motion to add twenty-five dollars per annum to a clergyman's salary.

THE PURITAN.

No. 45.

I would be worldly wise; for the other wisdom,
That does prescribe us a well-governed life,
And to do right to others, as ourselves,
I value not an atom.

Massenger.

Amidst all the character that have passed under my inspection, I know of none more disgusting and contemptible, than a thorough-going politician. Politics, in all the forms of the science, from the management of the parish to the rival candidates for the highest chair in the nation, sharpens the envy, extinguishes the benevolence of men, and makes them arithmetical machines, moving only by their interest, without one impulse from the benevolence of a generous heart.

I have already mentioned squire Wilson, our moderator, who was a true specimen of a politician on a small scale, and in a humble sphere. The squire

was a man who lived on calculation. He never uttered a sentiment, or moved a step, or took off his hat, but with a view to the effect. He was a tall, stately man, well dressed; who loved a glass of brandy, and spoke with a silver tongue. He was remarkable for never committing himself on any question, until it was absolutely necessary; and he had a fund of common-place remarks, by which he could go *round a subject*, without coming to the vital point. He always waited to see which way the stream would set, and then threw himself into the current. His practice was to suspend his opinion, "the matter was weighty and worthy of deliberation." No man could call him hasty or rash with his mouth; he never let his tongue run before his thoughts. He fully complied with the direction of Scripture, in being *swift to hear, slow to speak.* He remembered, according to the directions of the old philosopher, that he had one mouth and two ears, and therefore he should hear twice as much as he taxed others with hearing. He well knew that one hasty speech might lose him ten votes, and ten votes might turn the election.

The squire was one of the most affable men alive. He would pat one man on the shoulder, whilst he gave him agreeable advice; pull off his hat to a second, and squeeze a third by the hand. He never gave any advice but what was agreeable. There was another squire in town, who was as great a *bon vivant*

as himself, being generally muddled by three o'clock in the afternoon, from drinking brandy. All the town noticed it, and predicted, unless some faithful friend should arouse him from his error, he would be *over seas*, and gone as a citizen and as a man. Everybody knows how agreeable certain prescriptions are to people in this condition. Squire Wilson went to see him, and thus addressed him—"Brother," said he, "your health fails; I clearly perceive you look pale; (the fact was, his cheeks were like two red pulpit-cushions;) you are too abstemious; I advise you, as you grow older, to lay in some good Madeira, and some good old cogniac, and take a glass now and then. Your stomach requires it." Whether the advice was taken, I know not; but an assenting smile testified that it was abundantly agreeable.

Squire Wilson was remarkable for never giving a direct answer. I remember that my old favorite John Bunyan says, that out of the mouth of Apollyon, the fiend that encountered Christian, came fire and smoke. It was not so with squire Wilson. Out of his mouth, whenever he spoke, there came nothing but smoke. I recollect that one day when he was walking in his field, swinging his cane and overlooking his workmen, two worthy citizens laid a wager of ten dollars, that one of them could not go to him and propose any question, whatever the question might be, to which he should give a simple and direct answer. The champion went, and out of all possible questions,

he proposed the following. He knew that the worthy gentleman had an only son in Savannah, whom he loved as well as he was capable of loving any thing. He therefore asked, "Pray, sir, when did you hear from your son?" The squire paused, looked up to the sun in the sky, squirted the tobacco-juice from his mouth, and said, "My good friend, do you think the mail has got in to-day?" Thus nature was undeviating, and the wager was lost.

This popular man was very discreet with his tongue. He was no slanderer; he neither invented nor reported any tales, to the injury of his neighbor's good name. He was even excessively incredulous, to all such stories as other people were prone to believe. If he ever heard that a man set his own house on fire, in order to cheat the insurers or to excite the charities of the people, he always rejected the account, as an incredible act of wickedness. Though he was a Calvinist, and had been taught the Assembly's Catechism, he was no believer in total depravity, at least in detail. With him, everybody was good; it was good Mr. A, and worthy Mr. B, and my estimable friend Mr. C, and so on to the last scoundrel that filled up the tail of the human alphabet. Conscious, he said, of his own imperfections, he was unwilling to turn a scrutinizing or cruel eye on those of mankind.

As to his charities, they were all secret; he never sounded a trumpet before him when he gave alms,

nor did he *let his right hand know what his left hand did.* How many poor widows he relieved, or how many orphans he educated, no man in Bundleborough pretended to say. But that he might have performed many secret charities, is possible; for he was saving of his money; and what could he save it for, unless to give it away? But he kept his charities so very secret, that not one of them ever came to light.

Yet this man was one of the most popular leaders in our town. He was the darling of the place. Long did he represent us in the general court; where, I have heard it said, he was the wisest looking man in the whole body, though he seldom made speeches in that assembly. *There*, he hid his mental wisdom as carefully as he did his charities when he was at home, in Bundleborough. But I have been informed, and tradition still preserves the fact, that no man walked into the hall of legislation with a better grace; no man bowed to the speaker's chair with greater dignity; and no man could say *yea* or *no* with a firmer voice, when the signified interests of his constituents were at stake. In all these things, he was the very Solomon of his day.

The mortal remains of this great statesman now sleep in our grave-yard. Under a thorn-bush, whose crinkled boughs represent the tortuosities of a politician's heart, is seen his marble stone, bearing the figure of two angels, crowning his head with laurel, while a ray of glory seems to stream on it from the

skies. On the smooth marble is this epitaph; written by some surviving friend, who soothed his sorrows by thus lauding the departed dead.

Beneath this stone
Lie the mortal remains of
Ebenezer Wilson, Esq.,
Who departed &c. &c. &c.
Born in the times which tried men's souls,
He was bold, valiant, and sincere;
He sought the public interest
To the neglect of his own;
He was prudent, yet open-hearted;
Liberal, yet economical;
A moralist, and yet a Christian;
Bundleborough never lost a more faithful representative,
Nor his country a greater man;
He lies here
In the confident hope of a glorious resurrection.

THE PURITAN.

No. 46.

A clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea.

Burke.

Sir Thomas Brown, was a singular character, and, in his Religio Medici, he has laid open his heart with great freedom. He tells us, that in the Bible, he could hardly find impossibilities enough for his active faith; he adopted those interpretations of certain texts, which place them in irreconcilable contradiction to the demonstrations of science and the experience of mankind; "because," says he, "I love to lose myself in mystery, and 'tis my solitary recreation to pose my apprehension with those involved enigmas and riddles of the Trinity and incarnation;" he delights to believe a thing not only above, but contrary to reason. Such was the exalted faith of Sir Thomas Brown, which one may safely expose to public notice, as there is very little danger of its being followed in this analytic age.

The reverse of wrong is not always right; and there is such a thing, as being too much afraid of a mystery, both in our philosophy and religion. For what is a mystery? It is the antithesis, I apprehend, of something we can analyze, and the end of every analytic process is to terminate in a mystery. A solution has reference to what it solves; and the solution itself is a mystery. Thus, for example, when we see this vast universe in motion; planets, comets and satellites, keeping their appropriate places; and we ask, how the motion began? we find, according to the doctrine of some of the old philosophers, that we must terminate in the belief of a universal mind; for, as all matter is passive, we must suppose that the beginning of activity is spirit. In this sense, the existence of God is a *solution;* an ultimate truth which explains, in the most satisfactory manner conceivable, all the phenomena of nature. But then, *in itself considered,* the existence of God is a mystery. If you undertake to solve the solution, or to analyze that which is the end of every other analysis, you are lost at once. An ocean of darkness arises before you, and you have neither chart nor compass to picture or cross its illimitable wastes.

The truth is, all philosophy (and what is religion but a species of just philosophy?) consists of two parts—*analysis* and *mystery.* These are blended, like the light and darkness in the natural world. The great art is, to know when the analytic possibility

closes and the mystery begins. THIS IS WISDOM; THIS IS THE LAST DISCOVERY RESERVED FOR THE FACULTIES OF MAN. If it were not so, we might go on explaining forever. Every lamp we bring to the word of God or the works of nature would want another light to illuminate it; and the maxim of the old poet would be false, that light is a thing which is seen by itself; or in other words, it would not be true that *knowledge is knowledge.*

Nor are these mysteries barren and unproductive in their influence on the understanding or the heart. In religious things I am persuaded, that the *unknown* is almost as necessary to the sanctifying the heart as the *known.* Sir Thomas Brown got part of the truth, though he overstated it through his love of paradox. For what can be more necessary, than that man should wonder and adore, before an idea so vast, as to assure us that it comes from God, and so perplexing, as to lead us up to God again? It is the same impression in intellectuals, which was made on the Israelites in visible things, when they saw, at a trembling distance, Moses approach the *thick darkness where God was.*

We should distinguish between mystery and *mystification.* The last is always foolish and contemptible, or weak and to be explained. If a man comes to me with some crude thoughts, which he clothes in a half metaphor, (as, for example, when some honest quaker calls his reason and conscience the *light within*; or

when a Swedenborgian comes and expresses moral edification, by all the technics of architecture,) I see at once he is mystifying what might be expressed in much more literal language. Very much of this language is found, I suspect, in the works of the old platonist, and even in the writings of some excellent theologians. This I call *mystification;* and to such a man, I should say, Pray, sir, do learn to call a spade by its right name. Of these cobwebs of a diseased, unswept imagination, we cannot keep our minds too free. But if any one thinks, by avoiding these, to avoid all mystery, he knows but *half* the work of philosophy, and he loses *all* the power of religion. Religion, without mystery, would be a little idea. Its immensity, its majesty, its glory, its adoration would be sunk in the crucible and irrecoverably lost.

It is not without severe reflection, that we see how these mysteries meet us on every side. An analytic mind gets a taste for half the work of philosophy,* and loses all that is to be found on the other side. But as it is with our roads—they either terminate on the seaside, or are connected until we reach the boundless forests of the west; so it is with our investigations—they all end in a mystery, which it is useful for us to see, and it would be pious in us to adore.

Let us take an example.

We exist in time and space. These are the two "receptivities," as the Germans call them, in which

* i. e. for analysis only.

the understanding acts, and all incorporated things are found. But what is time? and what is space? At first they seem to be very comprehensible; for they are the conditions of all existence. They seem almost like finer elements in which we float; and it is by opening our eyes and attending to our own consciousness, that these ideas enter the mind. But what is time? What do we mean by equal periods of duration? It is one of the most puzzling questions, I ever asked myself. Time can be only measured by time, as extension can only be measured by extension. Two parts of extension you can bring together to measure one by the other; but how can you bring two parts of time (which is elapsed and gone, while we speak of it) together, to measure one by the other? There is no standard hour laid up in the tower, or a chronometer's office in Washington, by which all time shall be measured. Even while my breath is forming the expressions, "equal time," and "commensurate portions," I am at a loss to know what I mean. A fugitive idea is there; it flits before me; I grasp it and it is gone. O the deep mystery! The Power that measures my existence, eludes my research, and plunges me into darkness.

If the reader will thoughtfully peruse the 590th number of the Spectator, he will there find all I wish to say, concerning the mysteries involved (I might say apparent contradictions) in the existence of time and space. I refer to that number with great pleasure.

It was the first production which involved me in deep thinking. It made me a little, petulant metaphysician; and brought down some severe rebukes on my boyish head, from my grandfather and aunt.

For these reasons, I have never been scrupulous of receiving a system of religion, which presents me with some mysteries. I find them in nature; and I ought to expect to find them in a revelation, which comes from an infinite God; and as I have settled it to my own satisfaction, that some of the deep things of my creed, are not MYSTIFICATION, (i. e. things voluntarily darkened, when they might be expressed more plainly,) I conclude them to be MYSTERIES; and, though I would not say with Sir Thomas Brown, that there is not enough of these in the Bible for my active faith, yet far less would I reject an interpretation, "which contains a doctrine, the light of nature cannot discover, or a precept, which the law of nature does not oblige to."*

Before I close, let me say a word respecting one of the most repulsive articles in the old theology of New England. It is well known that our fathers taught the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity *ex arbitrio Dei;* and this has filled their descendants with the most pious horror, and been a standing reproach to them and their religion. What! make men sinners by an arbitrary decree; and damn tender infants for a crime which they never

* Butler's Analogy, chap. I. part 2.

committed!! Horrible! absurd! blasphemous!! But, it is a rule with me, when I find any thing eminently strange in human opinions, to ask myself whether I understand the thing as *it lay in the minds of those, who embraced it.* I would respectfully inquire then, whether all these exclamations are not founded in mistake? The existence of sin is a mystery; and if the doctrine of imputation is to be considered as a *solution* of that mystery, it is worthy of all the names of absurdity, which have been heaped upon it. But was it so intended? I apprehend our fathers meant to leave the primitive mystery just where the light of nature and revelation leaves and finds it. They only meant to state a subordinate fact in the government of God. If so, their doctrine darkened nothing; it only leaves us to bow in submissive adoration when reason says we must.

THE PURITAN.

No. 47.

Desire first taught us words: Man when created,
At first alone, long wandered up and down,
Forlorn and silent as his vassal-beasts;
But when a heaven-born maid, like you, appeared,
Strange pleasure filled his eyes, and fired his heart,
Unloosed his tongue, and his first talk was—love.

The Orphan.

I HAVE often employed myself in speculating on the influence of republicanism on the private manners of domestic life; on those little items of thought and sensation which make up, after all our proud aspirations, the sum total of our wretchedness or felicity. There can be no doubt that republicanism, and the free discussions, which it invites and allows, tends to produce a conflict of opinions, a sharpening of the temper, a division of neighborhoods into factions, a jealousy and alienation of life and heart, which it requires the strongest wisdom to regulate, and the highest moral principle to resist and overcome. But let us not

dwell on the dark side. In all ages and all governments, the duty of man is a combat with his propensities; and if liberty makes him too rough a disputer, despotism grinds him down to be a servile hypocrite.

There is one point of view, in which I am convinced that republicanism is eminently favorable to domestic happiness; I allude to its influence on love and marriage. The affections are left far more to their natural course, than in the aristocratic world, and there are far fewer restrictions on marriage. Dr. Dwight used frequently to say, that the doctrine of the English moralists on this subject was erroneous. That there are few happy marriages, is their constant assertion. They represent courtship, especially among the higher classes, as constant effort at simulation and dissimulation; love is professed and riches are sought. Jointures, pin-money, and all the arts of interest disturb the hearts of the parties, and destroy their happiness. A connection begun in mercenary views, often is continued in jealousy, and ends in divorce. But in America, love flies over our cities and villages, on his golden wings, unhampered by these oppressive chains. Our marriages are prompted by nature, regulated by principle, and are therefore introductions to happiness. A time will probably come, when the present condition of New England in this respect, will be looked back on as its golden age.

As a proof of the justice of this remark, I would

adduce the fact, that so few pathetic stories of wounded affection and disappointed love can be formed on New England manners, and yet bear much resemblance to truth. Here is no proud lord, ready to sacrifice his daughter's happiness to a marriage of policy; no Clarissa to be given to a Somes, and no Douglas to be joined to a Percy; but, nature prompted by affection follows her own laws; a process of love, is too happy for the parties to be pleasing to the spectator. I have been looking round for some pathetic stories with which to adorn my book; but among all my acquaintance, I have hardly found a hint for fiction to manufacture into a tale of tears.

Yet there is always a defective side in all human manners, a gap for vice to enter in. As we look over countries, we find some fashions supremely happy; they seem to be invented by Wisdom herself, to bind virtue to the soil by linking her with delight. But on the other hand, there will be some instances as remarkable of an opposite kind. Take, for example, the well-regulated stage in Athens, especially when under the influence of the muse of tragedy. How intellectual her voice! How sublime (for pagans) her moral lessons! Yet, on the other hand, what a fatal mistake it was; how completely did they set manners on the side of vice, when they cramped and confined the education of the wife, denied her all the ornaments which please, and lavished them on the harlot! It seems as if the fashions of all countries, had been

established by two powers; part of them by a messenger of benevolence, and part by a destroying angel. So strangely are they combined.

There is one side on which sensuality has sadly soiled the purity of love in New England; and it is a vice to which our youth have been tempted by an unfortunate system of manners. I can explain it best by a quotation from Shakspeare. When Ferdinand is breathing out the ardor of his love to Miranda, the poet makes her father say—and may the spirit of the lines thrill through the hearts of all our rustic youth!

> Then as my gift and thine own acquisition
> Worthily purchased, take my daughter: But
> If thou dost break her virgin knot before
> All sanctimonious ceremonies may
> With full and holy rite be ministered,
> No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
> To make this contract grow; but barren hate,
> Sour-eyed disdain and discord, shall bestrew
> The union of your bed with weeds so loathly,
> That you shall hate it both: therefore, take heed,
> As Hymen's lamp shall like you.—

This has been, and is, a needed lesson in New England; and I am afraid that thousands have found the imprecation verified in their after-experience. For how can the man esteem the wife whom he has found and made frail; and who can never point to the register of his family births without confusion and shame!

