

SHAKESPEARE AND OTHER LECTURES

GEORGE DAWSON M.A.





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# SHAKESPEARE

## AND OTHER LECTURES

BY

GEORGE DAWSON, M.A.

EDITED BY

GEORGE ST CLAIR, F.G.S.

"Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a viol the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them,"—JOHN MILTON.

"There is first the literature of *knowledge*, and secondly the literature of *power*. The function of the first is to *teach*, the function of the second is to *move*: the first is a rudder, the second an oar or a sail."—THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

LONDON :

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1888.

'*Sir Thomas More*.—How peaceably they stand together—Papists and Protestants, side by side.

"*Montesinos*.—Their very dust reposes not more quietly in the cemetery. Ancient and Modern, Jew and Gentile, Mohammedan and Crusader, French and English, Spaniards and Portuguese, Dutch and Brazilians, fighting their old battles, silently now, upon the same shelf."

R. SOUTHEY'S *Colloquies*.



## P R E F A C E.

---

EVER since the publication of Mr Dawson's "Biographical Lectures," friends have been asking for others, which they remembered hearing in their delivery; and thus has been prompted the preparation of the present volume.

The volume contains lectures and speeches—some delivered in earlier years, some in later, and differing considerably in style and merit; but the greater disparities are more owing to the reporter than the speaker. When a lecture is reported by Miss Beauclerc—as is the case with the one on the Shadow of Death—we have a near approach to fulness and accuracy; but some of the newspaper reports are mere fragments which have missed what was most characteristic, and are only included because they serve as connecting links.

In the preparation of the book I have had, as before, the invaluable help of Miss Beauclerc in collating and transcribing. The volume, we know, will be acceptable to Mr Dawson's old friends; and we trust it will be found bracing and helpful to young people.

The Editor has supplied the foot-notes.

GEO. ST CLAIR.

BIRMINGHAM, *November* 1887.

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## THE INSPIRATION OF SHAKESPEARE.

AN ORATION GIVEN AT MANCHESTER, APRIL 23, 1846.

I APPEAR before you to-day in a novel situation—that of delivering an oration on England's great bard, William Shakespeare; but I think it would be well if we had such a celebration annually. It would be well, I think, to substitute the celebration of the birthday of the greatest of our great ones, for that of such occurrences as the Gunpowder Plot.

Much as has been said and written on Shakespeare, one thing, I think, has been sadly neglected—the relation in which he, as well as all great geniuses, poets, and others stand to God Himself. There is a kind of blushing, apologetic air about religious people when they take up their Shakespeare. Much dislike even is manifested to Shakespeare and kindred spirits. But Shakespeare always has been read, notwithstanding the little criticisms of little minds. We thank God for the gladsome sunshine, the vernal season, and similar blessings; we thank Him for victories gained in warfare, but none seem to think of thanking God for genius and for its victories gained over bigotry, irreligion, and superstition. Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto were in their time more or less at variance with the Church, and our own great poets have more or less stood antagonistic to the Church; but it does not follow that they were not imbued with the spirit of Christianity. In early ages men were not possessed of the mock modesty prevalent now-a-days about religion and the poets. How has the modern opinion as to inspiration been adopted? It is thought if we teach that a poet is inspired, we shall make God answerable for all his faults or follies. Inspiration from God is denied to Shakespeare, because of his problematical deer-stealing, his roistering and his acting; but does any inspiration preserve its recipient from all sin and error? According to our common theology, inspiration is of two kinds; it comes only from the

source of good, or from the source of evil. How shall we know from which source came Shakespeare's, or any other's, inspiration? Mainly by observing to which they tend. Passing by some small carping critics who point to some passages in the great bard as objectionable, who will say that Shakespeare's writings come from below? I say that they teach a pure faith, they teach religiousness of spirit, faith in humanity, love to God, and they teach a reverent interpretation of Nature. If these, then, are the things Shakespeare's writings contain, if this be the result, then, I say, their source and origin is clear. If the fire of genius points to God, if its apex be upward, then it has borrowed its flame from the Great Spirit of the Universe.

The doctrine of inspiration has its technical use: but it is not for me to enter at present upon the inspiration of the writers of the Bible. What is Nature but the garment, the texture in which the Invisible is hidden from the mortal? God has woven for Himself in Nature the veil which makes it safe for the mortal to commune with the immortal. Nature then is said to be an inspiration of the Almighty. The Scriptures go further,—they say—“In God we live, and move, and have our being,”—that is, we are enveloped by God—the very atmosphere we breathe is divine. If, therefore, the inanimate things of Nature be inspired by the Almighty, then must genius and intellect be also inspired by God. If God be immediately present in the theologian, and in Creation—if the lowliest flower in Nature were not but for Him—then, I say, He must be immediately present also in the movements of genius, whether manifested in poetry or music, in painting or sculpture—in Beethoven, when he produced his glorious symphonies; in Michel Angelo, in his sublime carvings; and also in our great Bard, seeing that he wrote for humanity, and became the high priest of the true and noble, for all times;—present in him, consecrating him with his anointing finger, to this, one of the highest missions that man ever had to accomplish.

It is admitted that God must be immediately present in the creation of the first man, in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and in the teachings of the Church; but people will only admit God to be dimly present, or very remote, or originating a curious chain of intermediate causes, to bring forward the development of the poet, the artist, the sculptor, or the musician. Is it not absurdity

to deny that the great poet is possibly a minister of God? The ancients had a god for every class of inspiration; but these modern men are left fairly in a difficulty. According to modern notions, God's inspiration comes only upon priests, divines, and the writers of theological books; and his Spirit is only to be found in temples. In this view, there is no source for Shakespeare's inspiration. The inspiration of Shakespeare is, according to them, not good enough to have emanated from God: verily, it is not bad enough to be assigned to the devil; so it hangs, Mohammed's-coffin-like, between heaven and earth.

But the time is coming when this will be changed, and we shall no longer have, like Mrs Montague, to be the *apologists* for Shakespeare. What I would recommend is, that we strive to do away with that worship which is wholly theological on the one hand, and strive against what is wholly geniistic on the other. I would claim for the painter, the sculptor, the musician, and the poet, if each be true to his mission, pure-minded and pure-hearted, only developed by varied manifestations—the teaching of the same Spirit. Each sets forth one of those many inspirations of the Almighty by which He teaches his children of the earth their needful knowledge. Music, the drama, sculpture, and poetry, are objective forms in which God exhibits some of his ideas.

The rationalistic, the cold and the Scotch-logic philosophers, are opposed to these things. I argue, however, that the poet, the musician, and the sculptor, each teaches the kingdom of heaven. For every kind of soul, its proper ministrant is supplied. I grant to the theologian the inspiration to which he lays claim; but I say that God has, by poets, by sculptors, and by musicians, taught the world the same sublime lessons in an altered key, in a different tone. As the Master likened the kingdom of heaven to a long series of things, so that minds of different kind might each realize the idea by the similitude best adapted to them,—so poets, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are all teachers of the kingdom of heaven, under different parables; each teaching in his own language, righteousness and peace, love to God and man, the worship of the holy, the noble, the beautiful, and the true. In this way God is unwitnessed to none of his children. I look upon every one who teaches the truth as a most worthy successor of the apostles.

The occasional erring of a poet does not show that he is not a

man after the heart of the great Inspiring Spirit. Let small critics say their worst against Shakespeare,—let them select, as some of the reviewers do, all the bad parts of the book, still, as the adultery and murder of David did not prevent his being “a man after God’s own heart,” neither can they prove that our great Bard was not also “a man after God’s own heart.” As they fail to prove that the Hebrew king, with all his sins, was not, after all, “a man after God’s own heart,” so they fail to prove that Shakespeare did not draw the inspiration of his writings from God. As of old men were shown that God directed the minutest details of the building and adorning of the Hebrew temple, and the selection of cunning workmen and embroiderers; so now He is present, selecting from musicians, those who shall lead the sublime choirs of humanity; from amongst poets, those who shall hymn the songs of the Church,—thus showing Himself the artist’s God, the poet’s inspirer, the musician’s spiritual guide, the giver of theological laws, the ruler of political order, the teacher of social wisdom, and the deviser and designer not only of the sublime temple, but of its adornments, and even of the variegated and parti-coloured veils that for a time hide the coming age from us men of the outer court, from us the progressive worshippers of the Holy and the True. The great heroes have been the arms of God, the great poets the syllables through which the Almighty teaches man; by the artist God embodies for humanity the great things He would have painted here, and the sculptor renders objective some of those great and mystic things which he has received from the God of order and beauty, the God who painted Nature, and is the source and originator of all that advances man, and all that smooths the rugged path of life, and all that excites in us high and noble emotions.

I claim, therefore, for all these great men inspiration, and in doing so, I do not interfere with the special inspiration of the apostle, the evangelist, and the divine.

I am glad I have been able, at such an hour, on such a day, in such a busy place, and for such a purpose, to segregate you from your ordinary pursuits, to get you away for a short time from the busy concerns of life, and to induce you to think, during an hour of academic quietness, of one whose name will live, when even this great commercial town may be buried in the ruins and the



decays of time, and whose genius has offered a true holocaust of peace-offerings and sin-offerings and burnt-offerings, upon the altars of humanity, whence incense may ascend for ever unto the holiest of the Holy. If the alternatives were placed before us, either to give up our Anglo-Indian empire, or the works of Shakespeare, I am satisfied that none of us would hesitate which we would have. We should be for having left to us the great high priest of intellect.

## H A M L E T.

### I.

I NEED not spend any time in laudations of the great poet Shakespeare, for every man who has read or thought concerning him has left his tribute to his greatness and catholicity. A tribute to Shakespeare's greatness is seen in the earnest anxiety with which men seek to gain his suffrages, and bring him over to their side. He was a Roman Catholic, a Pyrrhonist, a Theist, and a Church of England man. Recently, we have seen *Hamlet* lifted up as a frightful example, a scourge and a warning against Pyrrhonism and doubting. The fact is, Shakespeare was not sectarian; he pleaded nobody's mission, he stated nobody's cause. He has written with a view to be a mirror of things as they are; and shows the office of the true poet and literary man, which is to re-create the soul of man as God has created it, and human society as man has made it. For it is not enough that the world lie out as created; the poet and the artist must so translate the hidden beauty and truth of Nature, as more readily to call up, in us inferior men, the quickening emotions which the primitive colours have stirred in them.

The writers upon Shakespeare are divided into two classes—the critics and the disciples; those who believe themselves to have attained, and those who believe themselves to have much to learn; those who go to see whether the instructor comes up to their standard, and those who go to be taught. This generation sides mainly with the critical school; but with regard to Shakespeare we have, following the great German critics, come into the disciples' school. This school holds that Shakespeare must always be supposed to be right until he is proved beyond gainsaying to be wrong. The preceding age, amongst whom were Johnson and Voltaire, looked down upon Shakespeare, assuming to be his master, dismissing him with sublime contempt or lofty pity. The true critic, however, regards the great works of art and literature,

as something like the works of Nature. And there is nothing impious in saying that the great works of man are in some senses greater than the great works of Nature; for wherever soul can mark itself there is a footmark more glorious and nearer to God than any appearance of spirit and mind simply working in a material form. In the old days they did not hesitate to ascribe inspiration to God as its source; but in these days we are afraid to acknowledge any *afflatus* beyond what can be given by phrenological development, logical sequences, or metaphysical goings. Whether this should be, that we should read that "every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of Lights," and yet hesitate to recognise in his greatest children his immediate presence—this remains not yet understood. Where reverence for a great man arises, there discipleship necessarily comes; and this is the spirit in which Shakespeare should be approached. We must look upon the great man of every kind, as being so one with Nature that we are not to be allowed to criticise his works until they are understood, and we can show them to be deviations from the normal law we have made out. When this is not the case, we must presume the poet always to be right; and the fault to be in ourselves, if we cannot understand him. Such was the spirit in which the German critics approached Shakespeare, and while Johnson and Steevens got little from him, *their* humanity was rewarded by getting more from him than he was himself conscious was there. For the greatest works of men of genius are not those of which they are most conscious. The orator, the poet, and the musician will tell of many striking passages that have come from them as impersonal utterances flowing through them and not from them.