For this common fault, I have no hesitation in saying, that a large part of the blame lights on parents. It is well known, that at a late hour of night, our bodies and minds undergo a change. Those hours nature designed for sleep; and if we steal them from their purpose, they are apt to be devoted to criminal dreams. To turn, therefore, an inexperienced pair, warm with youth, blind with passion, into a dark room, at a late hour, unguarded and alone—nay even to do worse!! (for the charges of the Quarterly Review, are supported by one of Mr. Edwards's sermons. See sermon on Genesis, xxxix. 12.) what can you expect? Why just the result that our history has disclosed; a result which has made us a scorn to other nations and a confusion to ourselves!

The time of courtship is an important season. Then the parties are to learn each other's character, adjust themselves to each other's habits, and to suffer those affections to ripen into esteem, which are to form their happiness in future life. Let it be a period of warmth; (and passion, if you please;) but let it be also, tempered with the strictest purity. No man can imagine, until taught by experience, how much the virtue of chastity rises in importance, when he sees his own daughters grow up around him. In all such cases, he wishes to have his lessons seconded by his own pure example.

These pages teach no ascetic doctrine. I could wish the intercourse of our youth to be free without

being licentious. The rose is never sweeter, than when it waves its beauty on the flexile bush, wagging its head in the breeze, unbent by art, and moving in all the original freedom and simplicity of nature. But I am a determined enemy of late hours in all possible concerns. I love the sun; I love his light; and I love that better light, of which his resplendent visage is but a feeble emblem. I once sat up on an arbitration all night, in a case, in which it seemed to be necessary; but the decision was such as satisfied none of the parties, no impartial hearer, and such as I myself could never after bear to think on, during the hours of sunshine.

The whole secret of choosing well in matrimony, may be taught in three words—*Explore the character.* A violent love-fit is always the result of ignorance; for there is not a daughter of Eve, that has merit enough to justify romantic love, though thousands and thousands, may reasonably inspire that gentle esteem, which is infinitely better. A woman-worshipper and a woman-hater, both derive their mistakes from ignorance of the female world; for if the characters of women were thoroughly understood, they would be found too good to be hated, and yet not good enough to be idolized.

THE PURITAN.

No. 48.

At length the morn and cold indifference came;
When, fully sated with the luscious banquet,
I hastily took leave; and left the nymph
To think on what was past, and sigh alone.

Fair Penitent.

My design in this number, is to illustrate the remarks of the former number, by a story, which I have heard from several elder people, and which I believe to be strictly true.

On the banks of the Merrimack, there dwelt a young lady, whose accomplishments were above her birth. She was not a finished beauty; but had a delicate, interesting countenance, and a wit and vivacity, which made her the life and delight of all the companies with which she chose to mingle. Her education had been good, for that day, (the commencement of the revolutionary war,) and her character was brightened by that good sense (I had almost said ge-

nius) which, however untaught, always forms the foundation of the interest we take, either in woman or man. She was addressed by a young and enterprising youth; the master of a vessel, of a family rather more genteel than her own; who was considered every way worthy of her. The parents of the young man, it is true, made some objections at first, because the girl belonged to a plain household; but when they came to be acquainted with her, after a short visit at their house, every objection vanished; her personal charms overcame the impediments of her birth, and the mother of the young captain declared, that she was as much in love with the girl as her son. It was considered as a very happy connection. Two of the most sprightly youth of both sexes, the life of all parties, and the delight of all friends, were to be united; and nobody wondered, (which is in itself a wonder,) that the one had chosen the other.

The young lover made several voyages to sea—for he was taught by his father, though he might marry a girl without much property, he must earn some money before marriage, or love would starve on penury and affection freeze. His adventures were good; his voyages, though long, were generally prosperous; and he was rising to that independence, which, on all principles of prudence, might justify marriage. But somehow, from some secret reason, unaccountable to all but the parties concerned, just before his last voyage, (previous to a disaster I am going to relate,) his

affections became cold; and, though the lady's charms were the same, and her interest the same, he treated her with the indifference of a cloyed lover. He seemed insensibly to lose his esteem for her; and on parting for this memorable voyage, they almost agreed to dissolve their connection. However they left the matter ambiguous; and it was evident that the thought of parting was more painful to the lady than to the man. Amidst all her lightness, and wit, and apparent trifling, it was obvious there was some deep-seated affliction preying on her heart. She smiled, and told him she did not doubt she should soon see him back again; for a bad penny was soon returned; but the speech was uttered in a mixed tone, and followed by some insuppressible tears.

During that voyage, he was taken by the British cruisers; he was carried into Deptford, and confined in a mariner's prison for several years. The war continued; no opportunity of exchange occurred; his letters were intercepted, and all thoughts of home, and its once charming connections, were obliterated from his heart.

I ought to mention, perhaps, that though he was a man not destitute of moral impressions, and of the strictest sentiments of honesty and honor, yet he had that loose notion prevalent in New England, that marriage rectifies all the slips previous to its ceremony; and had he known of any disaster at home, he would certainly felt bound in conscience to return and repair it.

When peace was declared, he was liberated, and once more began his career of commercial enterprise. He concluded that his connection with his once-loved Mehitable was dissolved; he had been long from home, he heard nothing; he supposed she was married; and like the bounding bird, on St. Valentine's day, he thought he was once more at liberty to spread the painted wing of freedom, and choose for himself another mate.

He went to the West Indies, and there found an opportunity of gratifying fancy and fortune both. There was a daughter of a rich merchant in the place, an only child, who attracted his attention. She was young, comely, rich, and willing to receive a youthful adventurer as her partner for life. As the young man bore an excellent character, her father could make no objection; and they were married; the bridegroom writing home to tell his parents of his situation, and prospects, with a signification for the present that he should make his residence in the West Indies.

But just as the marriage was finished, a vessel from Newburyport arrived in the island. It was natural for him to walk down to the shore, hear the news, inquire about home, and talk with one who had just come from the paternal abode. "Your parents are well," said the new arrived captain, "and things go on as usual; but do you know about Mehitable? She is the mother of a child of whom you are supposed to

be the father. She is shut up in her father's house; she never sees company; she weeps night and day; and the only recompense you can ever make her, is to return and marry her; for I am sure she is a fine girl, and is now spoiled for every body but yourself."

It would be difficult to conceive the horror that came over the face of Mehitable's lover. "O that I could call back yesterday! O that I could undo the work of a few short hours." He ought to have thrown his retrospections farther back. But he was married, and no reparation remained for poor Mehitable. Perhaps I should mention here, that her father, though poor, at least not rich, was a very proud and severe man. When he found out her situation, after her lover's capture in England, he said to her, with a dreadful look, dreadful at least to a guilty daughter, "You may stay in my house; I will not turn you out of doors. But never let me see your face again, never until the grave has covered your body or mine." This awful command was complied with. For seven years, the fallen, afflicted daughter spent her time in her father's house, in a solitary chamber, (weeping almost literally day and night,) sometimes hearing his voice, but never seeing his face.

Sad too, was the task which the bridegroom in the West Indies had to perform to his wife. Concluding that honesty was the best policy, he went home and told his bride the whole story. He confessed his former attachment to poor Mehitable; acknowledged

that he was the father of a son, not his wife's; allowed her merit and his own guilt—and declared it was his intention, as it was certainly his duty, to make every provision for the education of a child, which he was the means of introducing into the world in such unhappy circumstances. Here was a trying case! What should a woman do? What a wife? Should she give way to rage or magnanimity? Should she show her own virtue by kindness and generosity, or by invectives and triumphs over the fallen and oppressed.

I rejoice to say she acted the better part. She sent every article of comfort that her kindness could devise for her unfortunate rival. Teas, sugars, sweetmeats, oranges, dress, money, (but what is money when affection bleeds!) were sent over in almost every vessel. The boy was ordered to be put to school. She even allowed her husband to write a soothing letter to the heart he had seduced, bleeding over the reputation he had destroyed. This, I consider, as the highest flight of female generosity. Noble woman! Two words are enough for your eulogy.

In a few years, (three, I think,) this generous wife fell a prey to the climate; and left her husband at liberty to return home and raise his former love from her deep degradation. And now, I suppose, my reader imagines we are to have smooth sailing. The youth is to return, raise up his drooping flower, kiss away her tears, speak the accents of tenderness and conso-

lation, and spend the rest of his days in reputation and happiness. But no! The just Power that is never offended with impunity, had otherwise determined. It is true, he tried to do all this; he went home, released Mehitable from her bondage; married her, and tried every method to raise her to the honors of a wife. But her cheerfulness was gone; her vivacity was gone; her innocence was gone! and it was generally agreed, that they passed together a cheerless, unhappy life; and I recommend this story to the deep consideration, not only of those who trifle with, what Shakspeare calls, *the beforehand sin*, but of all those, who think that a subsequent recompense, however ample, always removes the whole evil of a preceding transgression.

THE PURITAN.

No. 49.

Yet much remains
To conquer still: Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: New foes arise
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains:
Milton's Sonnet to Cromwell.

ALREADY have I told my readers, that whatever might be my efforts, the cruel and ungrateful world always seemed to make it a point to leave me to obscurity and neglect. No deathless laurels bloomed for me. Votes bore not my name; and essays, epigrams, sermons, epic poems, though calculated for immortality, went to immediate oblivion. But once in my life my disastrous stars made a sudden revolution from the nadir to the zenith; and I was chosen to deliver an oration, on the 4th of July, to the whole assembled town of Bundleborough. Here was a great occasion. Much was expected; and I endeavored to arise to the *height of the great argument* set before me.

As however the oration, though I thought it my master-piece, was not requested for the press, I shall publish it here.

ORATION FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1820.

By John Oldbug.

Hail, natal day! Hail, happy country, where every sound is the echo of tranquillity, and every blossom the efflorescence of delight! Hail, Columbia, the glory of all lands, the home of the brave, and the paradise of the free! Hail, those noble heroes! who poured out their blood like water to purchase our liberties, though some of them had been so starved by oppression that they had scarcely any blood to shed! Hail, this blessed morn! when the blushing aurora, leading on the joyful hours from the golden gates of the east, and calling up every tuneful bird, reminds us, as she drives her airy chariot over the silver drops of dew, of the times, which tried men's souls. Hail, the fair sex! whose beauties incite the patriot and reward the conqueror, as he returns home on his triumphal car, to lay, in his sweet, domestic nest, the eggs of hope, and brood over them, with fond, parental care, until he hatches the chickens of innocent enjoyment. Hail, Washington! Hail, Green! Hail, Bunker Hill, and Lexington! or rather, (to speak without an anachronism,) Lexington and Bunker Hill! Hail, every thing that ought to be hailed on such a glorious day as this! And now, fellow citizens, having got through

this *travelled paragraph*, which it has almost exhausted my ingenuity to write, and my breath to speak, let me lay aside my sublimities and call you, through the rest of this oration, to hear a little plain common sense.

It is certain, whatever may be the purposes of human nature, man was never made for solitude. His station is society; his passions, his wants, his desires and his aversions, all point him to the social scene; and mix him with the great ocean of which his own existence is a constituent drop. This consideration should urge us to take a deep interest in the welfare of our fellow creatures; to improve that community from which it is impossible for us to retreat. Though the solitary island, the silent grove, the peaceful cell, the lonely bed, and the tranquil stream, may occasionally amuse a romantic imagination, yet in these respects, truth and fancy are entirely opposite. No man can, probably, bear a perfect seclusion from his species. This remark is not confuted by the history of the ancient monks. It was eminently a social passion that drove them into retirement. They were sought out and admired in their cells; and the wilderness was often to them, a passage to the episcopal throne. Whatever storms may pass over the sea of life, whatever passions may rage, however vice may be exalted and virtue depressed, it is the duty of a good man to face the difficulties. As politicians have said, that the most tyrannical government, is better than

anarchy; so it may be said, with equal truth, that the most corrupt society is better than solitude. The whole system of social virtue, is built on the divine command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This implies that we *have* a neighbor. It is social life alone that can give meaning to the law of God.

It is not uncommon to find some men, whose intentions are the best, whose perceptions are the most clear, and whose morality is most refined, shuffled out their influence, because they could not bear the roughness of the contest—because they would not purchase popularity at the market-price—because when their motives were misunderstood, and their character torn, they shrunk in discouragement from an ungrateful world, and felt in evil times, that a private station was the post of honor. This, however, is a fatal mistake. Evil times are precisely the occasions when the influence of good men is most needed. The station that mortifies their pride, which they call their feelings, that taxes their modesty, is precisely the station which in duty they ought to keep. It is true, you will see the noisy and the bold run away with much of the influence. You will see the meanest abilities succeeding by arts, which you cannot use. You will see the grossest hypocrisy for a while pass undetected; and the crowd so completely deceived, that they will consider it almost as treason to show them their true interest. But what then? Let not the good man despair. The arts of deception are ex-

haustible. The influence of truth is eternal. Like a constant stream, never foaming and never dry—it wears away the obstacle by a ceaseless flow. The people, it is true, sometimes sleep over their interest; they not only sleep, but they dream. Yet however soft their slumbers, or wild their dreams, they must wake at last. It has been the fatal mistake of some good men, that they have not waited for the waking hour. They have been defeated by their own despair.

In farther pursuing this subject, I solicit your patience while I shall discuss the following propositions.

1st. That most of the real good accomplished in the world, has been done by cool and impartial men—not the slaves of a party.

2d. That much more good would have been done, if such men had not too soon abandoned their cause.

3d. They ought to persevere and support each other.

1. That most of the real good accomplished in the world, has been done by cool and impartial men—not the slaves of a party.

A moment's reflection must convince us that utility is a distant object; to be looked at only by a cool and considering mind. It is like the rainbow which bounds the prospect and is to be seen by him alone, who cast his sight forward and elevates his eye, to that heaven in which the beautiful arch is completed. Impartial discernment is necessary even to form a

view of so remote an object; and still more is it necessary to pursue and overtake it. Passion blinds the mind; passion is employed in seeing and devouring the gratifications within its reach. It throws a man on little arts and temporary expedients; and urges him to lose the welfare of his country, in his own revengeful and ambitious ends. Take any one of the passions, and in their violence how completely will they cloud the strongest intellect, and make a man an incompetent judge, wherein he is thus inflamed. Anger has been called a short madness; pleasure has entered the cool breast, and broken down the most resolved heart; and even without the passions, a cold and villanous selfishness has bound the man to the worst of purposes, and rendered him as incapable of serving his country, as he was dead to the glory of his God. Such is the effect of these qualities in their separate state. But party spirit is a combination of them all. It is a collection of flames, raging with intense fury, and imparting to each other reciprocal heat. It wraps up in one deluded mind, every principle which can blind human nature, and inflame its corruptions to the highest degree. It is a combination of rage, revenge, malice, selfishness, pride, interest, ambition; all broken from their restraints, and set to run in the full career of their utmost wishes. You all know that when men act in crowds, the checks of conscience are diminished, because the sense of responsibility is divided. They counte-

nance each other, and there are none to punish where the majority are involved in the crime. If I wished to picture human nature in its worst and most degraded form; if I wished to add one more to the melancholy proofs we have of the great depravity of our race, I would show you an ignorant and bigoted populace, inflamed by libels; misled by demagogues; calling for revenge on imaginary crimes, and raving with that hunger which must be appeased with blood. Such scenes rather shock those fine speculations which we sometimes hear of the dignity of human nature. They show us man as he is; or at least as he may be; and they teach us how incapable an inflamed crowd is of seeing the plainest truth, or pursuing their most obvious interest.

If we turn to facts, we find that public utility has been seen and sought only by unparty-like men. History unrolls her thick volume; and the same bright moral has been found on every page. Some men have kept a steady career; and amidst all the shoutings and shakings of the crowd, have walked firmly to the same objects. They did not always save their country; but they retarded its ruin and almost sanctified its fall. Among the examples, I would mention the name of Cicero. His letters show his strong love of his country; and how that love made him slow in joining the violent sections into which Rome was split. He reasoned; he remonstrated; he exposed the faults of both sides; he blamed the ex-

cesses of all; and though his influence was impaired by his constitutional timidity, yet a few more such men, and Rome might have been free. His writings are almost the only relics of permanent utility which the political struggles of that time have left behind. We have the authority of lord Clarendon for saying, that Hampden and Pym, before the waverings of the king made it impossible to trust him, were moderate men. They were driven to violence by dire necessity. And where shall we find brighter names? New England is hardly indebted more to any of her own patriot sons. She may almost claim them as her own. I might adduce also the example of the eloquent Burke, who changed his apparent ground only because the wants of the times were changed. When he saw the power of the crown to be too great, he plead the cause of freedom; and when the mounds of society were broken, and a mad liberty was coming in like a flood, with a perfect consistency, he went over to the other side, and plead the cause of order and power. These are the great examples which history leaves us. They might easily be multiplied; and they go to support the point, that when a man's reason and conscience are trammeled, his usefulness is also confined.

Perhaps there may seem to be one exception to these remarks; and that is, when the world is sunk in a long and lazy slumber, when tyranny and oppression have a strong hold on the mind; it may be said that a violent man is necessary to wake them from

their sleep. Thus it is often said, that Luther was the exact instrument to produce the reformation. Something, perhaps, must be granted to the force of these examples. But after all, the good performed by a violent man, is generally a violent good. It passes for its full worth; and is seldom lasting, unless a more cautious spirit moves after him, and mends up the mischief he has done. It is like lighting the lamps of a dark room—the first only makes the striking transition from total darkness; while all the lustre of the lights that follow, shooting their radiance and mixing their beams, and constituting the brightness, are hardly noticed. It is the fate of the best men to be feebly praised.

2. That much more good would have been done, if such men had not too soon abandoned their cause.

It is one of the few advantages which the wicked have over the good, that they always pursue their purposes with greater activity. This truth has been noticed by our Saviour—*the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light;* and we may see from observation, that men become zealous, just in proportion to the badness of their cause. So cold is human nature in the cause of virtue, that *that* cause never engrosses all our powers. The most glowing Christian is seldom so ardent in the pursuit of his benevolent objects, as the man of pleasure in pursuit of his crimes. The sincerest patriot hardly watches to preserve his country, as the

traitor does to overthrow it. Sad perversity of human nature! Mournful proof of the imperfection of man! In a bad heart, all the passions move together; they rush to their objects, urged by instinct, by appetite, by false reason. The whole soul floats on one onward stream, in which there is neither counter-current nor eddy. But a good cause, never calls out the undivided man; because the best are but partially good. The good man is cool, is cautious, is fearful—he acts by intervals, and is scrupulous about his means; while the bad man is urged by a reckless desperation; he feels he has nothing to lose; he is regardless of means; and he tramples all inferior considerations under foot in the pursuit of his ends. The purest virtue, like water, is never more beautiful than when it settles into tranquillity. But vice never sleeps.

There is something in politics very discouraging to a man of fine and delicate morality. The virtues of the politician are not the virtues of the man. In the stormy region of public life, all the maxims which constituted the honor and glory of a private station are assaulted and shaken. New interests are felt; new passions are awake, and a new scene is opened. The immeasurable glitter of the prize for which they run—the toil with which it must be pursued and the difficulty of obtaining it—excites the strongest desires, and makes the candidates little scrupulous as to the measures they employ. I appeal to experience, and ask my hearers, if you have not felt your views of human

nature sink, when you have entered the troubled scene, and viewed the great actors with a closer inspection. I suspect that most people have approached public life with the same wonder, that the young pupil of anatomy approaches the dissecting room—astonished at the indifference with which the old practitioner can cut up the relics of mortality, and deal out his axioms over corruption and death. Our education teaches us to embrace only abstract truth; that truth is to be sought out and collected from all the combinations in which it is found in the world. We are told we must not suffer our prejudices or interests to warp us in the search of truth; but that she is a sovereign power which we are to acknowledge and adore, wherever we find her. Such is the lesson of the school; but the moment we step into the world, we find it divided into parties. Principles must be taken in the mass; and the very idea of forming new combinations, is scouted at as presumptuous and absurd. The public ear is already occupied; the section is already formed; and if you modify one of the principles, you injure the cause. We are taught in youth, that a good cause can only be promoted by good means. But real life is scarcely any thing else but the use of very suspicious means. Take the man versed in the world, and how changed! How little scrupulous does he become! I am afraid that republics are no exceptions to these remarks. The polished courtier and the stern republican, may seem

at first view to differ. But the one flatters the monarch and the other the crowd; and both of them are in the same danger of substituting policy for truth. The work of Sir Robert Walpole, is that of almost every politician; to beat down the standard of morality to a political level; to ridicule all the sublimities of the moral creed; to displace the earliest sympathies of the heart; and to make a cold and calculating selfishness, the pivot of our actions and the measure of our virtues.

But what makes this state more dangerous, is, that it is supported by several plausible reasons; which, backed by interest, are strong enough to convince a willing mind.

The first originates in the tyrant's plea; that is, as the politician will tell you, in the necessity of the case. How are we, he will say, to move man, except by the tools which have always moved him? What signify your fine-spun theories, when we are struggling for existence in the rush of life? Consult the nature of man, and consult history, and see if the crowd have ever been governed by simple truth. No! In dealing with mankind, a certain quantum of deception is necessary. King James found it so in his king-craft; the demagogue has found it so in his schemes; and even the best patriot has mixed some dross with his gold before he could work it into coin, and give it currency in the world. To-day, there is some popular measure abroad, which runs like wild-fire through the

land. The whole world is giddy. To oppose it, is certain death to your influence. Your lips are sealed up in inevitable silence. You must fall into the current and turn it when you can. To-morrow, faction is awake; the parties are formed; the lines are drawn; an absorbing interest sweeps every creature in the shape of a man, to the one side or the other. Truth may lie in the middle ground; but if you take your stand there, you will be shot down by the first fire of the advancing ranks. Now, a demagogue starts up, whose smooth eloquence and plausible professions have stolen the influence of every better man. At another time, some contingent advantage bribes the public opinion, and renders the people fierce for breaking over the rules which themselves have established. Such is the world on which we are thrown. It is just as impossible for a politician to keep a strait course and carry his plans, as it would be for a general to march on a mathematical line and win the fight. Now necessity, it is said, has no law. We must succumb to the laws of nature, which are but another name for the decrees of God.

But second, it is pretended that the very rules of morality themselves, refract and deviate as they pass into the denser medium of public life. They are no longer the same things; the lines of duty can no longer be drawn with the same precision. Political rights, for example, are very different things from private rights. Abstractly speaking, no man has a right to an office;

and yet all agree that the best offices should be occupied by the best men. But who are the best men? There is no certain measure of abilities. You cannot carry the surveyor's chain over a man's mind, as you can over his field. There are no needles and theodolites to take the heights and bearings of a man's wisdom and integrity. What wonder then, if in these uncertain claims to an office, a man should sometimes prefer himself to his neighbor, and depreciate his character simply in justice to his own. In a public struggle, a man is driven in self-defence, to that policy by which he is assailed. He is sorry, but he must meet his enemy on equal ground. He despises the whole code of crooked arts; but (unhappy man!) he must use them. Just as our duellists tell us—how much they despise the laws of honor, how tender and benevolent were their hearts, as they drew the pistol to shoot their antagonist dead. A libel is a dreadful thing, in private life; but in a public station it is a lawful weapon of self-defence.

It is said in the third place, that it would give an immense advantage to total wickedness, if the good patriot did not borrow some of the bad man's arts, and not leave him to all his advantages. Actions must not be estimated by their intrinsic nature; but by the character and intentions of the men from whom they proceed. Why should the honest man suffer the knave to usurp all the influence, merely because he is too scrupulous to tread in his footsteps, or copy his

arts. This is certainly violating the old maxim, that virtue is its own reward—it is discouraging the best men from serving their country; and forcing integrity to commit a kind of suicide. No man scruples to shoot a robber with his own weapon, or to entrap a swindler in his own arts.

It surely will not be expected that I shall pause to answer these sophistries, which, merely to state, is to confute them. Suffice it to say, that when one suffers his conscience to depart from the strict line of rectitude drawn by God, the whole ocean of policy is before him; and he has not a star or a chart to steer by, but his interest and his will. We have melancholy proof of this in the case of Cromwell—a man, whose character has been blackened by hands far less clean than his own. We are told by Burnet, that he found from some of Cromwell's confidential friends, that he was a man by no means without his morality—meaning, on the whole, to maintain the strictest principles of virtue and religion. In private life, he did so; his character was without a stain. But in his public capacity, he considered himself as a man thrown on great exigencies—encompassed around with political necessities; and in this connection, absolved from the rules which govern meaner mortals in lower stations. Thus he shed blood; thus he took the full sweep of ambition, without conscience and without remorse. So have reasoned far worse tyrants than Cromwell, and this reasoning has justified all their crimes.

Such are the dangers which enclose a man's integrity, when he steps from the private shade to the public forum. These are the temptations which urge him to violence and to policy. On the other hand, there are great difficulties in the cool and impartial course.

In the first place, it is hard for an impartial friend to truth to make himself understood. Parties have their watchwords, and the people always take all opinions in a lump. The idea of discriminating and limiting, is what they cannot or will not understand. It is not uncommon for some politic leaders in order to make a measure succeed, to overstate it; to exaggerate its importance; to mix it up with some measures addressed to the popular prejudices; and to surround it with the false and baleful flowers of a spurious rhetoric; so that even truth itself cannot prevail, without being mixed with many a lie. Indeed, I hardly ever knew a good cause carried with the multitude, on its naked merits. Now when an honest man is called upon to support this suspicious mixture, he hesitates; he is for limiting the propositions and paring off the deceitful rhetoric, and telling the world, in a long discourse, which they have not patience to hear, what he does believe and what he does not. The consequence is, he becomes suspected. All that is understood of him by the majority is, that he is not hearty in the cause. The only question put to him by the warm partizans is,—Will you join us? and the only answer

they wish to hear is, *yes* or *no*. To talk of limitations and consequences, and doubts and fears, in such a world as this! Away with such a fellow from the face of the earth. And it must be confessed it is hard to make the people understand the value of a moderate good, or the force of a limited proposition. In high party times, it is almost impossible. Here is the advantage which the violent man, however erroneous, has over the just. His sweeping assertions electrify and charm the public ear. He arouses; he deceives; he conquers; while poor forsaken truth, on her lame feet, comes limping far behind. "I have not resigned my crown," said Buonaparte, when he was forced to abdicate; "but with limitations." "Ah, Sire," said one of his marshals, "soldiers never understand limitations." It is just so with the people. If you once work them into a ferment, they will not understand a single limitation. They must be kept cool.

In the second place, the impartial man is easily confounded with a very different character; to which, though his face may have some resemblance, his heart is wholly unlike. Moderation, in politics or religion, is the best or the worst thing, according to the state of the times, or the motives of the individual who assumes it. There is a class of men, no doubt, who veil their selfish purposes, under the guise of belonging to no party; who love to rise in an assembly surrounded by wondering eyes, because no man can divine

whether they will espouse or oppose a measure; who never commit themselves to any party, because they are wedded to their own selfish interests; and who mean to choose their side *just when* the victory is won. Such men pay the same honor to moderation, that a hypocrite does to religion. They acknowledge its worth, by counterfeiting its form. They are spirits too independent to follow a multitude even to do good. There is another class not so despicable, but equally inefficient. Souls that are too timid ever to act. They would know how to make up their opinion, if all men would only think alike. They are sorry that there should be differences and contentions, and wish, whether the wind falls or not, to hush the waves to peace. There are some too, so perfectly good natured, that they never can oppose any man or measure—minds born to be overwhelmed. All these will pass for moderate men. But though the weakest and basest minds have abused the name, it does not follow that there is no such thing as honest moderation. In a turbulent age it must exist; it is the last cable to keep us from swinging to the rocks. In an inflated assembly, it is only the steady minds, who look through the tempest to the sunshine beyond it, that can guide you through. I venture to say that no one ever broke through the outworks of a party to the central leader, if he had the least claim to his station, who did not find him ten times more cool and impartial than the tools he used in his cause. Federalism never blinded

the mind of Hamilton; nor democracy that of Jefferson. They sat on a hill above the smoke of the battle, and saw the whole prospect around. Shall we then give ourselves up to the deceptions which make the master spirits smile, who reap the profit of our delusions?

But the greatest difficulty after all, is in the moral cowardice of good men. They have flinched from their station; they have abandoned their cause too soon. Impressed with the melancholy idea, that the cause of truth was lost, and that this world was only made for cheats and scoundrels, they have retired from the post of action, and left the world to be governed by the world's law. This was the fault of the discouraged prophet, when he said—I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets by the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away. This was the fault of Brutus when he slew himself, pronouncing virtue to be an empty name. This was the capital error of the best men in the French revolution—they fled when they should have staid; and left their country to all the horrors of violence and Jacobinism; and if there is one quality which stands out to noble admiration in the character of Washington, it is his cool perseverence, when the tongues of a thousand zealous

friends were silenced, and a thousand hearts suspected him. This, O venerable spirit, this was thy glory.

Thus I have endeavored to show, that much more good would have been done, if the best men had not too soon abandoned their cause.

Lastly, They ought to persevere and support each other.

It is the duty of a good man never to despair. The power of truth, after all, is great in our world. It comes on slowly, like the rising of the sun; you cannot hasten it by your impatience; but it will shine at last, and the clouds must break away before its light. There are no secrets of a party which have not finally been detected; no motives that have not at last been seen; no public characters which have not been appreciated. The false laurels have faded, and the true have flourished, matured by time. I am aware that this work of deception is always beginning anew. New deceivers arise to play off their errors, and new generations are misled. But the percussion of the last blow which truth strikes, is terrible indeed. She is a dreadful power, and will march to her final victory. She begins her course, to be sure, without pomp or pretensions; she is patient; she waits sometimes for years to elapse; she suffers the motley crowd of folly and error, to play off their tricks, and exhaust their pretensions. But she lies watching, in ambush, like the lion, and is sure of her prey. Not one of the puny tribe that have sported with their own deceiving,

can escape the flashings of her dreadful eye. Truth sometimes retires and weeps—but her tears turn to sparks of fire, and the world is illumined by their light. There is no estimating the force of a well-proved point, frequently and earnestly repeated. Let the deceiver, then, tremble, and let not the just man despair. Without looking to the final judgment, when all purposes shall be detected, you may rest assured there is a noble reversion in coming time.

Bad times are never so bad as they appear to be; and good times never so good. When we look over the agitated surface, in a period of violence and excitement, we are apt to say, Surely human nature is transformed, the sparks of truth and reason have become extinct, an universal frenzy seems to have seized on every mind. We grow superstitious, and almost believe that the moon has wheeled her course too near the earth, and unsettled the brains on her sister planet. No remonstrating voice is heard; wisdom and moderation seem to have hid themselves in the dens of the earth. But on a little research, we find the secret suspicion is cherished, that all is not right. We find lurking in one corner and another, the friend of man and the friend of God, mourning over these abominations; and wanting nothing but a little union and a little encouragement, to come forth and stem the torrent. I make no doubt, that during the popish plot, in the days of king Charles II., and during the reign of terror in France, that there were thousands

and thousands, who might have encouraged each other, and been united; had they but known each other's sentiments. These delusions are never so general as they appear to be. The truth is, a few maniacs have burst their prison, and usurped a place which they do not deserve; and the mass of society are confounded and astonished at their noise. Consider the case of the prophet, when he declared that every altar was thrown down and he alone was left. It is the declaration of God himself, Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed unto Baal.

But in all such circumstances, in one thing you must copy your enemies—you must borrow their unslumbering activity. You must step forward and make your opinions known. You must burst from every connection but that which binds you to the sacred cause of truth and righteousness. The disposition sometimes to sacrifice party attachments to higher obligations, becomes more necessary, because when it is most needed it is hardest to be done. Impartial justice is the greatest crime, when two parties both become so violent, that it is absolutely necessary that some one should arbitrate between them. When men become inflamed, they act on each other; they are repelled from the central ground of truth; the future is lost in the present; and no parties ever acted long in warm opposition to each other, but in their various evolutions both were wrong. In fact, they are con-

demned by their own maxims; so that what was claimed by one side, as a right in one period, is denied to their opponents in another. It is melancholy to find how little long debating sometimes conduces to truth. I have often thought, if some celestial messenger could hover over our political assemblies, (I say nothing here of our religious ones,) when warm with conflict and fierce with opposition; if some angel of God could unfold a scroll, written by the finger of truth, declaring the question as some future day must decide it to a silenced world—how few there would be who would receive the mandate; in some cases, perhaps not one. So true is the language of Scripture, that when God looks down from heaven to see the children of men, he sometimes finds that all have gone aside—there is none that doeth good; no, not one. To strip off a single exaggeration; to weaken a single argument; to attempt to give precision to a single ambiguity, are, in some instances, unpardonable crimes. The fog has a kind of halo of glory thrown over it, which the infatuated wanderers mistake for light.

Be it remembered, too, that the danger of such dissent is always greater in proportion as the government is more free. I speak, to be sure, of the moral danger. Racks and prisons are out of the question. But in a state of anarchy, it is instant death to oppose the wishes of the crowd; and the danger is always greater in proportion as the government leans over

towards anarchy, or verges towards the highest freedom. Men will find the energy somewhere; and if it is not given them in the theory of their laws, they will supply it by the violence of their manners. A republic does not destroy the social power; it often only veils it from the general view, and artfully shifts its place. Parties have no other arms to enforce their measures, than violent expulsion; outcries of revenge; blackening scandal; engines which rack the mind, while they spare the body; and talons which tear the character until they reach the soul. Men will always have some instruments to accomplish their purposes; and when the legal ones are denied them, they will use others, sanctioned by no law, either of God or man. Besides, parties are held together by voluntary assent; the flinching of one member seems to endanger the union of the whole. They must therefore hew down the first man that moves from his post, that others may tremble. I say not these things to reproach any body of men. But such are the laws of human nature. Such is the constant course of events. How important is it then, that some men should preserve a clear perception of unchanging truth, and with that perception, a willingness to support each other. He is the noblest martyr, who dares to lay his dearest reputation on the public altar, as Abraham offered his only son.