The first general canon, then, for the interpretation and study of Shakespeare is, that he is always right, and those who differ from him are always wrong. The second is, that when a student comes to any passage which he cannot understand, it is simply an invitation to study it till he can understand it. The world has never been able to leave Shakespeare behind. Other authors and other books become out of date, and are only curious as illustrations of dead matters—they become things of archæology, rather than things of living study. But no student of Shakespeare was ever yet able to leave him behind, or forget him: no man ever

found, in coming back to Shakespeare, that he did not come with a new power to understand. As the student deepens in wisdom, the abundant wisdom of Shakespeare becomes more revealed; the world's accumulation of knowledge does but make Shakespeare more loved, more modern, and more new.

John Kemble said once that in every copy of Shakespeare, the part most thumbed was *HAMLET*; and that is so, just as in a copy of the Bible, the blue and gold of the binding is most defaced where David's Psalms and the Gospels occur. The noblest kind of binding a book can have, is to be worn dark by the fingers of those who have studied it well. As a drama, *HAMLET* is not the best; as a tale, it is not the most tragic: but it is the play that men have most loved wherever English is the native tongue. *HAMLET* is, of all Shakespeare's plays, the least dependent upon stage effect or objective representation. And no play will tax our discipleship like this; for there are passages which we can hardly see to be right, or find from what point of view Shakespeare regarded them. I propose to refer to what appear to be the most difficult passages of the play, and these will be found to be such as relate to the more intricate workings of the human mind.

I will start with the character of Hamlet himself. First, you must get your minds clear of that popular portrait of Hamlet, as played by one of the Kembles—a romantic-looking youth, dark-eyed, dark-haired. Hamlet was nothing of the sort. He was a Teuton proper—so much so, that some have even said that Shakespeare intended the characters of Macbeth, Hamlet, and Shylock to be the exponents of race; Hamlet standing forth as the personification of the Teutons, Macbeth as a personification of the Celts, and Shylock as a personification of the Hebrew race. I do not think Shakespeare had any intention of the kind, for this notion about races is comparatively new-fangled and modern; but that Shakespeare, knowing Hamlet to be a Teuton, made him a Teuton, is abundantly clear. What has your dark-haired, romantic-looking hero, with a touch of the brigand about him, to do with Scandinavia? Thinking, pondering, speculating, refined, thoughtful—what has that to do with the Italian race, the Roman type, or the Celtic variety? Hamlet was yellow-haired, blue-eyed, large-bodied, inclining, as the Teuton race did, to bigness and

coarseness. He went to scale well ; and (it may be a vulgar test) you will find that, other things being equal, nations that weigh well are sure to be at the top of the world. With Hamlet's physical peculiarities, his mental characteristics are in accord—an addiction to reflection, a very large well-developed interior life, a perpetual gazing into the internal life, conscience as the test of all things, conscience as against tradition, conscience as against formal religion, conscience as against priests and their laws—the liberty of man, the privileges of the soul as against all corporations, and churches, and rules, and traditions, and laws. Teutonic people were very subjective, to use their own phrase, and their imaginations, their inner life, were as real, or more real, to them, than what their senses taught, or what came from without. But their manners were rough, their habits often coarse, their physique big, their tongues not always polished. If these things are well kept in mind, the *Hamlet* of Shakespeare will be better understood.

Hamlet has been very differently construed, for, while some have made him out to be one of the greatest of men, others regard him as a poor ungoverned man, whose intellect carried him away, and who lacked will, power, and force. His greatness was in one certain sphere of the mind, and not in others. His will was lacking. He was not a man of that strong energetic will, that, because it sees but little before and around it, does so much. This point may be illustrated by a comparison of the characters of *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth*. Lady Macbeth was inferior to her husband in everything but that comparative blindness which insures earnest action and diligent obdurate working ; she had little imagination or intellect, and she did her work without hesitation, because she simply saw it as work, without regard to the consequence. In Macbeth, on the other hand, the intellect and the imagination were dominant, and he tells us that the surmises of the deed to be done, and the phantasies that arose in his mind at the thought, were such that he could feel the present fear of the deed as a positive relief. In Hamlet this was carried to its utmost ; he saw more than any other man did, and the consequences of the deed arose up so clearly before him that they obscured the deed itself.

There is very little of the hero about Hamlet. One of the best lights shed on his mental character is by Coleridge, who

said, that, if he might be pardoned the presumption, he and Hamlet were very much alike. There was not much presumption in saying that, and if there were a little, the exactitude of the parallel, and the fine light shed by something we know on something less known, would give plenary absolution to Coleridge for his presumption. Hamlet's thoughts swarmed so that he could not see his duty ; and if you were to put on one shelf all the books Coleridge *proposed* to write, and on another all he *did* write, the one would be a library that would take a librarian all to itself, the other little better than a collection of lovely fragments.

Hamlet's father's ghost sent him on a difficult errand, and he always tried to go, resolving, re-resolving, and ending the same. It was not that he was unfaithful, and did not want to go, but that he had never finished thinking the matter out. The moment he was about to do the work, up came a new speculation, a new refinement. He split the straw, but then there were two straws. He indulged in any pretext for the glorious power of doing nothing, thinking the matter over again, and gaining a conscientious-looking excuse for delay. He would rather the deed were put on him by accident than that he should essay to do it ; and so he stands waiting until the fates float the King towards him to be killed instead of going to seek him ; and all the while wondering and wishing, and now blaming himself that the work is still to do, and even wondering at the craven scruples of conscience or forecast which prevented its being done. So strongly has Shakespeare carried out this idea, that two of the most terrible passages in the play are the result. One of these is the passage in which Hamlet, finding the King at prayers in his closet, refuses to kill him, because his soul would then go to heaven, but says that he will wait until lust and sin come back, and when his soul would be at the door of hell. He is perpetually putting it off, because he is not ready, because he has not done thinking about it. Would it be executing judgment, to kill a man who did not know he was about to be killed? Should the executioner strike his victim from behind? And with what looks like the perfection of malice, like the outcome of demoniacal passion, Hamlet says he will not kill him now, lest he should send him to heaven, but will kill him at some time

favourable for his going to hell. It has been said that this is too devilish and malignant; but even supposing Hamlet meant that, supposing this were his real reason for not killing the King, it must be recollected that Hamlet was not working out a private revenge; that after the visitation of the Ghost he was merely the sword of some great invisible power, that in that capacity he had to exercise due vengeance on a murderer, and that his duty was not therefore to send the King's soul to heaven, but to wait till he was at the door of hell, when by a short stroke, he should cause him so to fall that he should push the door open, and find ready entrance. That is, supposing Hamlet to be impersonal in the matter, the agent of fate, of destiny, of holy law. But this, in all probability, was not Hamlet's reason. There was no earnestness in his speech, except as an excuse for doing nothing. When Hamlet had not got time to think, he was prompt enough. When he ran Polonius through, he did it quickly; there was then no room for his indecision, his scrupulous conscience, his over-refinement. When Hamlet did a thing well, it was simply because there was no time to think about it. His promptitude arose from his inability to exercise his Teutonic introspection. Those fine sophistries as to the consequences of killing the King at the moment, are the excuses which conscience has always ready when it would either draw us into sin, or excuse us in the non-doing of a duty. When at last the catastrophe comes, it is floated to him. Hamlet does not kill the King, but the King gets killed; he does not fulfil the catastrophe, but the catastrophe is fulfilled through him; it comes rather by destiny and fate, than the strong will of man. The catastrophe clashes severely with the notions of those who are admirers of poetic justice, and who cannot bear that the rights and unrights should go down into one grave: but it was the poet's duty, not to set forth poetic justice, but the laws of this world as they are; and we know that the great universal laws of God work in universals; that God never moves out of his way, because there are righteous men in danger of being crushed, or holy men in danger of being punished; and nothing is so solemn as to mark how evil courses drag into their vortexes the just and innocent, the pious and holy.

The question of Hamlet's madness is next to be considered. One theory is that he was not mad at all, but only pretending;

and the other is that he was mad from the beginning. In the common meaning of the word he was not mad, but he was near to it; and he sometimes even was so overcome, that he was over the fine line where sanity trembles into a form of madness. I incline to the belief that the mind of Hamlet was thoroughly unhinged from his first appearance; not on account of the revelation by the Ghost, but on account of his mother's hasty marriage, of her unfaithfulness to the memory of the late King, of her inability to feel any compunction for what she had done. He had thought all this over till he was mad, and his mind never recovered its tone. His madness, as a consequence, was fitful: now he was sane enough to determine to be insane, but sometimes he was insane enough to act irresponsibly. If we regard Hamlet as altogether sane, or altogether insane, the play will be sadly spoiled. Only Hamlet when mad, is not like somebody who is not Hamlet, for lunacy does not destroy the individual character, but intensifies it. Some say, "Why should Hamlet affect madness?" There was a great reason for it. Madmen have liberties, they may peep, and gossip, and pry, without reproach; and Hamlet wanted to come at the knowledge of what the Ghost had told him in a way that he could make known. The secret of his father's death was so given him that he could not well put it in court. If you go before a hard-headed judge, and say you have heard something from a ghost, he will order the ghost to be produced. Hamlet was burdened with a secret that came to him supernaturally; he could not bring it to bear, and therefore he must get it confirmed by some form of evidence. What was he to do? He would feign madness in order that he might be able to peep and pry, to watch the King in a way that would not be tolerated from a sane man, to say sharp things to see if he could provoke his mother to tears; and, by-and-bye, he got the players to play a play that should make the King wince, that thus he might get again the evidence which he had got from the Ghost, but could not say so.

One of the early difficulties in the play is the levity which Hamlet mixes up with serious things and serious words. The alleged unseemly jests of Hamlet after the interview with his father's ghost, are a stumbling-block to some, and it is said that it was very unlikely he should be in a humour for jesting after such



a visitation. It has been a great perplexity to some people that the Ghost had hardly told his terrible tale before Hamlet called him "Old Truepenny," and the "Old boy in the cellar." If this were unnatural, what a blot and a blunder! If true, what discrimination in the master, who at a time of such emotion made Hamlet break out with what looks like the levity of shallowness and the silliness of fatuity! Those who find this a great stumbling-block are ignorant of the workings of the human soul, which, when overwrought and overcharged, often seeks to restore its equilibrium by a manifestation through the body of its opposite. But there is the justification of history. When a man's mind is terribly overwrought, levity is one of the means by which the overcharged cloud is distributed again. A jest is like a lightning-rod, and if the cloud is perilously full, the rod will take it off and distribute it. When the First Napoleon sat in council he whittled away at the arm of the chair—not because he did not think of what he was about, but because he thought *too much*. When Cromwell was going to sign King Charles's warrant, he took the pen and wiped it on Harry Martin's mouth. Do you think Cromwell was a fribble, and did not know what he was about? He terribly knew it, but that rough, coarse joke was a relief, though Cromwell did not know why he did it. In such ways the mind is saved from over-balance. Stupid people never do such things—a vessel that is not full does not run over.