I am sure that politics, in themselves, are very cool concerns. Separate them from their unfortunate at-

tendants—interest and ambition—and the problems of mathematics are hardly more remote from touching the passions. The great question in politics is, how much alleviation of human infelicity can come from government. This is the great problem of statesmen; and it is from losing sight of it, or not solving it, that all political errors originate. It is a complex question which must be worked out like the equations of Algebra. There is a certain line drawn by the great Founder of society, to which the evil waves of social life must come; and all attempts to beat them back, is like stopping the tide. If you seem to expel them in one point, they will break in upon you in another. The very question now before the public mind, of imprisonment for debt, may be taken as an example. To imprison an honest man because he is poor, is doubtless a great evil, and the government ought to relieve him, *if it can.* But here comes the question—*Will* it be any relief to deny the creditor this security for his loan? and *will* not the poor man suffer as much from being never trusted, as from thirty days' confinement in the yard of a prison? And as to making a distinction between the honest debtor and the fraudulent; *will* it not impose an entangling question on your courts of law, which no human sagacity can ever decide? I merely propose these questions. I do not answer them. They are merely specimens of the great problem, How much can government do for us? So no government can supersede the necessity of in-

dividual industry and self-exertion; no government can feed all its population; no government can give prosperity to the profligate and idle; no government can raise all the ambitious to office and renown. There is a certain degree of rigor necessary in imposing taxes and punishing crimes; because a lenity, which forgets justice, is sure to end in greater pain. In removing human ills, you can level down to a certain base; beyond which, if you think to go, your efforts become forever impotent and vain. They are worse than vain; for under the mockery of relief, the evil breaks in upon you in another form and a greater degree. The old evil is measured and known; but the new has all the indefinite horrors of an untried experiment. Now I ask, what have passion and pride to do in settling these complex problems? It is one of the coolest subjects which can possibly meet the human mind. There should be nothing to stir the passions, for it is a point in which all men have one interest. Nothing is wanted but a few cool heads to sit down, and compare the items until they can come to a result. Such are politics in the abstract. But alas! where am I?—I have wandered from our world.

A righteous cause is never totally defeated; and even the feeble efforts of one solitary individual, in doing good, are never entirely lost. In this world of violence and sin, the only permanent victories, (strange as it may seem,) are the victories of principle. I hope it is not too serious in this assembly to make a transi-

tion to the death of Christ. When he left his primitive glory, and veiled his divinity in the form of flesh and blood, he laid aside the greatness of his power, and chose to oppose the hostility of the world, in the weakness of a man. He addressed himself to the minds of mankind, and met them with no other weapons but those of principle. Instructive example! See how Omnipotence renounces its own might—pleased with no other victories than the captivity of willing hearts. For a while this force, even in the hands of the divine Redeemer, seemed to be contemptible. The rage of his enemies accomplished much more visible effect. They conquered him, as completely as brutal force could conquer. They accomplished their utmost wishes upon him; and it is often said, in the language of mystical theology, that he *triumphed when he fell.* But it is little understood what a strict precision there is to the meaning of these words. He did triumph—he exhibited the meekness and benevolence which shot remorse into the hearts which opposed him; and his death will be a powerful spectacle till the end of time. That simple story will bring millions of hearts to God. Yes, the very violence with which goodness is overwhelmed, is a part of its power. It gives pathos and eloquence to the dying scene. The principle may seem to be slain; but the ghost rises to haunt the murderers; and they find themselves conquered and prostrated in their own victories. Who would have thought, that saw the

meek and humble Baxter insulted and oppressed before Jeffreys, in mockery of all justice, and in an age when the sun of liberty seemed to have set forever,—who would have thought that English jurisprudence was learning some indignant lessons which she will never forget? Such is the price which liberty pays for her privileges; and such are the ways in which the victories of principle are won.

There is one fallacy, however, against which I must caution you. It is the supposing that all our blessings must be purchased at the price which has hitherto been paid for them. I hardly ever knew a man much versed in the world, who did not fall into this very error. Indeed it is a part of the system of some politicians. They say the world has always gone on pretty much at the same rate. Governments have always been administered by bribery and corruption; political discussions have always been attended by party spirit and strife. Liberty has always been a violent struggle of human passions. If you purchase it, you must pay the price. But is it so? Does not the hope of improving the condition of man, go on the supposition of separating these blessings from many, very many of their attendant evils? The very object of the expensive examples in former times, has been, I trust, that such examples may never return. Baxter was insulted by Jeffreys, that another Jeffreys may never sit upon the bench. The violence and mistakes of both parties, in our country, from the year 1796 to

1814, are remembered, I hope, that our government hereafter may be administered without these evils. Is there no such thing as growing wise from experience? Is religion nothing? Is principle nothing? Away with such dark wisdom. It is not true; and if it were true, it is better to be deceived.

We certainly purchase our other commodities at a cheaper rate. The market has always been improving; the pack-horse has been laid aside for the waggon; and the waggon gives place to the rail-road and the steam-boat. We build better ships—the comforts of life are multiplied. And shall the nobler science of man be stationary? Shall the immortal part be resigned over to despair?

No! let us form high ideas of our future destiny—let us fill our hearts with a sense of our responsible station; and let us remember that we act not only for man, but for God. I trust that our critical institutions will yet be sanctified; and that a voice will be heard in all our halls of legislation, speaking of BLESSING, and HONOR, and GLORY.

THE PURITAN.

No. 50.

With all thy heart, with all thy soul and mind,
Thou must Him love, and His behests embrace;
All other loves, with which the world doth blind
Weak fancies, and stir up affections base,
Thou must renounce and utterly displace,
And give thyself unto Him full and free,
That full and freely gave himself for thee.

Spenser's Hymn of Heavenly Love.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

This question has passed through many reflecting minds, without finding any satisfactory answer. Amongst all the religious divisions which prevail in the world—the clashing interests and jarring controversies, which have distracted the church and darkened the light of revelation, it is impossible for a probationer for eternity, who to-day is and to-morrow may die, not sometimes to pause and ask, *what is truth?*

Truth is that, which bears with a crushing power on the first suggestions of a vain heart. All that pleases

the mere man of the world; all that fills his imagination and fires his passions, is as false as the heart from which it springs, or the happiness it inspires. Truth is not the first suggestion of a mind left to itself; but it is those second thoughts which, as the proverb says, are always best. You might as well expect wheat from an unsown field, as to expect truth in the natural operations of a sensual and unsanctified mind.

Truth, in religion, is that which almost always at first sight gives pain. It is a discovery of our meanness, our wretchedness, our guilt and our dependence in the sight of God. Analyze human happiness, and you will find a great part of it is founded on delusion. What Swift said, in his favorite tone of sarcasm, is more true in sober reality, than perhaps he imagined. Human happiness (that is happiness without piety) is *the possession of being perpetually well deceived.* Man overrates his abilities and overrates his virtues. Divine truth lets in its blasting light and humbles him in the dust before God.

Truth, in religion, is that which at first sight always gives pain; not because error in itself is more congenial to our faculties than truth; but because religious truth is peculiar; revealing secrets about his heart and condition, which man has no wish to know.

Truth is the daughter of *reflection.* She is the angel that meets and blesses that man, who seeks her in his closet, looking into his soul, before his God, in view of eternity. Truth is the result of holding the

balance with a trembling hand which weighs interest and duty; pleasure and conscience; the present and the future; life and death; heaven and hell. Reflection is a very serious thing; it differs from *reasoning*. The number of those who reason, compared with those who do not, is very small; and yet for one that reflects there are thousands who reason. See Psalm iv. 4.

Truth in spiritual things, is not, as one of the fathers expresses it, the result of *geometrical necessities*. A man may make definitions and form inferences, and yet not reach the truth. I never yet saw a demonstration, even of the existence of God, which did not seem to me to weaken the conclusion. The Lord is in his temple and we must *behold* him there.

Truth is the fruit of prayer. He that never groaned out in the noontide and midnight hour—*Oh Lord, open thou mine eyes that I may see wondrous things out of thy law*, never yet found the truth.

To possess the truth, we must buy it; and a purchase implies a price. The price of truth is, what men are slow to resign, their indolence, their interest, (i. e. earthly interest,) and their pride.

In one word, truth is that which distresses or rejoices the soul. It is the fruit of many an anxious struggle; many a serious thought; many an earnest look to the fountain of light. Truth, spiritual truth, clearly seen and deeply felt, must either fill us with consolation or plunge us in despair.

THE PURITAN.

No. 51.

A law is a rule *prescribed*. Because a bare resolution confined in the breast of the legislator, without manifesting it by some external sign, can never be properly a law. It is requisite that this resolution be notified to the people who are to obey it. But the manner in which this notification is to be made, is a matter of very great indifference. It may be notified by universal tradition and long practice, which supposes a previous publication, and is the case of the common law of England. It may be notified *viva voce*, by officers appointed for that purpose, as is done with regard to proclamations, and such acts of parliament as are appointed to be publicly read in churches and other assemblies. It may, lastly, be notified by writing, printing, or the like; which is the general course taken with all our acts of parliament. Yet, whatever way is made use of, it is incumbent on the promulgators, to do it in the most public and perspicuous manner; not like Caligula, who (according to Dio Cassius) wrote his laws in a very small character, and hung them up on high pillars, the more effectually to ensnare the people.

Blackstone's Commentaries, page 46, *vol. I.*

THE BIBLE.

The foundation of all duty is obedience to the will of God; for however philosophers and theologians may have disputed respecting the nature of virtue and the sources of moral obligation, it will always remain

true, that the human mind, in its most vigorous excursions, never can rest on any satisfactory reason for obedience, but the simple fact, *that God has commanded it.* That great Being, that made us, knows all connections and all possible causes; and therefore, we have reason to believe, that his laws are founded on all the collected reasons, that can be present to an all-wise and all-knowing mind. When it is asked, therefore, what is the foundation of man's duty, the proper answer is, obedience to the will of God.

It is true there have been writers, who have attempted to give us some other reasons for our obedience. But they remind us of some of the solutions of the old philosophy, which Dr. Watts has so pleasantly ridiculed in his logic. "If I were asked," says Dr. Watts, "why a Jack roasts meat; and, if instead of showing the chains, the weight and the wheels, (such as the old meat Jacks formerly had,) and showing how they operated, I were to say it is owing to the *ustorious* or meat roasting quality of the Jack, I believe I should give very little information." The question still returns, what is this ustorious or meat-roasting quality? So when Dr. Paley tells us, that virtue is founded on utility, as it is that which promotes general happiness; he solves the question by setting before us one of the darkest speculations that can meet the human mind. What is utility? Is man to judge in all cases what will promote the comprehensive happiness of a boundless universe, and

that too, through the boundless ages of eternity? Surely, of such a writer, we may say, the more we think of his speculations the less we understand him; and therefore the thoughtful and the pious mind in all ages, has taken refuge from the darkness and agitation of human speculation, under the clear obligement of the divine will.

But the power of the divine will, considered as a rule of duty, depends upon our having some clear revelation. This is the corner-stone on which the whole of the Christian theory is built. We believe that true religion, as existing in the heart, consists in a strong desire and fixed determination to believe what God has spoken as a motive to obey what God has required. Our religion is founded on faith. But faith must have an object. That object is, the commands, the instructions, the ordinances, the laws, or whatever you please to call them, of God. Faith as much supposes a revealed rule by which it regulates its conclusions, as the use of the eye supposes a sun. Our eyes would have been in vain if God had given no light, and our faith would have been in vain if God had given no revelation.

It is these considerations that make it so vastly important, not only to believe that the Bible came from God, but that it is in the strictest sense *inspired.* The will of God is the rule of duty, and that sacred book is the sole certain medium through which we find his will. The full inspiration of the Scriptures therefore,

is a doctrine which all serious Christians will embrace as necessary to give a glow to their piety and precision to their faith.

This then we consider as one of the articles of a standing or a falling church. We are aware of the propensity of the human mind to bigotry; and we have no wish to bandy about those abused terms, heretic and heresy, on the heads or hearts that do not deserve them. But the moment the public confidence in the full inspiration of Scripture is shaken, we believe that the church is overthrown and the gospel is gone. This we believe to be the polluted source of the most dangerous delusions in religion that are now abroad.

There are some we are aware who pass under the name of Christians, who allow the Bible to be an excellent book, containing some of the best precepts and purest moral examples, who hold up its inspiration in such a way as entirely to destroy its power. They say, to be sure, that all wisdom comes from God; his common providence is extended over all his works; all extraordinary genius is his gift; and the same being that endowed a Newton with his sublime faculties, gave a Paul his ability to write. Thus it is covertly insinuated that Paul was no more inspired to deliver the counsels of Heaven and the rules of faith, than a great philosopher is inspired to give us the structure of the material heavens. But will such views satisfy the anxious mind that is looking

for a rule of duty? Surely this is to mock us with the name of inspiration when the thing itself is denied. No man believes that Newton was inspired, in the proper sense of that word. We believe that he was an extraordinary man with extraordinary faculties; and by diligence and study, he gave us many important truths, which he had discovered; but no man imagines in any thing Newton says, that he sees a divine command. We believe, when the apostles spoke, they uttered the divine will as much and as truly as if the voice had come from the radiant throne. So says the Son of God. *He that heareth you, heareth* ME. This is the appropriate notion of inspiration, and all who do not believe it, conceal their sentiments as they will, have abandoned the ground of the whole Christian church; and are but infidels in disguise.

The artifice of calling a bad invention by a good old name, and then endeavoring to shuffle it off under the protection of that name, is too stale, the present day, to prevail without detection. If a man calls his dark lantern, the sun; it makes it not a whit the brighter or better light.

Some believe the Bible is *partly* inspired. But *which* part is to be rejected and which is to be received, they are not very careful to say. We are aware here, that much quibbling may be raised by asking what is the Scripture, and are we to receive a book as inspiration because we find it bound up in a volume which we call the Bible? In answer to such

inquiries, we simply say, that when the united church, after ages of examination, have agreed to put certain books into the canon and exclude others, such decision is the best proof that human affairs allow, that *that* canon is the word of God. It stands whole and entire —the code of Heaven and the guide of man. Any doubts, needlessly suggested, that part is not inspired, is throwing us back into the night of ignorance; it is teaching infidelity by piecemeal. Who shall say what part is inspired? The rule is broken; the sun is gone; the shadows thicken into midnight; and man is a pilgrim on the wilderness, without a ray to guide him to safety and to peace.

Some teach that the Bible is not a revelation; but a *record* of inspiration. Eternal truth spoke the word, but fallen men recorded it. We might ask them, for whose benefit God revealed his word, for those who immediately heard it, or for all mankind? Would he at first have given a perfect pattern and then have left that pattern to have been mutilated and corrupted by the unskilful servants to whom it was committed? Besides, how does such a sentiment comport with the solemn promise, which Christ gave his apostles, that if he departed he would send them the Comforter to lead them into all truth?

The best antidote to all such foolish and wicked opinions, is a knowledge of the Bible itself. Let each one read it, and see what it is, and what it claims to be. The best Christians are Bible Christians. They

who open it with reverence; read it for information; reflect on it with prayer; and pass from its pages to retain its truths and walk by its spirit; they, and they alone are the children of light.

I have already remarked, that I consider all virtue as founded on the requirements of some law; without such a previous conception, virtue would be instinct, good nature, blind impulse—any thing rather than a fixed and sublime principle. For the heathen we are obliged to assume a law of nature; i. e. a knowledge of God and his will, discovered (dimly, to be sure, but still discovered) by tradition, reason, conjecture, or any other mode that is not *revelation*. And we see then, virtue failed for want of authority. Now the essence of the new dispensation is, that it brings us in direct contact with the authority of the Lawgiver, i. e. God. But a law must be prescribed; not confined, as Blackstone says, to the breast of the legislator. What *prescribing* is, in reference to municipal law, the *plenary inspiration* of the Scriptures is with reference to the law divine. It is the medium by which we know its authority; and by which the articles of faith are made more clear than the dictates of reason.

THE PURITAN.

No. 52.

Man ought for future happiness to fear,
If he live always happy here;
He wants the bleeding mark of grace,
The circumcision of the chosen race.

Cowley.

THERE are serious hours when the soul sinks into a deeper consciousness of its own character and wants than it possesses in the ordinary tenor of life. Religion is addressed to our consciousness; just as much so as light to the eye. The reason why it is not universally received is, that the soul is turned out of its own interior feelings by having its attention solicited and seduced abroad. Were it not for this, the truth of the Christian religion would strike us with an instant impression; and we should see its beauties as soon as our hearts were conformed to its spirit. The truth is, there are two kinds of consciousness in man; the common and the extraordinary; the superficial

and the deep; the one produced by the trifles of the world, and the other by more important objects, brought up to the attention sometimes by reflection, sometimes by calamity, but always through the agency of the divine Spirit. We must sound deep, in order to know what seems the nearest object—even ourselves.