As Hamlet was not a hero, so poor Ophelia was not a heroine. She was an admirable specimen of a very common-type woman—especially Teutonic women. A large part of the women of the Germanic race have no character. They have softness, amiability, an ability to show the die of man's impress, to make way for it. That is the ideal woman of the Germanic race. Englishmen like it; very few Englishmen could do with a French wife, she would be too quick. If a woman knows some few accomplishments and is able to talk a little sense, they are satisfied. When the average Englishman describes a woman, she is all negation. She should not talk loud, nor stride wide, not do this or that, not be learned, not fond of ink too much; she may be fond of *him*, and that is the only excess English opinion allows a woman to indulge in. Provided this type of woman has beauty, which she often has when young, the want of everything else is very much excused to

her. Women are interesting in proportion to their neutrality. In the glorious days of France, wit and intellect were the charm of the *dame de salon*. Who ever charged Englishwomen with much wit? What *salon* in London was ever more famous for its wit than for its millinery? When were Englishwomen ever guilty of *légèreté* or the wit of the Frenchwomen? Ophelia is the perfect flower of the Teutonic woman. She is lovely, she is innocent. Poor darling! she has hardly any faults about her; she is charming to behold, very useful, exceedingly amiable, obedient to her father in the most filial affectionate way. In this country this type of woman has been so loved that many women run about and boast of it. They say, "Look at me, I have a double chin, I know nothing much, except pots and pickle-pans." They are beautiful in their season, but it is soon over. Fancy Ophelia in middle age! She would have been fat, she would have kept fair, when she was forty. I am sorry for her, but I am glad she died. She was the sweetest, most natural, most amiable character that Shakespeare perhaps ever drew. Let anyone contrast her with Lady Macbeth. Some of you will say, "I should very much prefer Ophelia for a wife." Very well, as far as I am concerned, you are welcome to have her. Ophelia was very lovely and very loving, and I pity her, for it was this engagingness, this softness, which made her tragic fate so tragic. Shakespeare never gave way to the sentimentalism of mankind, and he never did a truer thing than when he painted this sweet-sweet white dove athwart the black cloud of doom that brought her at last to her death. Shakespeare has nothing to do with "poetic justice," he represents human life, and he well knew that the guilty entail suffering on the innocent, that the babe at home suffers for the father's sin.

Note also the form of madness which Hamlet assumed, and how in that and in the real madness of Ophelia, the great poet has anticipated the conclusions of science. In insanity, the most pious are often the most blasphemous; the most pure, the most lewd; and unholiness comes from the lips of the most holy. Some light may be thrown on this if we recollect that the besetting sin of a man is not that which appears in his conduct. During sanity he became acquainted with this besetting sin, in combating it, and he kept it in check as long as reason and conscience were the upper powers; but let madness come, and the foe that he has become ac-

acquainted with in resisting it becomes the tyrannical master; and thus the sin that he has most fought against during his time of sanity is the most prominent in the time of insanity. It has often been asked, why Shakespeare should have made Ophelia, when she became mad, sing such ditties? Well, as I have shown, a man often gets famous for the want of a vice which, if we knew his secret thought, is the one that haunts him most; and when the restraint is off, that which has been hidden comes out, as those who are acquainted with lunacy well know. As long as St George keeps the saddle, the dragon is kept under; but suppose St George out of the saddle, then the dragon may leap up. Now, in this view, Shakespeare must be right in his picture of Ophelia's madness, if, although previously a pure maiden, her battle had been, as it must have been, against the flesh, and her sanity had enabled her to keep that lower part of her nature in check. It is, however, said that it was highly improper that she should know these things; but this is talking idly, for we must all *know* many more wicked things than we *do*, and a thousand and one reasons might be given why Ophelia should know the songs which she sang in her madness. *How* did she come to know such songs? Ah! how *do* people know things? Would everyone in this assembly like me to know that you know the things you do know? This poor girl by nature was amorous, and in madness out came those things which had been concealed. Besides, those were not decorous days. I do not find anything unnatural in it. There are many things permissible in secret, that only become shameful when uttered. There are indecencies that are only indecencies in the ear; they may be of the earth, earthy, but the earth is a very good thing, and not to be despised. Hamlet, as an intellectual man, assumed madness of an intellectual form—he takes up his dominant feeling; but Ophelia, who was the type of sensuousness, went into sensualism, which she had fought against, and which was sensuousness ruled over by sinfulness.

The next question is Hamlet's relation to Ophelia, and whether he really loved her. He did not, for he could not, love her with the great love of which his soul was capable. Ophelia was the perfection of sensuousness, having very little energy, and very little strength of mind; she was animal and sensuous nature in its most beautiful aspect; but nothing more. She was the sensuous

nature always threatening to become the sensual. She was fair and lovable, attracting Hamlet, but never able to hold him long ; although he did love her by that attraction which attracts adverse natures together. For Hamlet was not likely to fail to make a distinction between Platonic beauty, which is beautiful because it is a manifestation of a beautiful soul working inwardly, and mere animal handsomeness. It was impossible that Hamlet should love Ophelia with that great overpassing love which becomes "the mystery of marriage ;" he loved her as the most fair thing, when he had nothing else to do, and was idle, but he had no struggle to give her up, at the Ghost's commandment. Hamlet could not help loving Ophelia to a certain extent ; none can help having a certain admiration for sensuous nature when very beautiful ;—but he was not a deep lover of Ophelia, and therefore it did not cost him much pain to leave her ; he loved her as much as she was worth, and he could do no more. It appears plain what her temptations were ; she was the perfection of sensuousness, but she had no great intellect, and could never have been made a nun or an anchorite. We know what her temptations were from the warnings and admonitions of her father and brother. I do not mean to say that she was impure ; those who know human nature well can make a great distinction between that and the sensuous nature which is always waiting to be tempted, and is always nigh to sin, but never sinning. Then, as I have said before, when madness came, what had been a besetting temptation became a dominant failing, and she sang, as in constructive art she ought to have sung, songs which it had been her soul's battle during sanity, to keep at arm's length. It is all nonsense to say that Hamlet trifled with her. When great duties come upon a man, no broken hearts can stand in the way of their discharge ; a man must forsake brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, when he is called to do great duties. Suppose Hamlet did slight Ophelia, and her heart was broken, it could not have been otherwise ; his great work must be done, whatever the consequence ; and a score of broken hearts will not turn nature out of its course. God's ways will work, though your heart be broken. We want an infusion of the spirit of those old Calvinists, who had brought themselves to this, that they could bow down and be damned, if God could thereby be glorified.

Ophelia's fate is doubtless very touching and sad, but Hamlet had got a great commandment to fulfil, and he must therefore suffer all minor things to drop off his path. That tragic fight at the grave, though difficult to be understood by some, is thoroughly true to nature. Hamlet was stung at the time by self-reproach for his hard-heartedness to Ophelia. It was natural enough that by Ophelia's tomb he should weep and be sad, yet he could do no other than purge himself of that sunny day's passion, in order to keep the one great commandment, which was henceforth to keep sole possession of him.

## II.

It is sometimes suspected that the enthusiasm for Shakespeare's works shown by some students is a fiction or a fashion. It is not so. The justification of that enthusiastic admiration is in the fact that every increase of knowledge and deepening of wisdom in the critic or the student do but show still greater knowledge and deeper wisdom in the great poet. When, too, it is found that his judgment is equal to his genius, and that his industry is on a par with his inspiration, it becomes impossible to wonder or to admire too much. The sign of the deepest wisdom in life has always been the ability to see beneath the present effects of life—to distinguish their causes, whether these be in things natural or in the actions of men; and yet, we are so held by the things that do appear, that we usually need assistance, either from the poet or from the man of science, to make us see that everything that appears upon the surface has been determined by certain principles that lie underneath. In the play of *HAMLET*, Shakespeare seems, unconsciously or designedly, to have attempted to do this for us. Hence the play has always been one of the most favourite subjective studies of all literature; for in *Hamlet* we have the outward life made transparent, and are enabled to look into a man's soul, and to see the strange and hidden workings of which his actions are a fore-doomed result.

With the old story on which the play of *HAMLET* is founded, Shakespeare makes short work. The original is a rude tale of adultery, murder, and revenge; in the hands of Shakespeare it

becomes "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark." The time of the old tale he adopts, as shown by the passage—

" Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red,  
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe  
Pays homage to us,"

is a period before the Norman conquest, when England was under the sovereignty of the Northmen as in the days of Canute, or paid tribute to Danish powers. The secret of the great popularity of the play of *HAMLET*, and the best key to the study of it, is that it is the history of a man's mind, and all men feel something of themselves in *Hamlet*. His subjection to the spiritual part of his nature ; his communion with thoughts of another world ; his scepticism ; his thinking too precisely on the event ; his being propelled, rather than propelling ; his being driven like a leaf before the wind ; his waiting for circumstances—these and other characteristics are shared more or less by all. I have spoken of Hamlet's madness. It is said that some definitions of madness would let loose half the inmates of Bedlam, and that others would put nine-tenths of the world into straight jackets. Madness may be taken to be simply a freedom from, or defiance of, the ordinary rules that govern the life of man. All that Hamlet was before his father's death, as testified by Ophelia and others : what he became after he had suffered from his dear father's death, his mother's disgusting marriage, and his own disappointment in being set aside from his lawful ambition and his crown, to be a court idler, and sort of younger brother ; and then what he became after he had seen his father's ghost, may be carefully studied and compared, in order to arrive at an understanding of his madness. His mind was sorely outraged, his faith in women destroyed, his pleasure in life taken from him ; unfixedness and derangement had begun. The fearful duty laid upon him by the terrible revelation completes the work, and *Hamlet* is by turns reasonable and unreasonable ; now suffering under involuntary disorder, and now feigning madness and committing intentional errors. With respect to Hamlet, there is that thought of Goethe's, that a work had been laid upon him too great for him to do ; but it has been maintained that Hamlet's inactivity arose not so much from want of heroism, as from his never seeing any method of action that satisfied his

intellect. No critics have sufficiently studied the necessity which Hamlet must have felt for satisfying the consciences of men, as well as his own soul, of the King's guilt. He knew of it, but it was by manifestations from the invisible world ; and it would yet be necessary to satisfy the consciences of men around him that he was, in killing the King, administering, not a private revenge, but one of the awful laws of God's vengeance against murder. Hence, he was always looking out for opportunities for the King to convict himself, and until this could be done he hesitated and paused. It has been said that Shakespeare wished in Hamlet to exhibit Pyrrhonism and doubt : but Hamlet had been a great believer ; his life was calm and full of belief up to the time that it suffered this strange disruption, and then he had enough to make anyone incredulous,—his faith in humanity was shaken. Where he looked for nobleness, there appeared the lowest sensualism and crime of the deepest dye. Such scepticism is common in the minds of thinkers in early life, in every generation. When they see that men have a prophet and will not obey him, that they have a Christ and crucify him, that they will worship the golden calf, or cover over their crimes with an outward glitter of appearance ; then the whole inward life is shaken, and that belief which lay calm in the soul, almost for a time perishes. That Hamlet ever lost his belief is to be denied ; that it suffered a strong questioning is clear enough. He was completely under the influence of destiny ; those commandments interfered with the most cherished things of his life ; the life of him who would otherwise have walked the earth sunnily, became a perpetual warfare ; showing that, to whomsoever the spirit of the Invisible speaks, they must fulfil their destiny, whether they will or no.