I have said that there is two kinds of consciousness; and I believe every person has felt it to be so, who has ever been laid on a sick bed without the abatement or loss of his power of reason. This truth is so obvious, that it has forced itself on the conviction of a writer very far from possessing any strict sentiments of religion. Adam Smith was the friend of David Hume, and of course not much the friend of the gospel of Christ. But he has pointed out, in one of his chapters, in his work on the Moral Sentiments, with great force and beauty, the different sentiments, which a man gets on a sick bed, respecting the world, its honors, its pleasures, and the importance of its pursuits, and above all, of his own merits and his claims on the divine favor. As a man must kneel low to bend his telescope to look up to the light of some meridian star, so it is with divine truth, it strikes us with the clearest impression, when we sink lowest in dependence and humility, in view of coming eternity before a present God.

In the ordinary course of life, we are apt to regard material things as the only substantial objects; and

to view spiritual concerns as shadows, which, though we confess their possible existence, have very little influence over our practical wisdom. Sickness, when dangerous, reverses this process. The shadow becomes substance, and the substance shadow. A worldly man, in the full career of prosperity, may be compared to an enthusiast of nature, standing on the borders of some tranquil lake, when its waters are so still as to be a mirror, reflecting the surrounding scenery of earth and sky. The real bodies are behind his back, and all that he watches with such intense interest, is delusion. If he were to pursue these images, it would prove his destruction. In both situations, facts are not only diverse, but contrary to the reportings of sense.

I, too, have been sick. I have felt the prostrating pang; counted the lingering hours; taken the nauseating cup. I have been called to see the world recede, and weigh temporal and eternal things in new balances on the borders of the grave. It was dreadful to see the dejected look; to hear the mysterious whisper; to watch and return the starting tear. It was dreadful to think of leaving this warm life, with all its connections, for a leap in the dark—for the cold tomb, and all the possible horrors beyond the tomb. But, above all dreadful was it, without some witness within, which my soul felt not, to think of appearing before the eyes of Him, in whose sight the very heavens are unclean. One wants the enthusiasm of religion,

in order to die in peace. And had not I felt some of the confidence afterwards, which dictated the following hymn, I could not have borne it. But my fears were not realized, and I recovered.

The following lines were suggested, not written, one beautiful morning, when the author looked out on the landscape from a bed of sickness. Every one has heard of the dying Rousseau, ordering his window to be opened, in his last sickness, that he might take one more look of nature. It was a striking incident in a man, who, with all his infidelity, found it hard to exterminate every religious impression from his soul. But if the infidel can look on nature with profit and pleasure, much more can the Christian, who sees, in the sweet aspect of a summer morning, but a dim shadow of the brighter glories of his Saviour's face.

LINES

Suggested on looking out one bright morning, from a sick bed, on the face of nature.

Behold, the morn, with vermil cheek,
Is beaming from the Ocean's bed;
O'er green-hair'd hills, and meadow's sleek,
With airy heels, young zephyrs tread:
Awake—oppressed with languor—pale;
I rise to meet the new-born gale;
To drink once more before I die,
The fresh elixir of the sky.

O Sun, about, through Heaven's blue road,
Once more to roll thy burning wheel;

May I, from suffering's lorn abode
One glance at thy bright visage steal?
Enough—'tis sweet—the narrow grot
For me prepared—thou enterest not.
The earth shall be my rigid bed;
And tomb-drops trickle round my head.

How fresh the green! how soft the air!
How cheerful every warbler nigh!
Soothed by the prospect, sick Despair
Might smile, and Death forget to die.
But restoration, on her wing,
To me the morning will not bring;
The brightest lawn, the softest strain,
To me are bright and soft in vain.

O birds, whose spirits never know,
Nor bodies, a tormenting pang;
Who sleep where tender blossoms blow,
And sing, where trembling dew-drops hang;
Why should you sing—when earth and sky,
Though bright, are sackcloth to my eye?
Ah cease—My spirits share no part,—
Your little anthems rend my heart.

O flowers, that deck the lowland dell,
Meek forms, meek children of the shade;
Receive, receive the last farewell
Of one, more swift than you to fade:
Heaven o'er me spreads its concave wings;
With melody the woodland rings;
The opening lilac looks divine,
Rejoicing every heart but mine.

And I'll rejoice—where Jesus died,
Such splendid forms if God can give;

What richer glories must abide,
Where Jesus shall forever live!
To those bright scenes which still remain,
Unsoil'd with guilt, unwrung with pain,
Death soon shall set my spirit free—
Strike, Tyrant, strike and let me see.

THE PURITAN.

No. 53.

The stricken dere by kinde
Of death that stands in awe,
For his recure an herb can fynde,
The arrowe to withdrawe.

Old Ballad.

HUMAN LIFE.

Human Life! Human Life! What a fine title for a writer, who publishes his lucubrations in periodical papers. I remember, in college, there were certain subjects which were considered as excellent themes for forensic discussion, because they opened a maze of diversity, and one might dispute on them forever, without coming to any conclusion. Something like this is a discourse on human life. It is a circle hazy and wide, embracing all subjects, from the pig-sty to the palace; and I defy the reader, even if he should be good-natured enough to honor this piece with his attention, and a very Yankee at guess-

ing, to surmise what is to be the tenor of my remarks. I place my covered dish on the table; and no man can tell, by the sight or the smell, whether it is to be the *pot-luck* of Metaphysics or the poultry (not poetry) of Romance and Love.

Human Life! Let me see,—what did I understand by this term, when I was joyous and young? Human life, to me, was then the gay vision of a bridegroom's dream, on the morning before marriage. I saw before me a long succession of enterprises, efforts, successes, honors, and enjoyments, which reason told me were possible, and a sanguine temperament assured me would not fail. I was not such a fool as to suppose that the rainbow could exist without the cloud, or that the sky above me was never to be darkened by a tempest. In picturing future life, therefore, I always used to throw in some sombre shades; but they were just such shades as suited the imagination; just such shades as a painter puts into his picture, to show off, by contrast, the lighter and gayer parts. They were sorrows formed by fancy, for fancy to bear. I made myself sick enough to be visited by some imaginary goddess; poor enough to bear my poverty with the spirit of a hero; in disgrace enough always to come off with final honor; and in danger enough at last to escape. I can truly say, I have been more disappointed in my pre-conceived misfortunes, than I ever have in the brightest pictures of fore-imagined bliss. I knew better how to draw the roses of life than its

thorns; I could picture the robin, with his red bosom and delightful song, better than the lizard or the toad. My sorrows, seen in perspective of the sun-light of the brightest morning that ever glittered over a human head; my pre-conceived sorrows, I say, have had about as much resemblance to real sorrow, as the bowls and daggers of a play-house have to real bowls and daggers. O ye visions of youthful bliss, ye dew-drops of the morning! I complain not that ye have fled; it is the common lot, and I ought to have suspected it. But how have I been disappointed in my griefs! How unlike the tales which passion and imagination told! The armor, which I had prepared, was the foil of the fencing-school, and not the spear for the battle.

Human life is a science, which no theory can teach; it must be infused gradually by experience. All young men think alike; and they must think alike, because there is nothing within, to meet with the response of consciousness, the testimonies they may have from books or men. I remember a poor old man, who dwelt near my father's, who used to go round with two shingles and a wheelbarrow, picking up the manure in the road for his land; the whole patrimony of which consisted of three acres and an half. If he was asked by a kind neighbor after his health, his reply was, a long string of complaints; a pain in his shoulder; a pain across his kidneys; a pain in his joints; a pain wherever there was a

sensation to suffer. That man's body is now beneath the clods of the valley; and his spirit, I hope, in a world where all pains cease, and all tears are wiped away. But if I could be indulged with one half hour's converse with his disembodied spirit, I would not fail to ask his pardon that I formerly heard his tale of suffering with so little sympathy or belief. I have since been taught by experience.

Yes, reader; and grim experience is the only thing that will ever teach you. We begin life in the spring; and the orchard of one of the Brookline farmers looks not more diversely in a morning of May and January, than human life looks, seen in prospect and retrospect. We commence our voyage near the head of the river, near its healthful banks and grassy fountains: its trees shade us; its birds soothe us; its breezes fan our bounding pulses and burning cheeks; and, as we glide softly and smoothly down its silent waters, we see no danger, and we suspect none. We are told that it will not always be thus; we are forewarned of the sterility and chillness, through which the current winds. But the silent waters, which are slipping beneath us, and bearing us along, are teaching the only effectual lesson. Why should the rareness of religious faith be taken as an argument of the non-existence of spiritual things? We are as incredulous to the evils of old age, in the hey-day of youth, as we are to the pains of eternity, amid the intoxications of life.

There are hours, however, when every thinking man feels that external things cannot satisfy him. The pursuit of business, the accumulation of wealth, leaves a void in his heart. The round of pleasure becomes tasteless and tiresome; and the life of life dies before death. Almost every one has been compelled to complain, in some sad hour,

> "How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,
> Seem to me, all the uses of this world!"

The sun loses its lustre—the flowers their fragrance; and there seems hardly motion enough in the current of life to preserve it from putrefaction. There are two causes which produce this emptiness of heart —this vacancy of interest. The one is exhausted novelty; and the other, the coming of sore disappointment. O! in the sad hour when sorrow takes hold of a man,—when privation sweeps away his enjoyments, and grief wrings his bosom—he looks round and finds the world converted into a wilderness. He sees human life in its true colors; the ordinary topics of moral declamation have a meaning, which he never saw or felt before. In the sadness and depth of his moral despondency, he looks round and asks—"Is there no refuge? Is this the sum of existence? Is there no cure for the wounds of the heart? Is there no medicine for man's higher nature? *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?*"

Such a man is in a state at once *favorable* and *un-*

favorable, to appreciate the gospel, and to receive its spirit and consolations into his heart. He is in a favorable state, inasmuch as he estimates the prospects of the world more correctly than he ever did before. Our neglect of religion, and indifference to its duties and claims, is not, perhaps, a primary emotion of the soul. We first love, inordinately, what God forbids; and then are disturbed that he forbids it, and willingly withdraw our attention from a subject, which only serves to damp our pleasures and alarm our fears. The mind has often been compared to balances; in one scale lie all the motives to a life of sense; in the other, the motives to a life of piety. It would seem, then, that when you have destroyed or lightened all the weights in the sensual scale, the other must preponderate, and the whole man be consecrated to duty and to God.

Religion consists, substantially, in two great discoveries; the one is the emptiness of temporal things; the other is the satisfactory nature of things eternal and divine. Thou, perhaps, hast made one of these discoveries. But why stop here? Why does not the ruin show the need of the recovery? Why should not the crown of thorns lead thee to the cross?

The grand evidence of the truth of the gospel consists in its adaptation to our condition and our wants. This is the only thing which carries conviction to the heart, after all the elaborate volumes which have been written on the evidences of Christianity. Suppose a

man to be walking on the side of a rivulet, on a summer's day; the water flows before him; he is thirsty; he stoops to drink; his thirst is quenched—his spirits are refreshed, and he goes on his way rejoicing. There can be no doubt, in this case, that water quenches our thirst, or that, if there is a design in creation, that God made it for that end. All the metaphysics of the schools would not dissuade such a traveller from such a conclusion. Now, what water is to the fainting traveller, the gospel is to the mind, when passion is checked by privation, and reason is purified by experience. It gives an end and an aim to all creation. It shows that man was not made in vain. It carries sweet conviction to a humble heart.

There are some objects, which are seen best in the twilight; the sombre hues of the evening are more refreshing to the eye, and set off these forms with more beauty and lovelier attraction. So there are hours of seriousness, when the *evidences* of religion strike the mind with deeper force.

To a man recovered from the delusions with which we all begin life, and viewing his present existence and future prospects in the light of reason and truth, the *consolations* of religion assume a new value. Once he slighted them; for he felt, in the succession of his pleasures and occupations, he wanted them not. The hunger of his mind was satisfied by other food; and he imputed to all men the gaiety and joy that danced in his own heart. A fond mother once gave

to her son a warm, well-lined pea-jacket, as he was going on a long voyage in various climates. As he sailed first through tropical regions, he was tempted to despise the maternal gift, and was about to part with his garment for some luxury which hit his fancy. But, as he advanced into polar regions, amidst storms and snows, he found the warm jacket not so contemptible a gift. Such are the consolations of religion; no man knows their value until the hour has come in which he needs them.

The objects of revelation are invisible; they do not lie before us like a house or a tree; they are seen only by an internal light. They are seen by faith; and faith is produced, so far as human endeavors can produce it, by reflection. Now the man, awakened from the dreams of life, is disposed to reflect. He *must* pause and think. His disappointments turn his eye inward on himself, and forward beyond the grave, and upward to his God. He loves to retire, when the cares and business of the day are over, to catch a glimpse of those objects and images, which are seen only by the mental eye. He is a meditative being, and is most busy when most alone.

Perhaps it will here be thought, that I ought to mention the power which affliction has to humble the heart, and give it that childlike simplicity of temper by which the kingdom of heaven must always be received. But alas! I doubt the fact; our pride follows us even in our sackcloth and our ashes; nor

shall I impute that to *affliction*, which ever has been and ever must be the work of *grace*.

But there are several things, which render the hour of affliction not so favorable to the reception of religion as might at first be supposed.

Religion (at least the religion of the gospel) is not, as some suppose, a disease of the mind; it is the choice of its most sound and healthy state. It is true there are a great many people, who are driven to something, which they call religion, by the murky operations of a disordered mind. When the disappointed girl leaves her parties of pleasure for a convent; when a broken merchant joins the Shakers; or a lady of suspected reputation suddenly reforms and *joins the church;* all these are but impressions made on the fancy, which leave the heart in the same rebellious state, in the sight of Heaven, which it was in before. Such persons, we may venture to predict, will soon repent of their repentance, and pass their lives under the forms of religion, entirely destitute of its consolations or its power.

So general and indefinite are our ideas of that religion, which it is man's sole wisdom to know, that we mistake almost any shadow for the substance, and baptize, by the name of piety, the gloomiest depressions or the wildest caprices, which ever sported over the human breast. We include, in a general name, objects which have no other resemblance than their outward appearance; and hence, when the conflict

comes, we take up with a piety as shadowy as were the images of our wandering pre-conceptions.

One of the deceptions of a mind, pausing under a cloud, is the view which it takes of the grave. To most men it is a terror to die. Death is awful even in its privations. To say nothing of the world to which it introduces us, we know the social joys and warm pursuits from which it will take us away.

> No more the sun these eyes shall view;
> Earth o'er these limbs her dust shall strew,
> And life's fantastic dream be o'er.

But, to a heart depressed and wounded, the grave assumes a new appearance. Its shades dissipate; a fantastic charm is thrown around it; and we conclude that, as all is empty and vain on this side of it, all must be serene and reposing beyond it. This state of mind has been *pictured* in the book of Job, and repeated by a thousand subsequent poets. *There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together—they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; which long for death, and it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave.*

We have the same state of mind described by Montgomery.

> There is a calm for those that weep,
> A rest for weary pilgrims found;
> They softly lie and sweetly sleep
> Beneath the ground.
>
> The storm that sweeps the wintry sky
> No more disturbs their sweet repose,
> Than summer evening's latest sigh,
> That shuts the rose.
>
> I long to lay my weary head, &c.

Such a state, no doubt, implies a great revolution in a man's feelings. Because he wishes for death, he supposes he is prepared for it; because he is tired of the world, he concludes he is meet for heaven. He mistakes depression for repentance, and the slumbers of passion for the renovation of the heart.

But let no one deceive himself. The change, accomplished by the divine Spirit, in making a man a Christian, is very different. It reveals before him the majesty of a holy God, whom, by his sins, he has offended, and prostrates him in the dust in view of that spotless throne, before which the best of us might tremble to appear. It teaches him that, without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. It infuses a new sorrow into the heart, other than that *sorrow of the world, which worketh death.*

THE PURITAN.

No. 54.

I HAVE already mentioned in my papers, Tom Wildbull, who advised me to go to the theatre. Tom was a sad dog for a while; but he has long since sown all his wild oats, and has married an estimable woman, and become himself an estimable man. He has requested me to allow place for one paper in my book, and I have consented. As in the case of Will Honeycomb, the reader will perceive, perhaps a little dash of his former character.

> Love, on this earth the only mean thou art,
> Whereby we hold intelligence with heaven,
> And it is thou that only dost impart
> The good that to mortality is given.
> O sacred bond, by time thou art not broken!
> O thing divine, by angels to be spoken!
> *The Legend of Pierce Gaveston, by Drayton.*

THE BIRD'S NEST IN THE MOON.