Of Ophelia I have not taken the favourable view that is common ; yet it is necessary to make the distinction perfectly clear between her sensuousness and sensuality. The Queen and Ophelia must be grouped together, in order to see that sensuousness has in one case become sensuality, and in the other it has trembled at the very fine line which marks the transit of the one into the other. So Hamlet and Polonius stand together in pyramidal structure ; and as Ophelia stands at the apex of the sensuous nature, Hamlet is made to stand at the apex of intellectual nature. Thus, throughout the whole of Shakespeare's

plays, laws of grouping are to be constantly watched. Polonius has always been, at first sight, a puzzle ; so foolish at one time, so apparently wise at another ; such a mixture of the silly, garrulous old man, and yet of one who has laid down maxims which all the world has agreed to quote as those in which are best pictured forth the rules of safe conduct for a young man in life. Polonius is a respectable, superannuated formula, an euphuistic diplomat—a touch of a fogey, but by no means a fool ; full of maxims, old stores got by experience, but of little service in the emergencies of strange and unexpected circumstances ; itching for former importance, and fussily thrusting his finger into every pie. Coleridge solved the seeming difficulty which there is in reconciling the different points of this man's character. He says, " Polonius is a man of maxims, never of ideas ; wherever it is a matter of experience, there he is great ; where it is a matter of prophecy, there he is foolish ; where experience carries him, he is wise ; where rule of thumb does not take him, there he is a failure." Hence he stands in fine relief to Hamlet, the man of ideas, who utters the great formulæ of life in their abstract forms. He is mentally the very opposite of Hamlet, whom he has exasperated by the part he has taken with regard to the succession to the crown, and who delights to tease him from antipathy and the provocation which his peculiarities always give to minds like that of Hamlet. Returning for a moment to Ophelia, I recommend the comparison of her with *Madge Wildfire*. As to the objections raised to the Danish lady's singing expressions taken from Elizabethan literature, I do not hold with them.

Horatio deserves a few words of hearty praise : he is *trew und fest*—the very man to be Hamlet's friend.

As to the King, there is little of good in his nature. He simply has this much of worthiness in him, that he knows he is a sinner. He knows the good of repentance, and will try to repent ; and then he turns his eyes to the ends of his sin, and they canker him and pull him down, thus showing that the flesh actually overcomes the spirit. This I count to be the last stage of a soul—the awful ability of a man to push what was once a feeling to be a mere opinion or doctrine. We ought to be repentant, so the King found, but he simply knew repentance and talked of it. Though a vile sinner, he carries himself royally, sways the sceptre



with dignity, and wears the crown with grace. I will read you that soliloquy of his, in which the wretched man gives ear to his conscience, repents of the sin by which he won his queen, his ambition and his crown, but cannot give up the *fruits* of sin :—

Oh, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven ;  
 It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,  
 A brother's murder !—Pray can I not,  
 Though inclination be as sharp as will ;  
 My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent ;  
 And like a man to double business bound,  
 I stand in pause where I shall first begin ;  
 And both neglect. What if this cursèd hand  
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood ?  
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
 To wash it white as snow ? Whereto serves mercy  
 But to confront the visage of offence ?  
 And what's in prayer but this twofold force,—  
 To be forstallèd ere we come to fall,  
 Or pardoned, being down ? Then I'll look up ;  
 My fault is past. But oh, what form of prayer  
 Can serve my turn ? Forgive me my foul murder !—  
 That cannot be ; since I am still possessed  
 Of those effects for which I did the murder,—  
 My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.  
 May one be pardoned, and retain the offence ?  
 In the corrupted currents of this world,  
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice ;  
 And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself,  
 Buys out the law : but 'tis not so above :  
*There* is no shuffling, there the action lies  
 In its true nature ; and we ourselves compelled,  
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
 To give in evidence. What then ? what rests ?  
 Try what repentance can : what can it not ?  
 Yet what can it, when one cannot repent ?  
 O wretched state ! O bosom, black as death !  
 O limèd soul, that, struggling to be free,  
 Art more engaged ! Help, angels, make assay !  
 Bow, stubborn knees ! and heart with strings of steel  
 Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe !—  
 All may be well !

I doubt the worth of any repentance that can bend the knees

but not release the grasp on evil gains. It shows the difference between wishing and willing, and illustrates the folly of motive-mongering, while the individual self remains. The last words, "All may be well," are the subtlest and saddest of all; for in them there is self-flattery of the soul, a hope that struggle, though baffled, may be accepted, instead of ceasing to do evil and learning to do well, followed by perseverance in religious duty without change of life.

Then comes the *Queen*. Of all knowledge of the murder of her husband, at the time of her marriage, I absolve her; but her guilt is that, *when* she knew it, she still remained with him who won her by such foul means. Sensual, without conscience, able to give such love as she had to a murderer, she is nearly utterly vile: a touch here and there, however, showing that she was not entirely and completely reprobate. A rake at heart, she became vile. True, she was a woman, and women are said to be angels; but if so, there are great varieties in angels.

With regard to the introduction of the *Grave-diggers*, and their careless traditional wit and ancient jokes, I defend it entirely. Objections have been taken to the grave-digging scene, as interfering with the solemnity of the tragedy, as being a descent into the low and vulgar. Nature is never all of a piece; no life is heroic for above an hour or two; Nature is never stormy very long; after you have been sighing deeply, the next thing will be to laugh. Now, the great tragedy, which aims not to mend life, but to *be* life, of necessity fulfils this condition. The grave-digging scene is beautiful in its place; it is obedient to the laws of life; it makes us learn the great lesson—how different are the laws of the construction of this world from what any small laws of ours would be. Voltaire has strongly reviled the grave-digging scene, and spoken of Shakespeare as making his characters play at bowls with skulls upon the stage. This is one of those generalisations of Voltaire's, the very absurdity of which is their fun, as when he speaks of the English as a people who cut off their kings' heads and their horses' tails, and who have a hundred religions and only one sauce. My defence rests on three grounds: the power and love of the English to pass rapidly from grave to gay; the co-presence in real life of tragedy, comedy, and farce; and the artistic darkening of the gloom by those momentary flashes of

light. Over-wrought feeling requires relief; grave-diggers *do* jest over graves, and sorrow feels more sorrowful than ever when it hears the laughter of the next house or of the street. To the sad man the sun is too bright; the bereaved mother feels all the more alone when the voices of the children at play sound in her sad ears. In watching the Grave-diggers we see how little way tragedy extends. Illustrative of this are the caricatures by the French of themselves, which appeared during the recent siege of Paris. In one of these, one of *nos braves* gorgeously arrayed, is incited to the combat by a heroine in Phrygian cap, who, pointing to the distant horizon on which the Germans could be just descried, exclaims: "*Ils sont là,*" whereupon the hero fires his revolver and lets off his gun. Such jests on such subjects at such a time! Such is life.

The grave-digger's scene is to the play of "Hamlet" as a flock of white pigeons flying beneath a thunder-cloud: it intensifies the blackness.

The clown scene makes the play like a day of life; it makes us see that man creates in imitation of God's creation. Wheresoever a great creative artist comes, the six days of God are rendered *in petto* by the painting, or music, or book, or oratory, of the man himself. Shakespeare could not write the history of a soul, without writing, in little, the history of the world. What he finds in Nature he finds in one day of life; clowns and kings go hand in hand. And so, over the open grave of an Ophelia people shall jest, and over the closed grave they shall laugh; in the middle of this awful play shall come the jests of clowns, and the laughter of those who are light-hearted, rather through want of thought than saddened by that plenitude of thought which Hamlet feels.

Hamlet's conduct at the grave has been objected to. If he had neglected and cast off Ophelia, why was he jealous? He remembered the time when he had been Ophelia's lover, and then there came that singularity in the human mind, a jealousy of anybody else being as sorrowful as we are. One of the most distinguishing glories of this play is the insight it gives us into those strange combats which go on within our nature; for we know that the sorrow of most thinkers is over the want of harmony within them. St Paul's old sorrow is our sorrow—flesh against spirit, sense against soul, faith against sight, the things that are seen against

the things that are unseen. This part of the play is Shakespeare's version of how the hopes of man in the future lie battling in the present. It is in every sense the most religious of plays that Shakespeare has written. It teaches us to wage this perpetual warfare; and it shows us the awful lesson, that we are in the hands of great laws which are impersonal, and to which we may be wisely obedient, or against which we may be madly rebellious. Hamlet does not altogether yield to the laws, and his life is turbulent. The earlier we behold these laws, the more firmly we work them out, the more beautiful life will be built up without our trouble, and we shall know that what is right inwardly is useful outwardly, and beautiful in all its going.

The slow movement of the play, the accidental way in which the catastrophe is brought about, and the gloom in which the drama closes, are all vindicated to the thoughtful student.

To those who wish to study HAMLET thoroughly, I recommend "The Devonshire Hamlet," these volumes being exact reprints of the first and second editions of Shakespeare's great drama—the HAMLET of 1603 and 1604—from the very rare originals in the possession of his Grace the Duke of Devonshire; with the two texts printed on opposite pages, and so arranged that the parallel passages face each other; and a biographical preface by Samuel Timmins. To quote the words of M. F. V. Hugo, these two quarto editions afford a "*Comparaison infiniment curieuse en ce qu'elle nous permet de pénétrer jusqu'au fond la pensée du poëte et de surprendre les secrets du génie en travail.*"

## KING LEAR.

I N reading the works of the great dramatist, people should divest their minds of the smallest desire to make him vote for any cause, mission, or interest, in booth political or conventicle religious. Indeed, it has been alleged as his great fault, that there is nothing of a priestlike element in him—no conscious aiming to raise man from what he is to what he should be—but that he contented himself with painting saints as always saintly, and sinners as always sinful. He painted to the life saints and sinners, good and bad. Whether this be good or evil is open to debate, but it answers the old question of the immorality of some of Shakespeare's phrases; for though there are unpleasant words and emphatic oaths which one could have wished out of his pages, yet they do not make *him* immoral. I do not wish to defend them. But Shakespeare never fell into the true immorality of painting life as it is not, of calling evil things by smooth names, of putting into cant and hypocrisy the verities of life. And although his bad people were bad, he brought into the world no such unmitigated villains as are found in modern plays and romances—folks who seem rather great stalking vices than human beings. Shakespeare never had innocent murderers, nor interesting knaves; neither did he make them monsters, nor palliate their evil doings. Shakespeare's characters are all in due harmony; they are complex and many-sided; and perhaps there is no better illustration of this than KING LEAR.

Bearing in mind that Dr Johnson and the disciples of the old school of well-balanced eulogism and blame, which for every excellency must find a fault, were, by their qualifying "buts," unconsciously laying down the theory that the man of the greatest genius is often wrong in his details—or, as the more genial school of later times hold it, that genius has always a law of its own—I confess I care little for the anachronisms which have been pointed out in Shakespeare's text. I consider they are absolutely neces-

sary, and are characteristic also of Milton, and the great painters, some of whom painted the Holy Family in Dutch costume. The object was not to show the costume, but to give the soul of the piece. It was the wish of Shakespeare to be understood by the people of his time, and it is always wise and necessary to speak of universal things in the language of the time, and to adopt the songs of the hour, the phrases of the time, and the costumes of the day. Although Hamlet was sent to Wittenberg to be educated, and critics can prove there was no school there in his time; although Nero was made to angle in the lake of darkness; although Shakespeare did put into the mouth of the Fool a ballad which was written in the time of Elizabeth; still such things are obstacles only to those who cannot bear to see Coriolanus without a toga, and who would have left the theatre in disgust had they seen Garrick play *Hamlet* in powder and a full-bottomed wig. Milton has been blamed for carrying Calvinism into Paradise before man existed; and in a Dutch painting we generally find the Virgin Mary costumed "frau"-wise. But these are the smallest and most worthless parts of the business—the mint, the anise, and the cummin.

Following the fashion condemned at the outset, it has been usual to look at *Lear* as a petulant, irritable, choleric, and impetuous old man; whereas in him you will find that subtle mixture that is in us all—a compound, of complexity seemingly irreconcilable; a terrible involution of motives; meannesses and greatnesses walking side by side. There is in him a constant struggle for the upper hand. Having settled that thus, and thus only, shall his kingdom be divided, Lear resolves to put his daughters to the test, and make the division of his kingdom appear to be the result of their conduct. Thus he fished for a reason to give legality to his determined conclusion. A true bit of nature this; and Shakespeare, in so drawing the character, showed that he well understood this complex, crooked nature of ours. But why did Lear ask for this display of love? Simply, as Coleridge says, "because he was a fond though not a loving man;" he wanted palpable demonstration that they loved him; he wanted to hear his daughters *say* they loved him—to know it; he plagues them on the point, and is determined they shall make the confession. Here, too, the *kingly* element comes in—he

commanded as a right that which can only be given spontaneously. The two sisters are plentiful in their protestations of affection, but *Cordelia* is obstinate; she might have given a word on the matter, but, though loving him, she would not give a demonstration of her affection, and so she is punished because she cannot babble about love like her sisters. Of all Shakespeare's characters, Cordelia is the noblest, of whom the least is said, but of whom most is felt. We see in her a pure type of humanity, but veiled, as a nun. I prefer the veiled figure to the nude. Cordelia is perhaps the purest and most perfect type of womanhood the world ever had, and though but little is heard of her, yet we find the whole play groups around her.

The "LEAR" of the stage, however, is not the LEAR of Shakespeare, but is a proper Tract Society kind of "LEAR"; and for this we have to thank a worthy of the name of Nahum Tate, who not only put the sweet strains of David into metre of a very "common" sort, but, as Charles Lamb wittily said, "Put the hook into the nostrils of the great leviathan play, so that the showman might lead it about the more easily." One could love the man for the utter wrongness of everything he does; he never makes the mistake of deviating into common sense; and wherever Tate has altered anything, there be sure you will find one of the chief beauties of the play. He makes *Cordelia* a sort of French waiting-maid *intrigante*, who is carrying on a little love affair, out of which he feels clear she must come victorious and successful—victory meaning matrimony, and success a desirable husband, consummated with banns duly proclaimed, and the customary penny hop, &c. He marries Cordelia to Edgar, the old king giving his consent, while Gloucester and Kent add their hearty blessing. Aristotle said it was people's weakness that made them want to see every tragedy or romance wind up pleasantly; and it was this inability to understand God's ways, this desire to have speedy justice, that wretched old school-book morality still flourishing in pulpits and elsewhere, that to be good is to be happy—it was this that played the deuce with Tate. He didn't see that God has ordained that no man shall live for himself only—that whosoever is linked to a sinner must take many of the stripes due to that sinner: but thinking the stripes were struck at random, he was anxious they should fall on the right shoulders. In God's providence they oft fall upon the innocent.

The sad end of Cordelia, therefore, shows how closely and completely Shakespeare runs with nature and truth and the laws of life in making her a martyr for other folks' sins, and making her share in their misfortunes. All this desire of saving the innocent from suffering is a weakness of which Shakespeare was never guilty. He painted things as he found them.

The humour of KING LEAR has nothing special in it, but it is genial, universal, and true; and in his *Fool* there is something more than a fool. Shelley gives this play the palm over all tragedy, of Euripides or other, from the masterly manner in which what would now-a-days be called the "comic" scenes are introduced—reasoning thus, that as Shakespeare was the equal of the Greeks in every other matter, and had done well that which they did not venture to attempt, therefore he carried the palm. All may have felt the mirth of the grave-diggers in HAMLET to be somewhat out of place, but Shakespeare is vindicated both in life and as an artist. Wedding procession and funeral are in the street at the same time; the black cloud is blackest when its edges are light; the broken heart seems hardest to bear when merry laughter sounds in its ear. So Shakespeare has relieved and set off this terrible tragedy by the humorous wisdom of the light-hearted Fool, showing by the love felt for him by Lear that although the poor King's wits were all abroad, the natural goodness of his heart was left to him, and he still possessed that true friendship and union of soul which he had in his palmier days before misfortunes came.

The extrusion of Gloucester's eyes upon the stage (which, in the play, is supposed to have been done in another room) is a blunder in stage direction which shows the importance of attending to that difficult line which forbids a too near approach to the real, from the associations which are apt to gather around certain things. Some things are allowable—some not. The hero of a piece must commit suicide in a proper manner, or be killed with the right sort of instrument. The axe and the sword for heroes; hanging is only for knaves: for scarcely ever is a great man hanged. Contrast the stage effect of "sword" *versus* "boxing-gloves," "headsman" *versus* "hangman," "meerschaum" *versus* "yard of clay." It is in the mastery over this difficult point of art that Shakespeare greatly excels. You must not hang your hero; the guillotine will not do—only the axe. You must not put out eyes



on a stage ; it is not what Shakespeare intended—if he did, then I think that for once Shakespeare was wrong. If any alteration can with safety be made, it is in this part, which might be safely blotted out. That you should hear of the putting out of the eyes, and not see it done, is the right plan.

To write a good tragedy is one of the most difficult of all subjects, for you cannot introduce letters to explain the characters as you can in biography ; and here it is that Shakespeare shines, in introducing soliloquy in order that intricacies may be developed. In *LEAR*, the whole story is evolved out of the acted life of the characters, instead of our hearing it discoursed about—the soliloquies being few, and only given when needed to suggest the motives of action to the audience.

The play is remarkable as containing the most repulsive character Shakespeare ever drew. One of Lear's daughters was wicked without redemption, utterly vile in every respect. I fear that in life such characters are to be found, and therefore they are necessary for the dramatist's art. She fell into a state of irredeemable baseness and unmitigated beastliness ; her cruelty to her father was extreme, and evinced a desertion of all that is noble and good, illustrating the remark made by some one, that when women do become bad, there are depths of that badness which men never can reach.

One great rule which Shakespeare has followed in *LEAR*, is the colour he has suffered the hero to throw over the whole of life. It might have been a sunny day when Lear wandered on the heath, but the facts must not be painted literally, and Shakespeare would have committed a blunder if he had not made the weather of nature subordinate to the weather of the soul of the King dethroned, discrowned, broken-hearted and mad. When the hero of a tragedy is sad, nature should appear so. The subordination of nature to man should be maintained ; and so, when Lear is on the heath, all nature is in sympathy with the broken-hearted father and the discrowned King. The scenery takes its colour from man ; and Shakespeare has acted on this principle more than any other dramatist, clothing his characters with the right dresses, and making the weather to correspond.

As to the close of the play, with its tremendous climax of sorrows, it is the greatest painting of accumulated woe ever

executed, and beyond description. I can pardon the man who pours a torrent of tears at the King's sorrows. He who can bear to see this play acted without suffering as though a real sorrow and a real grief were being gone through,—the man who can see it and not feel himself a partner in the tragedy—ought to spend his next evening over invoices, and find his life's mission in the duties appertaining to a drysalting warehouse, where his inability to reproach himself with the weakness of ever having shed a tear may prove useful to him. Those who can see Lear's sorrows dry-eyed, lack the spirit which Shakespeare would evoke—lack geniality, and all that makes a good student of tragedy. It is more "proper" to weep at a well-told tale, than at the same thing enacted before your eyes, but it is the glory of the tragedian to appeal to the secret parts of our nature, when the play is only acted, and not a reality.

## ROMEO AND JULIET.

MR DAWSON commenced by remarking that in all lecturing or commenting on Shakespeare, it should be very clearly understood what were the limits any wise man would impose on himself; for to comment on Shakespeare in order to generate a first love would be ridiculous, but to comment in order to justify and explain the first love would be useful and necessary. In looking at a great picture for the first time, no wise man noticed the handling, the tints, the foreground or background; but the second time he would begin to examine the why and the wherefore, the method and mechanism by which the first emotion was produced. In drinking with a hearty thirst, one did not regard the sparkling of the liquid, or the colour and fashion of the glass; but when the thirst was slaked, then one became curious, and thought of the vessel and the drink, and speculated on its vintage, growth, and age. He should simply attempt to understand the method and working which justified our first love of *ROMEO AND JULIET*; not talk of its beauties, but endeavour to show why it was so beautiful, and why it created in all so ardent an admiration as to be emphatically the most beautiful tragedy that Shakespeare ever wrote, or the world ever had. It was almost too beautiful; the strength seemed almost refined away, the beauty had a little too much of the Adonis, and one coveted a little more of the Hercules. When Shakespeare wrote it he was very young, and it was bathed in the peculiarities, graces, and weaknesses of very young folk. All tragedy must be somewhat removed from the ordinary things of life in order that its due effect might be produced; its hero must die by the axe, and not by the rope; every weapon that gleams must, as it were, draw down from the heaven of history something of imagination, romance, and brightness, and grace. Shakespeare always took the painfulness from the edge of his tragedy by some touch of beauty; never approached the grave merely to moralise thereon, but to use it as a touchstone to bring

such effects upon the human soul—its passions, sorrows, endurance and beliefs—as no other touchstone could.

In proceeding to notice some of the beauties of the marvellous play, the Lecturer first referred to what might be called the organic unity of Shakespeare's plays—not the unity of artificial flowers, each made separately and then grouped, but a unity in which one spirit breathed through all, and brought every part into harmony and grace. Shakespeare had no method, no rules: he adhered not to the unities of action, time and place; we did not witness the process of construction, but only the complete and harmonious results: his glorious works were like Solomon's marvellous temple, reared without the sound of axe or hammer, the stones were hewed far away, and the timber cut where first it grew. Shakespeare had written a "Midsummer Night's Dream," and *ROMEO AND JULIET* might almost be called a "Midsummer Night's Act." Everything in the play was in beautiful keeping with the clime: the love and marriage, too sudden for our colder clime, but suitable enough to warm lands and clear blue skies: the fierce street quarrels: the men always abroad: and even down to the letter by the messenger, delayed by reason of the plague; all were natural and true.

The Lecturer next proceeded, in his usual effective and eloquent manner, to vindicate the love of Juliet, appealing to the experience and memory of all who had ever been in love to justify her words; and to show that to strong passion, to one greatly moved, no language could be too expressive, no metaphor, hyperbole, or extravagance too great. Among the peculiarities of the play, it was remarkable how Shakespeare had distinguished Romeo's sentimental affection for Rosaline from his love for Juliet. It was indeed the difference between sentiment and passion, which would explain much of the love poetry of the world. Sentiment had its proprieties, but passion had none: passion might be mastered by hard fighting, but sentiment might be controlled at will.