DID you ever, my friendly reader, in revisiting your native place, from which, like me, you had been

separated by many years of wandering, experience the sensation of littleness, with which every object seemed clothed, shrinking in its dimensions as your eye had become enlarged by a familiarity with the nobler scenes of a wider world? I was born on the northern side of the Blue Hills, which seemed, to my boyish eyes, as the loftiest mountains that ever propped the incumbent sky. My first expedition on the ocean was down the capacious waters of Dorchester bay, in one of those vast floating castles, called a wherry, or a canoe, to catch those mighty monsters of the deep, denominated tom-cod. O how did my heart expand as we ploughed out of the great bason of waters called Mill-creek! What emotions of sublimity did I feel when I reached the juncture, where the dark Neponset, the mother of frogs and mud-turtles, rolls her copious streams to join the billows of Boston harbor! What sensations of alarm entered my breast as we doubled that long cape called Farm-bar, renowned for periwinkles and clams! How did I look with an aching eye over the boundless surface of brine, which separates Farm-bar from Dorchester Heights, now ycleped South Boston. And, to look still farther into the impenetrable regions of the north, and see, beyond the forts, the dome of the State-House and the steeples of Boston, lifting their tops in the blue horizon, almost beyond the ken of human vision,—it made my imagination real. I had new conceptions of the magnitude of our world. Thomp-

son's Island I supposed must be the shores of some of the western countries in Europe. But when we came to sail through the narrows of squaw rock, and finally pass the Moon,* my imagination became dizzy, and I felt like a man in a balloon, who has bid farewell to sublunary scenes, and scarcely expects again to tread the terrestrial ball. Bounding billows! how did you roll in majesty to my youthful eye! Mighty scenes! how did you impress my childish fancy with the first ideas of vastitude and magnificence! Alas! our conceptions are all relative. Every thing depends on the state of the mind. One may see St. Peter's church at Rome with less emotion than our State-House, and stand at the foot of Ætna itself without feeling or fear.

I love to visit these scenes; for they give me back the green days of childhood and pleasure with all the freshness of the original impression. I do not mean to say that I view these scenes with the admiration and delight, with which they were once beheld. But they form a kind of *medium*, a perspective glass, by which one can look back to the time when every prospect was pleasing because every object was new. I love to go to the Moon. I never shake off sublunary cares and sorrows so completely as when I am fairly landed on that beautiful island. A man in the Moon, may see Castle Island, the city of Boston, the ships in the harbor, the silver waters of our little Archi-

* Moon Island, in Boston harbor.

pelago, all lying as it were at his feet. There you may be at once social and solitary; social, because you see the busy world before you, and solitary, because there is not a single creature on the island, except a few feeding cows, to disturb your repose.

I was there last summer, and was surveying the scene with my usual emotions, when my attention was attracted by the whirring wings of a little sparrow, whom, in walking, I had frightened from her nest. It may be necessary, perhaps, to tell some of the clerks in Washington street, who, six months from the country, are apt to forget all the objects among which they were born and bred, that this bird always builds its nest on the ground. I have seen their nests in the middle of a corn-hill, curiously placed in the centre of the five green stalks, so that it was difficult, at hoeing time, to dress the hill without burying the nest. This sparrow had built her nest as usual on the ground, beneath a little tuft of grass, more rich and thick-set than the rest of the herbage around it. I cast a careless glance at the nest, saw the soft down that lined its internal part, the four little speckled eggs which enclosed the parent's hope. I marked the cows that were feeding around it; and I came away without the least imagination that I should write a dissertation on the *Bird's Nest in the Moon.*

But our minds are strange things. That bird's nest has haunted me ever since. I could not but inquire why Providence, who inspires all animals with an uner-

ring instinct, had not moved the foolish creature to build her habitation in a safer place. A multitude of huge animals were feeding around it, one tread of whose cloven foot would crush both bird and progeny into ruin. I could not but reflect on the precarious condition to which the creature had committed her most tender hopes. I was thinking how the interest of two beings, both created by the same high hand and supported by the same kind power, might cross each other, and neither of them know it, until the fatal moment when the feebler might be annihilated by the stronger power. A cow is seeking a bite of grass; she steps aside merely to gratify that idle appetite; she treads on the nest, and destroys the offspring of the defenceless bird. Thus, what is a trifle to one being, is destruction to another.

Before I proceed any farther, I think proper to apprise the reader that I was in a right frame of mind to write a meditation on a broomstick; and, however much wits may sneer and critics condemn, I am determined to make something of my bird's nest.

As I came away from the island, I reflected that this bird's situation, in her humble defenceless nest, might be no unapt emblem of man in this precarious world of uncertainty and sorrow. We are impelled, by some of the tenderest instincts of our nature, to form the conjugal connection; the eye of some matchless beauty attracts our attention, and melts our hearts; we form the tender union, and we build our nest;

committing to it the soft deposites of our gentlest affections. But where do we build this nest? Are we any wiser than the foolish bird? No—the nest is on the ground of terrestrial calamities, and a thousand invisible dangers are roving around. We are *doubled in wedlock and multiplied in children,* and stand but a *broader mark* for the cruel arrows of death and destruction, which are shot from every side. What are diseases, in their countless forms, accidents by flood and fire, the seductions of temptation, and even half the human species themselves, but so many huge cows feeding around our nest, and ready, every moment, to crush our dearest hopes, with the most careless indifference, beneath their brutal tread? Sometimes, as we sit at home, we can see the calamity coming at a distance. We hear the breathing of the vast monster; we mark its wavering path—now looking towards us in a direct line—now capriciously turning for a moment aside. We see the swing of its dreadful horns, the savage rapacity of its brutal appetite; we behold it approaching nearer and nearer, and it passes by within a hair-breadth of our ruin, leaving us to the sad reflection that another and another are still behind. Poor bird! I feel no heart to condemn thy folly, but rather to weep over thy condition and my own. Our situations are exactly alike. Thy choicest comforts come entwined with pain; and no sooner is thy callow young developed, than thou feelest all the cares that distract a parent's

heart. How often hast thou been driven from thy nest! How often hast thou fluttered thy wings in agony, and taken up the wail of sorrow, as if thy children were already lost. The careless step, so indifferent to another, was rapture or despair to thee.

A man must be a fool not to perceive that these remarks are written by a parent; and I am sure they are dictated by feelings, which none but a parent can understand. Well, then, let me tell the secret, and be as foolish as the best of them, since, in this hard age, none but a fool would have a feeling heart. The other evening I walked into the chamber where my children were sleeping. There was Nathan with the clothes half kicked down, his hands thrown carelessly over his head, tired with play, now resting in repose; there was little Sal, with her balmy breath and her rosy cheeks, sleeping and looking like innocence itself. There was Lucy, who has just begun to prattle, and runs daily with tottering steps and lisping voice to ask her father to toss her into the air. [I solemnly wish, if these remarks are read by any youthful bachelor of forty, who boards and means to board all his days in Tremont House, that he would read not a syllable farther.] As I looked upon these sleeping innocents, I could not but regard them as so many little birds, which I must fold under my wing, and protect, if possible, in security in my nest. [But when I thought of the huge cows that were feeding around them; the ugly hoofs that might crush them into ruin; in short,

when I remembered *the Bird's Nest in the Moon*, I trembled and wept.

But why weep? Is there not a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow? It is very possible, that the nest which I saw was not in so precarious a condition as it appeared to be. Perhaps some providential instinct led the bird to build her fragile house in the ranker grass, which the kine never bite, and, of course, on which they would not be likely to tread; perhaps some kind impulse may guide that species so as not to tread even on a bird's nest. At any rate, chance might lead to an escape. I have never heard, and I despair now of ascertaining the important fact, that the nest I saw was actually crushed by the foot of a cow. Perhaps the joyful mother saw her young expand their wings, and inherit their paternal air; perhaps the progeny of those very eggs are now singing in the groves around Boston. There is a merciful God, whose care and protection extend over all his works, who takes care of the sparrow's children and of mine.

I think I have read somewhere, that, if a man wishes to learn to pray, he must go to sea; but, with all due submission to the author of this wise remark, I think we should rather say—Let him be married and have a family of children. It is almost impossible to be an infidel with a little progeny rising round you. If Hume could have seen a little lisping girl, come and climb his knees and address him as a father—

"Papa, who made all things?" he would have almost involuntarily answered—God. If a man wishes to learn to pray for protection during the night, let him go, as I have done, and see his children asleep, and remember the pestilence that walks in darkness. Let him experience the feelings of an anxious father, bending over the sleeping forms of his tender children, and conscious of the thousand dangers, seen and unseen, that hover around their defenceless heads. It was over her dear little sleeping infants—if she had any—I imagine, that Mrs. Barbauld penned the following beautiful remarks: "If prayer were not enjoined to the perfection, it would be permitted to the weakness of our nature. We should be betrayed into it, if we thought it sin; and pious ejaculations would escape our lips, though we were obliged to preface them with—God forgive me for praying!"

A family of children, walking amidst a thousand dangers and often escaping, is one of the most striking proofs of a particular Providence that ever met my mind. To talk about the general laws of nature, immutable and unbendible to the interposing will of the Deity! Away with such metaphysical trash; it is just fit for old bachelors to write. Until I had children, I never knew what the Scriptures meant, when they say that the *very hairs of our head are all numbered.* I was once standing in a public road, and saw a team of three yokes of oxen and a horse, moving very fast along the road without a driver. A

little child was standing in the road directly before the wagon, with no time for escaping. The whole train of cattle passed directly over the child, throwing it down, and apparently crushing it into jelly. Every spectator thought it dead; its life was not worth a *pin's fee;* the anxious mother ran to rescue her offspring; but, alas, too late; and her piercing shrieks spoke her despair. But lo, when the little urchin was picked up, instead of being found a corpse, as was by all expected, its roguish smile seemed to say that it regarded the event as a good joke, which it would willingly see repeated. Every one of the beasts, though moving so rapidly, had contrived to shun the child; and this event, together with the *Bird's Nest in the Moon*, have convinced me, that verily there is a God, and that he governs the world by a particular providence.

I have often thought it was unfortunate that some of the great geniuses, who have undertaken to enlighten the world by their infidelity, were not married men. It would have done more to help them to *digest the venom of their spleen*, than all the long volumes of rejoinders which have been written by metaphysical theologians. For, to say nothing of the powerful smiles of a woman, when that woman is your wife, reflecting and beaming the very benevolence of a creating God,—there are some things in a married life, which are enough to overthrow the faith of the most stubborn infidel, that ever apportioned his incre-

dulity to his ignorance. I myself was rather inclined to infidelity when I was first married. But the smiles of the honey-moon softened me, and I bought a Bible to lie in our parlor. When my wife first sent me after the doctor, at midnight, my faith began to waver; and I was absolutely staggered when I heard the new-born infant cry. As I looked on the little miracle, I was ashamed, and renounced my former faith; and every new prattler, that has risen around me, has made me a better Christian. I now actually read the Bible with my children, and we pray over it. I sometimes tell my former companions in infidelity, when they try to flout me out of my religion, that they are welcome to our old belief—to all its wisdom and all its comforts. They are old bachelors still.

And no wonder that such an unnatural life should lead to such an absurd faith. Hume was an old bachelor, and every page of his philosophy smells of his folly. Hobbs was an old bachelor, and so was Voltaire, and Rousseau, and Jeremy Bentham, and Tom Paine. I have always thought it a thousand pities, that Mademoiselle Curchod did not wind her chains more effectually around Gibbon's heart. I imagine that Cupid, the little god of love, might have expelled a great deal of Paganism from the pages of his splendid history. Some, to be sure, will be infidels in the bosom of wedlock, as some would be fools in the very palaces of Solomon. But this is not the order of nature. Her virtuous instincts lead to truth.

In that beautiful dialogue which Plato has written, in which he describes the closing scene in the life of Socrates, Plato makes his master Socrates, in the course of the discussion, attempt to account for the existence of skepticism; and he traces it to the same cause as that which produces misanthropy. He thinks that men of rash judgments and irritable tempers, when they have once confided in a character superficially virtuous, and have found themselves deceived, pass a judgment on the whole species, and spend the rest of their lives in revenging their disappointment by railing at mankind. In like manner, he supposes, that when a hasty mind has been deceived by an apparent demonstration, and afterwards discovers that the demonstration is false, it loses its confidence in all reasoning, and views all things in the universe as floating, like the waters of the Euripus, without order and without end. Such a man is τῶν τε ὄντων τῆς ἀληθείας ϛερηθείη, deprived of the certainty of real existence, and imputes to reason the darkness of his own mind.

I have generally noticed that infidelity and misanthropy have an affinity for each other, and are often combined in the same heart. But how is a man to avoid misanthropy? No man ever became a misanthrope under the smiles of an affectionate wife, and surrounded by a family of ruddy children. These are tender chains, which connect us with the universe; they bind us in harmony with our species;

they lead us to feel our need of a higher protector,—to see the glory and the goodness, and therefore to believe in the existence of God.

When a man is once on a wrong track, every step he takes only leads him so much farther out of the way. God, when he built the world, designed to pack men together in families; and it is the only way in which you can throw the human species together, without impairing their principles and endangering their virtue. A man goes into a splendid city,—he becomes too licentious, or too lazy, or too proud to establish a family. He passes his time among the rubicund inmates of a fashionable boarding-house. He spends his evenings at the theatre or billiard-table. He rails at women, and hates children, because he only knows the vilest of the sex, and has never seen a child which was his own. His affections become warped, his heart is insulated; and, because he has lost his humanity, he has never found his religion. O how I should like, before such a fellow goes to his lonely grave, and his rotten carcass manures the ground, to throw into his narrow heart, one straw from my *Bird's Nest in the Moon!*

THE PURITAN.

No. 55.

King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he called the tailor—lown;
He was a wight of high renown,
And thou wert but of low degree;
'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.

Old Ballad.

To John Oldbug, Esq.

Sir,—Shall I tell you my story? You will find it exemplify an error too prevalent in our land. I was the son of a very frugal family; my father was a farmer in the county of Worcester, who suffered nothing to be done in a slow or drivelling manner. In summer we were up with the sun, to hear the Bob O'Lincon, to follow the plough and tend the hay; and in winter I went to school, to improve my mind, and to prepare to be a good republican. I was peculiarly apt in the mysteries of arithmetic; wrote

a fine hand, and made a rapid progress in all my winter studies, until our schoolmaster declared it was a shame that such a rising genius should be buried in the country, and confined to the labors of an agricultural life. Accordingly, I persuaded my father to place me in a mercantile house in Boston, where my facilities with my pen and readiness at business, soon made me distinguished. I served my time with a very liberal master, who, when I was one and twenty, put me in as a supercargo to one of his vessels; and I made several profitable voyages both for myself and him. I believe I hit the true medium between meanness and extravagance; for though I always appeared well in company, and never failed to pay my shot in any necessary expenses, I yet took care not to involve myself in expenses beyond my means. If I was entrapped into a costly frolic, (which it was seldom,) I always came off with honor, but took special care for the future. I was soon enabled to set up for myself; my business was flourishing. I had a wholesale store in State street, and I was soon in a condition to offer myself as a respectable candidate for marriage. Many of the city belles, I verily believe, (I speak without vanity,) set their caps for me. At least, respectable fathers often invited me to dine; and wonderful conveniences were opened to me, to get acquainted with any lady I wished. But I preferred a humble connection from my native town. I married a girl, who,

like myself, had been brought up on a farm; but she had an improvable genius, a fine mixture of lady-like politeness and good housewifery; and, after a few months residence in the city, she became as accomplished as the best. These were the golden days of my prosperity. Like St. Paul at Rome, I lived in my own hired house; but my business was prosperous; my appearance was equal to that of other merchants. I had a frugal and affectionate wife, with no debts but such as I could pay, and a clear conscience according to the common measure of moral obligation.

In this course, I soon acquired something like forty thousand dollars; and I frequently proposed to my wife the expedient of building a house, and becoming lord of my own tenement; having the pleasure of saying that "I reside in a shelter from which no man could legally turn me out." But she always checked my vanity; reminded me that we were doing well now; told me how many merchants had failed by the extravagance of domestic expenses, and concluded with a quotation from Mr. John Rogers's poetry, where he tells his children not *to build their house too high.*

About this time, in the hey-day of my pecuniary prosperity, my prudent wife died; and after mourning for sometime with a husband's bitterness and brevity, I began to wipe away my tears and look around for another. My condition was altered; I

was now, comparatively a rich man, and I wanted a companion suited to my station. Accordingly, I married into one of the most aristocratic families in Boston. My new partner was a perfect lady. I had no reason to complain of her person or accomplishments; but she was as ignorant of economy as a child. In short, she began to incite me to do what I was too prone to perform already—to purchase a handsome house in the west end of the town.

It seems to be a sort of maxim among Bostonians, (at least the most superficial of them,) that a man must lay out half his estate in a house. If he is worth ten thousand dollars, he must spend five thousand on his habitation, and so on up to the highest opulence a man can obtain. I was worth about forty thousand dollars, and therefore calculated to expend twenty thousand on my house. [But, alas! experience always outruns the most rigid calculation.] I had supposed that even with such an expensive house, I should have twenty thousand dollars left for trade, and this with the credit, which is so liberally granted in our country, would enable me to rise to my expenses, and justify my splendor by my success. I bought my house—we entered it; and now began my career of splendor and misfortune. In the first place, no man buys a house without altering it a little. This cost me two thousand dollars; then I was obliged to purchase a new supply of furniture; new carpets for more spacious rooms, new chairs for new visitors;

and finally I was obliged to enlarge my domestic establishment in all respects; so that my expenses were multiplied to a fearful amount. In short, it was just as it was with my dress, when a boy in the country. If I stuck to my old clothes, all was frugal and of a piece; but if I bought a new coat, I must add a new waistcoat, and pantaloons, and a hat, and boots, until my whole person was renovated, and all parts refreshed except my poor purse.