The Lecturer next proceeded to notice the presentiments (which usually accompanied strong passions) predominant throughout the play, and explained his observations by many felicitous illustrations from the ordinary events of life. Romeo's description of the apothecary's shop had often been condemned as an ill-timed

interpolation, breaking the harmony of the play, and inappropriate to the absorbing grief of Romeo at the time ; but the lecturer maintained, in a very forcible and satisfactory argument, that the passage was utterly well-timed, and was another example of Shakespeare's very accurate observation ; since, like a prisoner who had studied every means of escape, counted every brick in his cell, remarked the spider-webs, and curious worm-eaten holes in the floor and wall, so Romeo, having lately noted the needy shop of the lean apothecary, and having found from him a key to let him out of life, would dwell on all immediately concerning his escape, and find the wretchedness of the apothecary in harmony with his own.

After denouncing the absurd attempts at "poetical justice," which had induced some to modify the catastrophe of the play, Mr Dawson concluded a very excellent address by observing that the sadness of the close was relieved by the results it produced, since the fate of the lovers united in death was a sweet atonement for long family feuds ; fatal quarrels were hushed, and hearts long parted united over their sad tomb. The sweetest flowers—the lily of peace and the rose of reconciliation—grew out of the grave in which the lovers lay.

## SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE.

THOSE who read the sonnets of Shakespeare, must understand that they discourse upon the master passions and master sadnesses of mortal life. They discourse of love, of friendship, of falseness, of want of faith, of sin, of contrition and repentance. They were not written in play; these sonnets of Shakespeare are as a leaf torn out of the human heart, and red with the life-blood of the man who wrote them. It was not intended, perhaps, that we should read the book. The book is not for those who cannot understand the terrible depths of human passion; it was not written for boys and girls, nor for men and women who go through their courtship, love, and marriage in the ordinary way. A couple of not over-wise folks meet at a ball, and talk small nonsense, enter their obscure names on a little tablet with an elaborate pencil, smile, say a few common-places, pay a few compliments, and then get *engaged*. After the engagement they use quires of paper to inform all the family of the happy event. Mamma sits down and consumes other quires in informing the earliest grandmother or the latest cousin of the desirable connection with which the family is about to be honoured. A dull courtship, ending in an orthodox marriage; a honeymoon worthy to be called a treacle one; and the end fulfilled in increasing the population. Such persons as these are not the persons for whom these sonnets were written. They are for those who know that there are passions in the human soul, which shake it almost to death, for those who rightly understand the master-passion of love, the tenderness and strength of friendship; for those who know what it is to tremble with emotion, to quake with passion, and to lie almost dead with the overmastery of sorrow and of sin.

The sonnets of Shakespeare must be looked upon, to use a simile, as lovely beads, every one of which is perfect, and nicely carved with a fine finger and an elaborate guidance of genius,—like to the works of that wonderful artist, Benvenuto Cellini. The

beads, when strung together, form a glorious necklace. This simile will tell you that you may study each bead separately, but that they must also be studied in connection. In studying them, let us keep in mind that great, glorious book, the *In Memoriam* of Tennyson. Though the difference between the books is very great, the study of the one will assist the study of the other. I admit that in some of these sonnets there may be an over-elaborateness. Our fathers liked quaintness. They were prodigals of art, were the ancients; but, in these days, when men go as near to Nature as they can for sixpence, and no nearer, they cannot imitate the prodigality of genius spent upon a sonnet or a bead, a clasp or a ring. Where there is poverty there must be frugality in expenditure; where there is fulness of wealth, all things may be profuse. I admit that some of these sonnets are over-elaborated. It is possible to put on more workmanship than the gold will bear; it is possible for the tool to go in so deep as almost to come through. But this is a pardonable fault. We do not find fault with a face because it is too beautiful. The string of the sonnets is this: love between man and woman; friendship between man and man; falseness in woman; falseness in man; sin, contrition, confession.

But before the sonnets are looked into, the student must ask the question, "Are they dramatic, or are they biographical? In writing them, did Shakespeare merely try his 'prentice hand, and test his ability to represent passion, and states of feeling and being which he never knew, or were they his own story?" I do not wish to dogmatise on the point, but it is one of the essential questions to put. Was Shakespeare a man who had loved where he ought not—a man who had wept where he ought, a man who had had a faithless friend, and had had the double bitterness of his faithless mistress becoming the mistress of his faithless friend? Are these sonnets like the psalms of King David—deeply, awfully, passionately true?

Before coming to the sonnets, there is, as is usual in the case of Shakespeare, a heap of rubbish to be got through. As a great living man said about Cromwell: "I have had to dig through two centuries of the guano of owls to get at him." Who was the "W. H." to whom they were dedicated? *Queen Elizabeth*, said Chalmers. *William Harte*, said another; but then Harte was

not born till after they were written! *Lord Southampton*, cried another; but that nobleman could not have needed an exhortation to marriage, seeing that he married in spite of the prohibition of the Queen. *William Hughes*, argued some; for was there not this line—

“A man in hue all hues in his controlling.”

Lastly, is there not that wonderful German who has discovered that “W. H.” means *William Himself*? To me, “W. H.” stands for WILLIAM HERBERT, afterward William, Earl of Pembroke. One critic has told us that the sonnets are a series of letters without dates and directions, and so forth. In considering them as autobiographical, we cannot escape the conclusion that their writer was a mighty man, who, like other mighty men, had fallen and sinned, and who, like some other great sinners, had never called evil good, had never utterly forsaken the good, had never utterly fallen. These sonnets contain some of the saddest, sweetest tears which have ever been shed since King David mourned his iniquity—some of the greatest sighs which ever came up from the human soul since that mighty man sighed for the world. Shakespeare was a great, good, gracious, wise, God-fearing soul, like King David, having his sins and his faults, his penitence and his contritions.

The Sonnets, strictly speaking, are not sonnets, although they are called so. A sonnet is a vessel, strict in form, provided for the poet, and whatever wine he has, he must manage to get into the vessel; the number of lines and the rules of construction are defined. Shakespeare's Sonnets are not sonnets, but poems in sonnet-stanza.

I follow the division made by Mr Charles Armitage Brown, whose work, “*Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems*,”\* I consider the best that has been written on the subject. Mr Brown, following a suggestion made by Coleridge, divides these poems in sonnet-stanza, thus:—

FIRST POEM.—Stanzas 1 to 26: *To his friend, persuading him to marry.*

SECOND POEM.—Stanzas 27 to 55: *To his friend, who had robbed the poet of his mistress, forgiving him.*



THIRD POEM.—Stanzas 56 to 77: *To his friend, complaining of his coldness, and warning him of life's decay.*

FOURTH POEM.—Stanzas 78 to 101: *To his friend, complaining that he prefers another poet's praises, and reproving him for faults that may injure his character.*

FIFTH POEM.—Stanzas 102 to 126: *To his friend, excusing himself for having been some time silent, and disclaiming the charge of inconstancy.*

SIXTH POEM.—Stanzas 127 to 152: *To his mistress, on her infidelity.*

I agree with Mr Brown that "the attentive reader will be convinced that these divisions are neither arbitrary nor fanciful, but inevitable. An unsought-for recommendation is that they are thus formed into poems tolerably equal in length, varying from twenty-two to twenty-six stanzas each." Spenser, a few years previously, wrote his *Visions of Petrarch*, *Visions of Bellay*, *Visions of the World's Vanity*, and *The Ruins of Rome*, in this same sonnet-stanza.

The next matter on which the student should be forewarned is the changes in language since Shakespeare's day. At first, it is startling to find epithets, now never used except to a woman, applied to a man. So it is startling to find what seems bad grammar; but Shakespeare was not bound, had he been able, to write the grammar of the reign of Victoria, or to talk to his friend as friends speak to one another now. Who would study Shakespeare well must study well the grammar of Shakespeare. Words, like families, come down in the world. In an old version of the New Testament, St Paul is called "the knave of Jesus Christ." We do not now speak of the "beauty" of a man, or call a man "beautiful," but in the Old Testament we read, "David was of a beautiful countenance," and none "so praised as Absalom for beauty." We call a man now "handsome," but, in Shakespeare's time, "handsome" meant suitable, dexterous. Not now should we call a man "sweet," but in Shakespeare we have "sweet Ned," "sweet Bassanio," "sweet Valentine." Then, "sweet love" was used where now we should say, "dear friend." No woman would now like to be called a "wench," "mistress" was once a term of honour, when "friend" addressed to a woman would have been like the *amica* of the Latin or the *amie* of the French. In Shake-

spare's time, men spoke of men as their loves and their lovers : "I tell thee, fellow, thy general is my lover." In Cornwall, men still address men as "my dear," "my love," old customs lingering in that far corner of the land. In older days, the language of love and friendship was more the same than now, and, as has well been said, "Not only did friendship, in poetical and prosaic addresses, adopt the language of love, but to express its utmost sincerity it breathed of tenderness. On the other hand, love, eager to free itself from the imputation of transient desire, strove to be assimilated to a pure friendship. Thus the language of love and friendship became confounded, till fashion, or something worse, endeavoured to separate their terms."

I will now read a few of these sonnets to you. Those I have selected I have chosen as examples of beauty, of sweetness, of the strife of strong feeling to express itself through hyperbole, and by language which seems extravagant to those in whom the strong passion does not exist, of admirable similes, of the anatomy of passion, and of evil passion, and of lofty moral writing.

The sonnets I shall read are Nos. 8, 94, 99, 102, 116, and 129 :—

#### SONNET VIII.

Music to hear ! why hear'st thou music sadly ?  
 Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy :  
 Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,  
 Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy ?  
 If the true concord of well-tunèd sounds,  
 By unions married, do offend thine ear,  
 They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds  
 In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear :  
 Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,  
 Strikes each in each by mutual ordering ;  
 Resembling sire, and child, and happy mother,  
 Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing :  
     Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,  
     Sings this to thee—" *Thou single wilt prove now.*"

This beautiful sonnet is one of those addressed to his friend, persuading him to marry.

The next one is from those addressed to his friend reproving him for faults that may injure his character.

## SONNET XCIV.

They that have power to hurt and will do none,  
That do not do the thing they most do show,  
Who moving others are themselves as stone,  
Unmovèd, cold, and to temptation slow ;  
They rightly do inherit Heaven's graces  
And husband Nature's riches from expense ;  
They are the lords and owners of their faces,  
Others but stewards of their excellence :  
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,  
Though to itself it only live and die ;  
But if that flower with base infection meet,  
The basest weed outbraves his dignity !  
    For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds ;  
    Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

## SONNET XCIX.

The forward Violet thus did I chide :—  
“ Sweet thief ! whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells  
If not from my Love's breath ? The purple pride  
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells,  
In my Love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed ! ”  
The lily I condemn'd for thy hand,  
And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair ;  
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,  
One blushing shame, another white despair ;  
A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both  
And to his robbery had annexed thy breath ;  
But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth,  
A vengeful canker eat him up to death !  
    More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,  
    But sweet or colour it had stolen from thee.

In sonnet 102 he explains and defends his recent silence.

## SONNET CII.

My love is strengthened, tho' more weak in seeming ;  
I love not less, tho' less the show appear ;  
That love is merchandised whose rich esteeming  
The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere !

Our love was new and then but in the spring  
 When I was wont to greet it with my lays,  
 As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,  
 And stops her pipe in growth of riper days :  
 Not that the summer is less pleasant now  
 Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,  
 But that wild music burthens every bough,  
 And sweets grown common lose their dear delight !  
 Therefore like her, I sometime hold my tongue,  
 Because I would not dull you with my song.