To add to my misfortunes, just about this time my business became embarrassed. I had launched into some daring speculations, just as business was on the point of depression; and had I had at command my whole capital, I might have survived it. But you are aware that business has its turns of rise and depression, like the ebbing and flowing of the sea. Business was now on the wane; my speculations were bad, and my notes at the bank increased to a fearful amount. My name was on a great deal of bad paper; and I was obliged to lay a heavy mortgage on my house. I concealed my condition from my wife, and I considered it as a point of policy to shine out in my living and equipage as much as possible. But one morning, after we had entertained one of our most expensive parties, a man failed on whose paper was my name to a large amount. My creditors became suspicious, and the next day I was obliged to fail also. Our house was attached—the mortgage was sued—my wife was in tears, and my whole family in

the utmost distress. It was a blow from which I have never been able to recover. We were soon obliged to move into the country in the most abject poverty; and I write this account, that every man who purchases or builds a house, may learn wisdom from my mistakes; and not make the very roof which should protect him, the means of exposing his houseless head to exile and ruin.

C. NEEDHAM.

THE PURITAN.

No. 56.

It is clearly demonstrable, that the production of cotton depends not so much on soil and climate, as on the existence of domestic slavery. In the relaxing latitudes where it grows, not one half the quantity would be produced, but for the existence of this institution; and every practical planter will concur in the opinion, that if all the slaves in these States were now emancipated, the American crop will be reduced, the very next year, from 1,200,000 to 600,000 bales. No great skill in political economy will be required to estimate how enormously the price of cotton would be increased by this change, and no one who will consider how largely this staple contributes to the wealth of manufacturing nations, and to the necessaries and comforts of the poorer classes all over the world, can fail to perceive the disastrous effects of so great a reduction in the quantity, and so great an enhancement in the price of it. In Great Britain, France and the United States, the catastrophe would be overwhelming; and it is not extravagant to say, that for little more than two millions of negro slaves, cut loose from their tranquil moorings and set adrift upon the untried ocean of at least a doubtful experiment. ten millions of poor white people would be reduced to destitution, pauperism and starvation. An anxious desire to avoid the last sad alternative of an injured community, prompts this final appeal to the interests and enlightened philanthropy of our confederate States. And we cannot permit ourselves to believe, that our just demands, thus supported by every consideration of humanity and duty, will be rejected by States who are united to us by so many social and political ties, and who have so deep an interest in the preservation of that union.—*Gov. McDuffie's Message to South Carolina Legislature*, 1835.

I HAVE placed this motto at the head of my paper as an absolute curiosity. It is impossible for bur-

lesque to go beyond it. Indeed, it is precisely the instance which Montesquieu brings, in that sarcastic chapter which he has written on the origin of slavery. What the theoretic Frenchman says, as bitter, biting irony, our republican governor brings forward as sober, political truth. *Le sucre seroit trop cher si l'on ne faisoit, travailler la plante qui le produit par des esclaves.** So we must trample on the laws of God, and violate the rights of humanity, because, if we should attempt to respect them, sugar and cotton would become too dear.

I have hitherto avoided taking any part in the temporary questions which are now agitating the country throughout all its borders; because I wish my book to be the repository, only of those truths which are permanent, and which the mind of the reader may receive with the least prejudice and objection. But this motto contains a principle, (carried to be sure to its highest extreme, and therefore more proper to be made a monument,) which must prove the bane of all free government. It is setting expediency higher than moral principle; or rather *it is bringing an argument from expediency, not to modify but to overthrow the highest rule of righteousness.* This is the great error of our land; this is the bane of republicanism. For, as in a Russian house made for winter, you can only throw up the windows and diminish the battlements in safety, by increasing

* De L'Esprit Des Lois Livre xv. c. v.

the general mildness of the atmosphere; so with respect to government, you can only throw off the restraints of external power, by increasing the prevalence of deep principle in voluntary hearts. When interest is the criterion of wisdom, liberty will degenerate into despotism.

It has been observed by lord Coke, that corporations have no souls; and it would seem in all collective bodies, from the parish to the nation, that in most of their deliberations, the immortal nature of man, with all its wants and wishes, is forgotten. Man, in his private capacity, has a body and a spirit; and the sensualities of the first are infinitely inferior to the everlasting wants of the last. But when men are associated in political bodies, the high principles of a deathless spirit, seem to be lost in the transient regulations of a material life; and there seems to be a total divorce between politics and principle.

There is no science for which I feel a greater distrust, as to its details, and a deeper abhorrence, as to its general principles, than that of political economy —the great idol of the age. *Nebuchadnezzar the king, made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: and he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. * * * * Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations and languages, that, at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and*

all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up; and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, shall in the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Yet in despite of all the charms of this united music, and all the terrors of this flaming furnace, I must hesitate to fall before this golden image, more dazzling to the imagination, than conducive to the well-being of man.

In the first place, as to its induction—Is it so perfect as to lay the foundation of much certain knowledge? We will suppose, to please the modern politician, that trade is the great channel of public duty, and that beef and pudding are the supreme objects of national felicity. Still the investigations of the political economist, run into such an infinite number of infinitesimal items, as to elude the comprehension of the most careful mind in its most patient investigation. He will find his regulations have touched but the smaller part of the springs which move the wheels of the complex machine. There is a wisdom in nature, which any partial interference of man only disturbs and deteriorates; and as the water, dropped from the clouds, finds its way over the mountains, to the brooks and springs which conduct it over the earth, in obedience to pre-established laws, which the wisdom of man would in vain attempt to improve or destroy; so, I suspect, the interests of men, in marts and cities, in towns and nations, are balanced by a

wisdom, which we only disturb when we touch it. What should we say to a college of physicians, collected to devise means to keep up an equality in the birth of the sexes?

The uncertainty of the science, the differences amongst the highest authorities, increases the suspicion, that the inductions must be very imperfect among millions of facts where thousands of causes meet and mingle.

But it is the *spirit* of the science which is most deleterious. Its assumptions are not grounded on the true nature of man. It is not true that man becomes a sensual being as soon as he joins the body politic, and delegates his representatives in congress to take care of his sensual interests alone. The soul is the creature of principle; and there are principles never to be violated, however great the loss or the gain. In the scramble for wealth and power, which is daily increasing in some high quarters, and flowing like lava-torrents from the top of some ignited mountain to every quarter of the land, he is the valuable politician, who will dare to avow his reverence and respect for ETERNAL RIGHTEOUSNESS; and will own that expediency is not the predominating object in the code of a politician.

Republicanism has its tendencies; and one of them is to leap over the rules of right, for accomplishing gain. The only antagonist power to this dangerous propensity, is a reverence for justice to the

incurring of some loss. This is the last lesson learned by individuals; and nations need to be taught it still more. The famous anecdote of Aristides, illustrates the point at which I aim. When he refused to burn the fleet of an enemy, though highly advantageous to the public, because it was NOT RIGHT, he taught a lesson to all succeeding statesmen, more noble, more profitable too, than all the systems of political economy ever written. How great the mind into which such conceptions could enter! How noble the people who could support him! But it is no very criminal libel to say that Gov. McDuffie is not Aristides, and South Carolina is not Athens.

Indeed we are fast going down the hill which degrades human nature to the lowest competitions. Already politics has become a game of skill to secure a cunning interest. This is now avowed; and hypocrisy drops her mask because there is not reverence enough for virtue to induce her to wear it. The transition has been awful and rapid. We are a young people, with all the vices of a hoary empire on our heads.

THE PURITAN.

No. 57.

Still they were wise, whatever way they went.

Dryden.

It seems to be generally agreed, that our republic is in a perilous condition—commotions are heard of from every quarter. The supremacy of the laws is set aside; the statutes of justice and mercy are veiled, while the sovereign people signify their supreme will; and a short cut to rectitude, (or at least to vengeance,) seems now to be chosen by those who are impatient of the *law's delay*. A mob in a great city is a matter of course; and, even in Bundleborough itself, we have some thoughts of attempting one to pull down Mr. Needle's sign, whom we suspect of being a secret abolitionist. We have hardly materials enough for a genuine riot, but if we can turn out all the paupers from our workhouse; all the boys from our two *animal schools*, (as they were called in town-

meeting,) and all the scolds and termagants, we may make a pretty respectable mob, and be in the fashion, which is the glory of all towns.

The reason of this general agitation over our country, is a matter of some curiosity. What is it that has thus let loose the spirit of discord and disturbance, to break our own repose, and make us a reproach in the sight of other nations? Has the devil broke his chain? or has the angel, foretold in Revelation, to whom was given the key of the bottomless pit, come down and opened that horrid chasm, so that *there arises a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace?* Some cause has produced this fermented state of things, open or latent; a cause which, if sagacity could discover, wisdom might be employed to remove it.

We are told by physicians that there are some diseases of the body, for the origin of which we must look into the mind. They are caused by grief, or care, or depression; so that in these cases we must seek *a moral medicine for a mortifying mischief.* In the diseases of nations, a similar remark is sometimes true. For their outward faults, you must look into their ideal world. You must inquire into the state of religion and philosophy among them. You must inquire into the processes of education in schools and colleges. There the steam is generated, which moves the engine. There is a public soul; and its habits

and opinions will govern the body politic in all its material developments.

Now, if we look into the *ideal* of our own age and country, we shall find that its characteristic is, that no principle is fixed, no foundation is laid; a universal skepticism has seized the public mind as to every human interest, and not a corner-stone is laid in politics, religion, morals, or education. We are, to be sure, on the *verge* of a glorious millennium; the day of light and felicity is soon to dawn upon us; but this day is future, and all the light and splendor of it, only serves to throw darkness on the present hour. Our hopes are in discovery; we have nothing in possession. The description which Dr. Johnson has given of the age of Hudibras, is too faithful a picture of our own time. "It is scarcely possible," says he, "in the regularity and composure of the present, to imagine the tumult of absurdity and clamor of contradiction, which perplexed doctrine, disordered practice, and disturbed both public and private quiet, in that age when subordination was broken, and awe was hissed away; when any unsettled innovator, who could hatch a half-formed notion, produced it to the public; when every man might become a preacher, and almost every preacher could collect a congregation."

These must be considered as the tendencies of republicanism, and they can only be overcome by some opposite tendencies of a moral and voluntary kind.

I was a few days since conversing with a lawyer, and expressing my astonishment, considering the nature of our courts, that any culprit was ever brought to execution. I observed to him that crimes were always secret, and there must be evidence technically sufficient; then the justice must commit him; the grand jury must find a bill; the attorney general was intrusted with a vast deal of discretionary power; the traverse jury must be unanimous in their verdict; one man with a scruple in his mind may defeat their decision; then comes the motion for arrest of judgment, or for a new trial; the judge must pronounce sentence, and finally the executive power may grant a pardon. So many were the tripping stones in the way to justice, in the plainest cases. The lawyer replied it would be so, were it not that the very difficulty in the theory was counteracted by a moral spirit in the practice. Nay, the consciousness of this difficulty almost produced this reacting spirit. In like manner it seems to me, our only salvation from certain tendencies in republicanism, must come from a consciousness of them, and an antagonist spirit produced by that knowledge.

Republicanism has a tendency to rash innovation, and must be counteracted by a moral bearing the other way. It wants a stable philosophy, and a fixed and binding religion. Party spirit has existed ever since man has existed in the social state; and I have often thought it might be reduced, like the questions in

algebra, to a certain formula. Whatever the subject, political or religious, there are the innovators and conservatives, and these again are subdivided into divisions more or less developed, according to circumstances. There is your headlong innovators, root and branch men, radicals, enthusiasts, jacobins, or whatsoever name they assume, and the moderate innovators. So on the other side, the conservators are subdivided into two orders, more or less tenacious. Now the rectitude of these principles depends on circumstances. Our blessed Saviour was an innovator; but then we know from Josephus and other sources, it was in opposition to the phariseeism of the Jewish religion. Cicero was a conservative, but then it was in opposition to the corruptions of Rome, and the ambition of Cæsar. On understanding this formula, depends almost all the light we derive from history. One of the strongest proofs of the truths of the gospel, historically speaking, is seen by viewing this very question correctly. But however this may be, in this age monarchy and all its appendages fall into the favor and custody of the conservatives. Republicanism was born in innovation, and loves innovation. Innovation in politics; innovation in morals; innovation in principle; innovation in practice. We are on a whirling stream, sure to go fast, and not very sure whither we go. It is the spirit of this age that nothing is fixed. Every foundation totters, and every fundamental principle is disputed. Now, if you were

to see a great fleet, spreading all their canvass, throwing over their ballast and committing themselves to the wildest winds, you would see in visibles the invisible spirit of our times. We cannot entirely prevent it. But we may counteract it by a spirit of moral conservation. Let us lay the injunction on our youth; let us teach it to our children, that old principles tried by experience, are not lightly to be shaken. We have something to keep as well as to gain.

Some excellent men, in giving exhortations on this subject, have been deceived by the value of their object. They seem to think that by exhorting the young men in our colleges to cast off the chains of authority, they shall stimulate their powers, and make them original geniuses. One eminent writer has said, "that the chief object of past ages has been to rear prison walls around the human mind." I accept his metaphor, and would observe that these walls never imprisoned one original genius; they only serve as a test of his strength, by showing how easily he can leap over them; and, as to the majority of students, they were not born to expand the horizon of human knowledge. But, whatever we want in these days, we do not want less reverence for authority. There are too many who, with the unjust judge's moral character, have his dangerous intrepidity—I FEAR NOT GOD, NEITHER REGARD MAN.

THE PURITAN.

No. 58.

O gracious God! how far have we
Prophaned thy heavenly gift of poesy?
Made prostitute and profligate the muse,
Debased to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordained above,
For tongues of angels and for hymns of love.

Dryden.

A SOUND and healthful literature is so necessary to the good morals of a country, that it should be supported by all the dictates of a just criticism; and by literature, I mean not the elaborate volumes, which please a few in their closets, but those light and readable pages which fly, like scattered blossoms, to every part of our land. The number is very few who form their opinions from deep examination. Some phantom of fancy, some spark, blown on the winds of chance, strikes the vacant and youthful mind, awakes the imagination, combines with their passions, and ripens into a confirmed belief. There

are thousands of vain girls, who have extracted their theology from novels, and equally vain gentlemen, who have received their whole code of ethics from the mouth of a player.

For this reason, I have always thought it a matter of gratitude that the English language has so much excellent poetry. Perhaps there is no tongue under heaven, in which so much solid truth is arrayed in such attractive verse. Spenser has dressed all the moral virtues in pleasing allegories; Fletcher sung the mysteries of redemption; Sir John Davis proves to us the immortality of the soul, in better arguments (it must be confessed) than poetry. Drummond and Crashaw give us the raptures of mystic and meditative devotion. And to come to later times, who ever united so much devotion with so much poetry, as Dr. Watts! for I must dissent from the criticism of Dr. Johnson on the great man—great he certainly was; great as a Christian, and great as a poet; to prove which, I would only propose this one test—the difficulties which his genius overcame. When a poet sings of love and rapture; of moonlight walks and bright eyes; of smelling flowers and gushing streams; of the tender meeting and the parting agony, he touches a sensual chord, and his very subject does half his work for him. His very terms intoxicate the host of youths and virgins that gather around his song. Not so the poet that touches on the solemn themes of devotion. There the bent of nature is

against him, and he must kindle his fire with green wood on the frozen wilds of the forest. We owe much to those authors, who have employed melody on the side of virtue and religion. They had a hard task to execute; they had to disjoin ideas long associated, and to awaken the cold admiration of reluctant readers. They cultivated frankincense in Greenland.

The fashionable poetry of the present day, is what may be denominated morbid poetry; and as it is, or at least has been, (for there are some symptoms of the dawning of a better day,) infatuating the sensitive youth of our land, let me give its characteristics.

Now the mark of morbid poetry is not that it is drawn from the depths of nature, as some of its manufacturers pretend, nor that it is the result of strong feeling; but that it comes from a mind introspective and inverted; a mind nervous and moody; that dwells among its own musings; a mind in as unnatural a state as can be imagined. Hence in morbid poetry you will find strong feelings produced by no adequate cause. I am no enemy to strong feeling; the author may touch the deepest tones of the heart; he may pour forth his strains of rapture and agony, if he will only assign a sufficient cause for them, and make his hero feel as most other people would feel in similar circumstances. This is the aim of wisdom, and the triumph of real genius. But when he introduces a moody gentleman, such as God never made

and earth never saw; when he makes him in deep anguish without any calamities; seeking he knows not what, and disappointed at the loss of that which never existed; when it is his sole aim and delight "to bring a lover, a lady, and a rival, into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture, and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolical joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered;"* when this is the case, I must think that such poetry is the sickly progeny of a sickly sire; and if it becomes so by imitation or affectation, why this only makes the fault worse. For of all diseases, voluntary sickness is the most disgusting.

Perhaps these remarks might be illustrated by an example. Of all the characters which Shakspeare has drawn, none comes so near the introspective and excessively meditative, as Hamlet. He is sad and solitary; he almost approaches to insanity before he feigns it; and yet, though Hamlet is actually diseased, nothing is further from morbid poetry, than the whole drama which paints his character. It is the very bloom and efflorescence of sound and healthful nature; and why? Because there is an adequate cause for

* Dr. Johnson's Preface to Shakspeare.

all Hamlet's feeling. We see great events acting on a fair specimen of human nature. The reader feels if he were young, had lost a father, and were perplexed as to the character of a mother; and, above all, were he met by an awful messenger from the supernatural world, he would feel and act as Hamlet does. But what a wide difference between the meditations of Hamlet and those of some of the heroes of lord Byron!

Some writers are deceived into this faulty poetry, by looking for strong feeling in a wrong direction. They look for it within; they think to move our sympathy by increasing the sensitiveness of their heroes, rather than by exciting natural emotions by great events. Hence they surround themselves with splendid haloes of their own creation; plunge into the dark and mystical; and speculate, and feel as they hope none ever speculated and felt before.

> Such minds do love the marvellous too well
> Not to believe it.

Hence the poems of Dana, though rich in description, and crowded with sentiment, must fail to strike a sympathetic string in the general breast; and hence, in the productions of Coleridge, we find so many traces of genius and opium.

Having thus spoken of poetry, I shall now, like some other authors, give a specimen which violates my own criticism. Of all the inverted states of mind

which a man feels in common life, perhaps none are more morbid, than when he is thoroughly home-sick. When I was in college, I went out one winter vacation to keep school in a village in Connecticut. I was young, moody, among strangers, and hated my occupation. One fair moonlight evening in winter, I walked out on the shore of Long Island Sound, to lament my cruel fate, i. e. the cruel fate of being obliged to do something for my living; and, seated on a little eminence, indulged in the feelings which generated the following lines.

A THOUGHT OF HOME.

Reposed in caverns dark and drear,
The nothern tempest sleeps awhile;
Old winter, in his frowns severe,
Old frowning winter deigns to smile.

On a lorn hill, whose snowy height
Seems reared the storms and seas to brave,
I sit—companion of the night,
And listener to the breaking wave.

From home removed, 'midst strangers cast,
While hopes excite, or fears benumb,
I think of pleasant moments past,
Or happier moments yet to come.

I live—they're here—strong memory speaks,
Anticipation brings her store;
With bounding heart and burning cheeks,
I feel the joys once felt before.

The plain for sport, the bower for love,
Where youth or boyhood used to go;
The elms that spread their arms above—
The rapid brook that ran below.

The shaded pond—the laboring mill,
To which the salt creek winding strayed—
The spire beyond the savin hill—
The ancient school-house, half decayed;

All, all are here—I am not blind,
Not duped by fancy's flattering zeal;
'Tis not the mockery of the mind;
'Tis something that I deeply feel.

My mother! o'er the distant stile,
'Tis she! she looks—she now is near;
I *guess* her by that heavenly smile—
I *know* her by that bursting tear.

My sister! dost thou near me stand,
And every doubt and cloud remove?
Do I not press thy offered hand,
And kiss the lips of chastest love?

My father! at that sacred name,
With reverence, love and awe I bow;
I fill anew the filial flame,—
'Twas duty once, but rapture now.

Friends! how they haste with generous zeal,
The wanderer on his way to meet;
They smile upon me, and I feel
The sum of happiness complete.

Where am I? All the charm is o'er:
No father, friends or sister nigh;
The wave beats lazy on the shore;
The wind sighs loud and passes by.

THE PURITAN.

No. 59.

His anger moral and his wisdom gay.

Pope.

In this paper, I design to give a sketch-like view of those illustrious predecessors, whose footsteps I am endeavoring to follow in humble imitation.

Cotton Mather, quoting Basil, mentions a certain art of drawing many doves, by anointing the wings of a few with a fragrant ointment, and so sending them abroad, that by the fragrancy of the ointment, they may allure others into the house. There are a certain class of writers, whose object it is to fill up men's minds and spare time, and to allure them to goodness, not merely by the ponderous truths of theology, or the deep arguments of philosophy, but by the fragrance of those intellectual wings, with which they wake the fancy and infold the heart.

I have already mentioned Addison. After some

considerable interval, followed the illustrious author of the Rambler. Of a work so well known, it may be both difficult and needless to say any thing new, or which has not a thousand times been presented to the reader's mind. It is a book, which is always the delight of young students in colleges, when they begin to write themes; because it has exactly the unbusiness-like style, which the mind relishes and craves when it writes solely for criticism; but our admiration of Johnson almost always abates with the progress of life. His false antithesis, his uniform roll of sentence, his pomposity and pendentry have often been pointed out, and severely censured; yet, after all his errors, where is the man, who like him, can chain the attention to mere didactic discussion without the aid of narrative? Criticism, with me, I have already remarked, is an affair of feeling; and if I were to be called to watch with a sick man, where the object was to sit in idleness and repell sleep, and if a narrative volume were prohibited, I would certainly take a volume of the Rambler.

He has certainly his weak points; his allegories I always pass over; though all Addison's are excellent. His wit is much what we may suppose his dancing would have been, had he, as was reported of him, taken lessons of Vestris. His pictures of life and manners are rather clumsy; and his women are strange formal phantoms, such as earth never saw and I hope never will see. But when he writes a paper on the

misery of man, the vanity of life and the solemnities of a death-bed, he warbles out his groans with the sweetest melody, and I am sure to follow his eloquence though his philosophy should lead me to despair. His criticisms, too, if not always true, are always supremely beautiful.

It has been lamented by some serious people, that both he and Addison, when they touch with so much felicity, on some of the parts of religion, had not more clearly seen, or more clearly displayed the central truth—the terms of our acceptance with the Deity. There are expressions in both these great writers, on this point, which every evangelical reader wishes away. But we should consider in all works, the writer's end; and what would have been the condition of English literature if Addison and Johnson had had the principles of Voltaire and Rousseau!

Τόσσον ἔνερθ' ἀΐδεω, ὅσσον οὐρανός ἐς' ἀπὸ γαίης.

Scarcely had Johnson finished his Rambler, when Dr. Hawkesworth began his renowned work. The Adventurer was partly written by Johnson, and in most of its pages closely imitates him. But it is not as an imitator that Hawkesworth's best excellence appears. His peculiar brightness, as it appears to me, is the skill with which he can construct some natural story to illustrate some moral principle. I recollect

one which began in thoughtless lying and ended in a fatal duel.

The Mirror has all the characteristics of the man who has been called the Scotch Addison. Indeed the author of the Man of Feeling, could not fail of producing an interesting periodical. His book, I should suppose, must be a favorite with the ladies; and most youthful eyes, like mine, have probably wept over the stories of *Sir Edward* and *La Roche*. This writer is inexpressibly tender and delicate. But this is his chief praise. His natural tenderness supplies the place of deeper principle; and there are few of our popular writers who have so seldom bound their precepts on the conscience, by the strong sanctions of revealed religion.

I have not space to characterize the World, the Looker-on, the Lounger, the Connoisseur, and various other volumes written with various ability, and destined to oblivion, from their very number, perhaps, rather than their want of merit. But one I must notice—Cumberland's Observer; a periodical paper only in name; but a beautiful repository of literary history and criticism. His criticism, however, too often revolves on one pivot, and that fixed in a wrong position. In analyzing a drama, he always turns a very scrutinizing eye on the probability of the fable—the last thing I think of when I read a play; for I agree with Mr. Puff, in Sheridan's Critic—"O lud, Sir, if people who want to listen, or overhear, were

not always connived at in a tragedy, there would be no carrying on any plot in the world." There is no end to such criticism.

From British writers let us turn to those of our own land; and here the first shape that meets us, is the renowned Franklin. His good sense taught him, to write to the circumstances and wants of his own country, and hence instead of conjuring up the aristocratic images of a foreign land, and painting them in colors which had already been exhausted, he remembered that he dwelt among the farmers and tradesmen of an infant country—all of them free and equal, and all struggling for a subsistence; and hence he teaches them the lessons of frugality and economy. He was the first American author who possessed the *patavinity of morals;* and in this respect his sagacity, his originality, his rustic wit and household wisdom, are equal to all antiquity and above all praise. His style, too, is the happiest for his purpose imaginable. It is a great pity, that in addition to his life and essays, another little volume, consisting of his beauties, (and his essence is in his beauties,) has not been collected. If a man could believe prudence to be the sum of virtue, could live as Franklin did, to be eighty years old, and then return, as Franklin wished, to live his life over again, then this great writer's morality would be all existence could wish, or conscience demand. But if there be

such a thing as religion, then —— But I must conceal my severe censures, and spare the venerable dead.

The high praises bestowed by the Edinburgh Review, on the works of Dickinson, led me to an impatient search after the FARMER'S LETTERS; and I must say, I read them with disappointment. Though the author assumes with great parade, the character of a practical man, yet the reader may judge of the justice of that claim, by his pretending to plough with a little child riding on the beam; which is very sentimental. His tale of a gibbeted negro in the southern States, is so horrible, that the reader is compelled to disbelieve it; his style is redundant, and he labors hard at the vain effort of making backwoodsmen happy, and log-houses picturesque. These foreign critics are doubly unjust; they know not how to praise us.

There was a couple of volumes published in Massachusetts some forty years ago, called the MORAL MONITOR, not wholly unworthy of notice. As another follower in the bright succession, we may notice Dennie, who refused "to beat down mud walls with roses," but whose papers were a selection of roses collected in a golden string. People as old as I am, will remember some other fugitive names, which had only an ephemeral existence. Such as the GLEANER, supposed to be written by a clergyman's wife, and too foolish to be approved by any body; the GOSSIP, in a Magazine published in Boston thirty years ago, con-

sidered as the work of the same hand, and bearing marks of equal folly. The ORDEAL, in a paper called the Emerald, was a far more respectable production. But all its merits could not redeem it from oblivion.

> Purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro
> Languescit moriens, lassove papavera collo
> Demisere caput, pluvia cum forte gravantur.

But one of the best of these writers, and one who has placed the lighter morals on their only solid foundation, and that too in a sweet and playful style, is Mr. Sampson, the author of the BRIEF REMARKER. This author has not contented himself in dealing out moral truisms, nor has he plunged into a dazzling deluge of perverse originality. He has some penetrating remarks on human nature, and many of his papers are beautiful, original and just. I am sure my commendation is impartial; for I know the man only from his book.

Thus have I endeavored to do justice to all my predecessors, so far as I know them. My book comes after, like a humble servant to the illustrious train. I could wish such pleasing themes had fallen into more skilful hands; but if Mr. Everett will condescend to be governor; if Dr. Channing and Dr. Beecher will waste their energies on temporary controversies; if Mr. Irving will write semi-novels, and Mr. Paulding exaggerated caricatures for satires—

why then the *moral* and the *permanent* must fall into such hands as those of John Oldbug. I say—JOHN OLDBUG.

Phœbus! what a name!
To fill the speaking trump of future fame.

THE PURITAN.

No. 60.

Now Mr. Great-heart was a strong man; so he was not afraid of a lion.
Pilgrim's Progress.

Behold! I have reached my last number. After having long been tossed by the billows and beaten by the tempest, I am at last sailing by the buoy of Point Alderton, and have the prospect of casting my anchor, for a quarantine, by Rainsford's island. I mean, I am about closing my book; and it requires no small share of intrepidity to deliver the offspring of one's brain, to this cold and censorious world. I *am* afraid of the lions. In anticipation I hear them roar already; and fancy I can see the critics devouring my harmless pages, with that merciless spirit with which they can at once gratify their hunger and satiate their revenge.

But I am not answerable for consequences; and the first thing I have to tell the reader, is, that time

has intercepted my purposes; and many things, which I designed to have put into my volumes, have slipped through my fingers and are gone—probably forever. Whether this be thy sorrow or mine, I must tell thee that I intended to have described my aunt Hannah's death-bed; to have made much more use of my uncle Gideon; to have invited thee to a husking; to have talked more about that New England feast—a thanksgiving; to have given the history of a debt; to have told thee some capital stories, related by my grandfather, about the Indians; to have brought up New England manners and incidents, in more vivacious pictures than any I have yet been able to paint. I had some flowers, at the bottom of my basket, more sweet, more fair, than any I have yet presented thee. But, alas! how do our designs shrivel in the execution! My last hour has come; and, instead of weaving new narratives, I must give my closing advice.

Remember then, my friendly reader, who hast thus followed me patiently to my last page, that thou art a REPUBLICAN; thy duties, like those of all other men, arise from thy station; and there are certain tendencies in republicanism, which will certainly upset our happiness, unless they are resisted by an antagonist spirit. You have observed, no doubt, that many things preserve their position by balancing. Hold up a pair of scales, for example; see two boys tilting on a rail; see Signor Blitz, walking the slack rope, (if that is among his jugglings, for I have never

seen this *thaumaturgus* work his wonders,) consider a ship loaded with iron; or rise to the planets, revolving in their orbits; and you will find that every thing keeps its place, and sounds its notes in concord with the universal harmony, by the counteracting influence of two opposite powers. Republicanism tends to ambition; offering the prizes of office to all, it diffuses the cravings of that dangerous passion, through all the ranks of life. All hate to work and love to rule. This then must be counteracted by an antagonist spirit; and as powerful as the tendency to which it is opposed. Need I tell you that the spirit is religion? a religion which enforces humility—ambition's balance and ambition's cure. Republicanism tends to self-glorification;—the will of the people—a free, enlightened community! the last great empire! a people capable of self-government! a wonderful people!

> Columbia! Columbia! to glory arise!
> The queen of the world and the child of the skies.

These visions, for aught I know proper in their place, can only be overcome by opening a book which tells us in rather plain language—that *men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie.* Republicanism tends to excitement and disorganization; and therefore the counter-spirit must be strict subordination in schools and families. Heaven deliver us, I say, from republican schools and families;

there every master and father must and shall be king; and here let me advise you, attentively to peruse Sir William Temple's account of the Netherlands. The Dutch were a wise people. They understood liberty. They were the first who resisted oppression on consistent principles, and they long preserved it. Now their peculiarity was, that while their theory and public system was very free, it was overcome, in its tendencies to excess, by the strictest system of domestic manners, and by the severest municipal regulations. Republicanism tends to make men unsocial —to alienate them into factions. As Dr. Goldsmith says—

> That independence Britons prize so high,
> Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie.

How much more is this true of Americans! Every thing is here addressed to the *many;* and the proverb tells us that *many* men have many minds. Shakspeare, who, with all his genius, I fear, was no true republican, has described the disposition of the many with too much severity. In Corolanus, he makes one of the honest citizens say—*We have been called so* (i. e. the many headed multitude) *of many; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald; but that our wits are so diversely colored; and truly, I think, if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south; and this consent of one direction, would be at*

once to all points of the compass.—Corolanus, Act II. scene 3. Indeed we find we have always something to quarrel about. A candidate, a tariff, a new law, an old one, masonry or anti-masonry, colonization or abolitionism, a bank or a bridge, a foreigner or a fool. Even in my dear native town, Bundleborough, we always had our factions. Squire Wilson wanted a new road, and Col. Crane would oppose it; Tom Long wanted a license, and some of the selectmen would say he should not have it; the singers would quarrel, or Dr. Snivelwell would threaten to ask a dismission; in short, we had something to keep us in commotion year in and year out.

> Difficulty is behind, fear is before;
> When he gets up the hill he hears the lions roar;
> A Christian man is never long at ease;
> When one fright's gone, another doth him seize.

The counter spirit to this, is great meekness and benevolence. An obstinate man makes a sad republican.

Nor must a man be blown about by every shifting wind of doctrine. Republicanism is naturally an innovator, and we want some discreet conservatives. The truth is, in our whirl-a-gig times, a wise man must bend, like the tree, to recover himself when the wind is over. He must resemble the nave of a wheel—not a worse knave—which turns gently with the circumference; conforms, but preserves its centre;

turns, but turns less, and connects its swiftest motion with the progress of the vehicle. Such are the politicians we want, and such should be our citizens.

But, above all things, in the perilous times which I foresee are coming, (perilous I say, but not clearly destructive,) if you are a good man, preserve your sincerity. Bring out the individuality of your character; and never shrink from the roaring of the popular lions of the day. When I have gone to a public meeting, and heard some of our flaming orators, puffing and blowing, and rolling out hyperboles, which must be figures of speech to save them from being LIES, I have said—but I am afraid to tell what I have said. I have said it to my wife and children; and thanks be to the Father of mercies, the freedom of speech still lingers around the fireside.

My last paragraph shall be to explain a hard word. I have used the word *antithesis;* and by it, I mean *that* which cannot be understood without its correlative opposite; as light without darkness, heat without cold, matter without spirit, and spirit without matter; and so, reader, take my explanation, and my last

FAREWELL.