## SONNET CXVI.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
 Admit impediments : Love is not love  
 Which alters when it alteration finds,  
 Or bends with the remover to remove !  
 Oh, no ! it is an ever-fixèd mark  
 That looks on tempests, and is never shaken !  
 It is the star to every wandering bark,  
 Whose worth's unknown, altho' his height be taken :  
 Love's not Time's fool, tho' rosy lips and cheeks  
 Within his bending sickle's compass come ;  
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
 If this be error and upon me proved,  
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

The last sonnet I shall read is from the Sixth Poem, as Mr C. A. Brown makes the division.

## SONNET CXXIX.

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame  
 Is lust in action, and till action, lust ;  
 Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,  
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust ;  
 Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight ;  
 Past reason hunted, and no sooner had  
 Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait  
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad :  
 Mad in pursuit, and in possession so :  
 Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme ;

A bliss in proof ; and proved, a very woe ;  
Before, a joy proposed ; behind, a dream !  
All this the world well knows ; yet none knows well  
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

I advise those of you who are students of these sonnets to write them out in prose, and to paraphrase each, after the fashion of Mr Armitage Brown, or as has been done for the successive little poems of *In Memoriam*.

## SONGS OF SHAKESPEARE :

AN ADDRESS PREFATORY TO A VOCAL ENTERTAINMENT.

I AM not going to attempt to *say* the songs of Shakespeare—that would be poor work ; nor shall I attempt to praise them—that would need the mouth of a Chrysostom, which I have not, and happily they need no praise. My task is simply to write a very short preface to the very excellent exercise that is to follow. In fulfilment of that task I do not intend to begin by defining what a “song” is, but I do think it right to state what are the characteristics of a good and genuine song, a song that arises first out of a very harmonious and glad heart. Many people can sing without any words to sing at all ; they sing—often nonsense—in the mere effort to give vent to gladness. It ever has been so. But by-and-bye great poets come, and, bringing together the common humanities of men, find words to express almost all their emotions. Humanity, so to speak, having the emotions, comes to these poets to sing them ; and sing them Shakespeare did right heartily.

As to songs in general, and Shakespeare’s songs in particular, when one hears them sung there are two things to be considered. We can either consider the relation of the song to him who sings it, or its effect upon him who hears it. Taking first then the songs of Shakespeare in relation to himself, they show what the man was—the healthiest and best balanced man that ever lived. If he has any rivals, and it is doubtful whether he has, Sophocles in the old world, and Goethe in the modern, are the only two men who come anywhere near him. His greatness consisted in his harmonious many-mindedness. Most men and women are only parts of men and women, and so conscious are they of it, that they have divided themselves into little worlds. There is, for instance, the “religious world,” many of whose citizens testify to their shame by carrying the parchment of their citizenship about

them—some on their foreheads, others in the whine and twang of their utterance, and others in the supercilious contempt with which they affect to look upon all who are unable to utter their Shibolet. And then there is a “commercial world,” and a “political world.” But what is so admirable about this man Shakespeare is that he was everything. There is no better word, and no worse, to describe him than that used by the Germans when they called Goethe “many-sided”—good, for we find him full and complete in every part—bad, because he, like all other truly great men, had no sides or angles at all, but was a perfect circle of goodnesses, to be looked at with equal pleasure from all points. So that the glory of Shakespeare is that he *was* everything, and was great in everything. You cannot tell which is greater, his wisdom or his wit, his wit or his wisdom. He was the world’s wittiest child, and was, of all other moderns, the most wise. He was, therefore, “merry and wise.” He is found, too, to be eminently pious, full of common sense, prudent and enthusiastic, jolly and serious, solemn and mirthful. Everything in the man is there in hearty, honest, full measure, and it is a mercy to come across such a man. Most people one comes across have but one object, one pursuit; but this Shakespeare, from whatever side you look at him, is complete—and this completeness is shown nowhere better than in his songs.

The glory of his songs, too, is not that they are tucked in or hugged in to his piece to fill a gap, but that they help to develop the character to whom they are given, and to interpret the drama. Would that this were so in other dramas! All of us have seen vaudevilles acted, and we have known to a nicety when the song was to come. Watch the actress, and you can see her pumping for it; you feel, so to speak, that it is a song *in vacuo*: it is adapted to her voice. It is the same in the drawing-room. One hears young ladies, who will sing what is new in preference to what has been tried and proved, sit down and assure one that they are a “Gipsy Bride.” How people can be such a lot of idiots I cannot tell; for I do not know a dirtier, greasier selection of ruffians and blackguards upon earth than are the gipsies. Another sits down and wishes she was in “Fairy Land.” Honestly speaking, I do not think “Fairy Land” reciprocated the wish. Fancy, for instance, a lady of fair proportions wishing to be in “Fairy Land.”

and expecting to look well there!—why, she must have a mushroom grown specially for her to sit upon! And that which is true in the drawing-room is also true in the theatre, for in the majority of plays that I have seen and read of, the songs have no vital connection with the play at all, their only connection is an orchestral one. A lady, for instance, in the middle of something that has nothing to do with it, sings, “I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls”—a most uncomfortable place to dwell in. With the exception of one or two dramas only, there is very seldom any further connection between the play and the song than there is between the “marble halls” and the lady. But Shakespeare’s songs always have their vital connection with the plays, even if the song be only quoted. He did not set *Falstaff* to sing a song simply because it suited his “register,” nor did he set him to sing the Old Hundredth, but if the old fellow sings at all, he is certain to roll out some good old stave in praise of sack, to show that he is happiest when drinking sack. And then there is that willow song of Desdemona’s—it is the song of all others *for* Desdemona, and while she sings it, the dramatic interest goes on. She *must* have chosen some such song to sing, and while setting forth her character, history, and disposition, it helps the play. Indeed the dramatic art is never so well helped as when helped by the lyrical, and the two are never so well blended as when Shakespeare blends them; for by him both are so mingled that the lyrical explains, sustains, and illustrates the character the dramatist wished to set forth.

As to the songs Ophelia sung, though they have been condemned as unsuited to her, I do not despair of showing that they are as vitally connected with her fate and character as are any of the songs Shakespeare has put into the mouths of others. First of all comes the great argument that Shakespeare’s mind was too well balanced ever to have been guilty of any such unfitness; and then comes the fact that they are put into her mouth during madness. The two classes of things people best know are those they love best and those they hate most. By continual striving with evil, one becomes familiar with its features. It is a fact known to scientific men, that that which a man strives most to repress when sane is that which comes uppermost when he is mad, and I therefore hold it to have been consummate skill in Shakespeare to make Ophelia sing the songs she did sing.



There is this great, harmonious, merry, mirthful man, always at home in every form of human life ; able to rejoice with them that rejoice, whether child, clown, fool, or wise man ; and able to mourn with all who mourn. And if some complain of him, forsooth, that he has written some nonsense, how could he do otherwise? The chorus of a song must be nonsense, or how could you expect the company to join in? Nonsense, in fact, in song, is only the out-breaking of human nature's joys, so sudden that words cannot be found to express them. But after all, nonsense or no nonsense, these songs are the pure outbreakings of human gladness in every form, from highest to lowest ; and though Shakespeare may be great as a poet, great in everything else, in nothing is he greater than in his songs.

Mr Anderton then delivered a brief address, giving a descriptive and short historical account of the various pieces, and afterwards the following of the poet's songs were sung by amateurs :—"It was a lover and his lass," "Where the bee sucks," "Blow, blow, thou winter wind," "Under the greenwood tree," "O bid your faithful Ariel fly," "It was a lording's daughter," "Bid me discourse," "When that I was a little tiny-boy."

## IMPROVERS OF SHAKESPEARE.

### I.

THAT there is a depravity of the human heart, of course all well-conducted people entirely believe ; and that there is a depravity of the human intellect, we are almost compelled to believe, when we find that the greatest genius this country—or, indeed, the world—has ever had, is the man whose works have been the most spoiled, the most “corrected,” the most altered, and the most misunderstood, of any writer worth designating. If any proof were wanted that the human intellect has its perversities as it is asserted the human heart has, the very title of my lecture would show the doctrine to be true. Shakespeare never wanted mending, and yet he is the most mended of all. His limbs were originally straight, but every bungler and every booby has broken them, in order that he may reset them. Not only have they corrected his commas and made his rhyme run smoothly, but they have altered his composition, mended his views of justice, transferred his plays to classic Greece, and made *Romeo* and *Juliet* talk the mild Latinism of Addison’s Cato. There is no presumption of which they have not been guilty. Just as in the great churches which cover our land, the mark of the old high-pitched roof, and the defaced carvings, and the bits of glorious colour peeping out from beneath the whitewash, serve as a sort of high-water mark of old beauty and devotion, as well as of modern churchwardenship and cheap nastiness—just as when our Gothic cathedrals fell into the hands of architects for repairing purposes, they could not resist the introduction of some bit of Doric or scrap of Corinthian—so have Shakespeare’s works suffered from the churchwardens of literature, from pagans who believed that Sophocles was *the* great man, and that Aristotle was the only one who could lay down critical rules. If they found a spout making queer faces at them, they said, “Dear, dear ! what place can these things have in a temple ?” If they found Lear’s

Fool putting out his tongue, or twisting his mouth during one of the terrible invocations in the play—if they found mirth in the midst of tragedy—they at once said, “Aristotle never would have allowed this,” and forthwith went to work with whitewash bucket and brush until they had daubed over everything that was at all picturesque and strange. When I come to show you how Shakespeare has been altered; how his morals, plots, catastrophes, and language have all been altered, tinkered, and mended, I think you will believe with me that there is some dark cloud which has passed over the human intellect—that there is some damnable temptation under which man has fallen.

The history of the text of Shakespeare is an important matter in considering the question, “How came men to think there was room for improvement?” It will be necessary for those most acquainted with the subject to inquire and point out how it came to pass that the author who has left the clearest of manuscripts, and the most perfect of works, is the man upon whom commentators have exercised their most wondrous stupidity, and how it came to pass that a man who wanted no mending has been tinkered and mended until he can scarcely be recognised. During Shakespeare’s life, but apparently without his consent, some fifteen or eighteen of his plays were published, in quarto, and six others in his name, but which were subsequently repudiated by his editors. These eighteen plays were probably stolen, though by whom, or how, or why, no one can now say. Whether some reporter went to the theatre, and took them down, or Shakespeare lent the manuscript, it is impossible to tell, but it is clear that Shakespeare did not trouble his head much about the matter. It does not appear that there was any talk about “copyright,” “policy,” and so on, or that the poet applied for an interdict. The making of books for money was only coming into fashion then, and Shakespeare was evidently a hearty, genial, careless kind of man, not fussily feverish about his fame, or fretting about his reputation, nor running up and down the world cackling every time he produced a work. He seems to have been one of those glorious men who think that character can take care of itself, and true genius neither puffs nor advertises itself.

In 1623, seven years after his death, the first collected edition of his works, the famous “First Folio” was produced, with the

following title, "Mr William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, published according to the true original copies." This precious volume is the proper authority for the text of Shakespeare. In it were seventeen new plays, some of them doubtful in their paternity. The editors of this edition were fellow-actors, joint theatrical proprietors, and loving friends—John Heminge and Henry Condell. The following is an extract from the preface to this edition: "Whereas you were abused with divers stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors that exposed them, even those are now offered to your view, cured and perfect of their limbs, and all the rest, absolute in their members as he conceived them; who, as he was a happy imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together, and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." His hand and his brain so went together that each thought was happily expressed, and the consequence was a manuscript without a blot, and a book without a fault. Here, then, is the mystery, that the works of a man who wrote perfectly, and supplied the printers with a manuscript without blunder or bungle, free from even a blot, have yet been made the most tangled, the most troublesome mess ever produced. How came that first folio to be a book the fullest of errors that the world ever beheld? It is a marvel of typography. It ought to have been a book that needed no correction and asked for no alterations—perfect; but the printers got hold of the manuscript, and the result is the worst-printed book the world ever had. Mr Collier estimated that the bad spelling, punctuation, and other minor errors amounted to twenty thousand, whilst those which were to be estimated by quality rather than by quantity, were incalculable, and surpassed all the powers of the mind to show. I have looked into the book, and have found it full of every error a printer could commit. Every possible bungle that a booby could perpetrate, every possible mistake a fool could crowd in, every fault a blunderer could create, every error that stupidity could gather together, are all lumped into this the greatest of works, this the clearest of manuscripts the world ever had. Hence came the need of editing. Hence there was an invitation to every man to try his hand at

reducing a labyrinth of blunders to something like order. Fools having created a jungle, bunglers a thicket, and blunderers a forest, a generation of commentators arose to hunt therein; for, of course, a generation of boobies gave rise to a generation of excavators. Pedantry, conceit, foolishness, and stupidity had all done their worst, and the result was that the brightness of Shakespeare was obscured, the clearest of writers was made to appear the dullest of men, and the writer who made no mistakes came before the world in a guise that it was difficult to pierce through or to understand.

Nine years after came another edition. This second folio was published in 1632. It showed a fine conservatism in that it preserved every blunder, mistake, blot, and boobyism, of the first; and it was "radical" in that it lumped on every additional crotchet, error, and stupidity, of the time. That second edition was the first, with "improvements."

And now came a long, long gap in the history of Shakespeare. I mean the Puritan gap, when our fathers thought theatres abominable, the drama devilish, and players condemned—when they dammed up all human energy into two channels—the chapel and the shop. Having six days to attend to the shop, and one to the chapel, what wonder if it happened that they should be no exception to the rule, that those countries which have been most puritan have also been the countries that loved money most. Do you doubt it? Make a map of Puritan countries—Holland, Scotland, England, Switzerland, America. Then make a map of money-loving countries, and see if the two do not agree.

Tracing the various editions published subsequently, the first real editor was Rowe, who corrected many of the grosser blunders. Then came one who corrected a few more errors, and probably thought he did Shakespeare rather a good turn by putting "Alexander Pope" upon the title page. Pope's edition was published in 1725. But he could do nothing for Shakespeare. Poor man, he did not understand Shakespeare, who wore his own hair, and who was supposed to have been caught in the wilds of Stratford-on-Avon. After this came Theobald, who delighted chiefly in showing Pope's errors, and correcting him. Then came Sir Thomas Hanmer, who did very little but lend his title; Bishop Warburton, snarling critic and pleasant gentleman, pompous, vain,

flippant, and shallow, and abounding in "improvements," who did nothing for Shakespeare, but only exposed his own ignorance. In 1765, a truly great man took Shakespeare in hand, Samuel Johnson, the man of mighty learning, with kindest heart and most dogmatic tongue—the man who in evil days maintained purity in his faith, purity in his heart, purity upon his tongue,—a great, grand, colossal Englishman, always to be spoken of with respect, but to whom Shakespeare was a sealed book. If Homer sometimes nods, Johnson snores. His edition contains some of the most noble things ever said about Shakespeare, and some of the most ineffable ineptitudes with which ever any commentator overlaid a glorious text that needed no explanation whatever. Johnson was in many matters the best vindicator Shakespeare ever had, but he said some most savage things of him, and has written a mountainous heap of rubbish regarding his plays. Johnson and Shakespeare speak a different language. Johnson is regular and formal; Shakespeare is original—a genius, inspired in all things. The next editor of Shakespeare was Capell, who was the very monarch of dulness. He published his edition in 1768, and proved himself the obscurest and dullest man that ever took Shakespeare in hand. Never does he deviate into brightness, never by any chance stray into sense. In 1773 came Steevens, who ought to be called the great Shakesporean cobbler. He patched him most liberally. If there was a place rather threadbare, on went a heavy patch of Steevens's, be it black, blue, or brown, and you can always see the liberal thread with which he sewed it on. But he went further, he made holes, in order that he might patch them. Whenever he did not understand Shakespeare, he mutilated and patched him. A great man has called Steevens "the prince of commentators;" but he was the most mischievous literary man that ever lived, and manufactured more moonshine (which composes the largest part of what is called "history") than any other man ever did. In 1790 came Malone, a most careful and conservative editor, the truest editor that Shakespeare had ever had up to the time that his edition appeared. Steevens despised the first folio edition, Malone respected it. All other people mended Shakespeare, but Malone allowed him to speak for himself. He was the most reverent preserver of all that he believed his author had set down. In

this spirit he has been followed by Singer, Chalmers, and most of the editors of our own times.

Dismissing editors, we now come to commentators. First, there was Seymour. He sat down to Shakespeare with too definite principles. They were chiefly two—the necessity for grammar, and the desirability of having ten-syllable lines. Certainly Shakespeare was open to having his grammar mended, unless men could understand that Shakespeare was a maker of grammar. Grammar is to some extent like the pronunciation of words. Though subject to certain fundamental rules, it will yet change now and then, in spite of all the little Murrays in existence. But Seymour was great in grammar. So he sat down, strap in hand, and called up that Stratford boy, William Shakespeare, who had never been to either of the Universities—an unpardonable sin—and having pointed him out as guilty of the most flagrant violation of grammar, he kindly puts him right. So with ten-syllable lines, he found Shakespeare's lines all possible lengths. He had no ear for true melody. His notion of poetry consisted in putting a capital letter at the beginning of a line, taking care that the line contained so many syllables, giving it a guitar-like twang at the end, and then waiting its issue from the hopper of his mill, as if it were the true article. In grammar, his chief achievement was taking away the word "from" when it occurred in conjunction with "whence."

Then came Jackson. He was a printer. He naturally thought, seeing the errors of the first folio were committed by compositors, who but a compositor could set them right? He was right, to a certain extent, for it required a technical acquaintance with printers' proofs to understand how such and such errors arose. But he forgot the good old proverb, "Let the cobbler stick to his last." He ventured beyond the composing-case, and, having corrected blunders made by printers, corrected excellences made by the poet. In "All's Well" the clown says, "An' we might have a good woman born but for every blazing star, or at an earthquake, 'twould mend the lottery well." Jackson did not approve of this. He said, "How can a *woman* be born? A female when introduced into life is an infant." Shakespeare also, in "Troilus and Cressida," speaks of "Hector, whose patience is, as a virtue, fix'd." Jackson considered that as patience itself was

a virtue, the fix'd virtue had nothing to do with the passage. He said it ought to read, "Hector, whose patience is as a vulture fixed," inasmuch as "vultures never move from their prey, until their insatiable gluttony has entirely devoured it."

Take Bishop Warburton next. He suggested that the passage, "I will speak a prophecy or e'er I go," should be, "I will speak a prophecy or two e'er I go." "This 'or e'er,'" he said, "is very bad English." Very bad English! And this from a bishop, frequently hearing the Bible read! Had he forgotten the passages, "or ever the silver cord is loosed," "or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world," "and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him"? The bishop then fell foul of that fine old sentence, "the ear-piercing fife." He made it, "the fear-'spersing fife," "because piercing of the ear is not the effect on the hearer." What the bishop meant passes my comprehension.\*

Again, Shakespeare uses that extremely erudite and far-fetched expression, "dry," in the passage, "Dry was he for sway." Steevens says, "That means thirsty; the expression is, I am told, quite common in the midland counties." So that Warwickshire people can understand that very obscure word, "dry"! Steevens also tells us that the word "hint" means suggestion; and that "to court" means "the acts by which men recommend themselves to the ladies." Is it irreverent to say to Steevens, "Thank you for nothing"? Dogberry said, "An two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind." Now, there was something so astounding in that proposition, it was so profound, so unintelligible, and so new, that the great lexicographer, Dr Johnson, went into a lengthy explanation of how such a course was rendered necessary by circumstances. Shakespeare said, "I am bid forth," and Dr Johnson explained that this meant, "I am invited." Shakespeare said, "She will score the value upon my pate." Steevens said, "Perhaps, before writing was a general accomplishment, a kind of rough writing as to wares had from a shop was kept by check or notches on a post." This was only a peradventure! Steevens

\* "Farewell the neighing steeds, and the shrill trump,  
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife."

*Othello*, Act iii., Scene 8.

Warburton would read—

"The spirit-stirring drum, th' fear-'spersing fife,"

*i.e.*, the fear-dispersing.



knew nothing of a "score" representing the daily pint of milk or sack of coal. Shakespeare spoke of slippers being "in eager haste thrust on the contrary foot;" whereupon Johnson said, "Shakespeare has forgotten that he is speaking of slippers, and not of gloves;" by which we may conclude that Johnson knew nothing of "rights" and "lefts" in shoes. But the idea of correcting Shakespeare about that! So, never being able to forget his Dictionary, the Doctor tells us that "rash" means "hasty." He also expounds the passage, "Ill-weaved ambition, how much art thou shrunk," by the remark, "It is a metaphor taken from cloth, which shrinks when it is ill-weaved, when its texture is loose."

The next passage is so obscure, that it needed a three-commentator-power to rescue it from oblivion. In "Antony and Cleopatra," in a parting scene, one of the *dramatis personæ* says, "The elements be kind to you." Johnson said, "This is obscure; it seems to me to mean, 'May the different elements of the body, or principles of life, maintain such a proportion or harmony as may keep you cheerful.'" Steevens said, "I believe this means, 'May the four elements of which the world is composed unite their influences and make thee cheerful.'" Mason said, "Johnson's explanation is too profound to be just; Octavia was about to make a long journey by land and water; and it is a wish expressed that both these elements may be kind to her." So, when Shakespeare calls the devil "the common enemy of mankind," this is so unheard of that a deep draught of commentary has to be swallowed e'er it is understood. Steevens says that the words occur in the first lines of the "Destruction of Troy," "though Shakespeare might have heard the expression in some other place." Certainly, it is possible that Shakespeare might have strayed into Stratford church some day, or he might even have looked into a prayer-book, and seen that the devil was called "the common enemy of mankind." It is within the bounds of possibility! "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." Does *this* want explanation? Can any man be so unaccountably stupid as not to see its beauty? And yet Bishop Warburton said, "Dr Farmer informs me that these terms are merely technical." A dealer in skewers lately informed him that his nephew could only assist him in making them: "he could 'rough-hew' them, but I was obliged to 'shape their ends.'

And whoever recollects the profession of Shakespeare's father may admit that his son could be no stranger to such a term, as I have frequently seen packages of wool primed up with such skewers." Therein, to him, lay the origin of the beautiful passage. To take another specimen of Dr Johnson's criticism on the passage in "Macbeth," following the question, "Wherefore was that cry?" and the reply, "The queen, my lord, is dead," the Doctor says this was "justly suspected of being corrupt." Then follows a most delicious specimen of the Doctor's paraphrasing of the passage, which is so diluted by him as to destroy its beauty. The Doctor says that Shakespeare sacrificed virtue to convenience, and seemed to write without a moral purpose, making no just distribution of good and evil, and making no proper distinction between the righteous and the wicked, and left the example of the good to operate by chance. That charge means that Shakespeare involved the moral in the course of the play, instead of putting it into a separate place. Such men as Johnson want Shakespeare to be like the bore in social company, from whom we are sure to have a set sermon, or a dissertation on religion. But wise men do as Shakespeare did—leave their moral to work its own way.

## II.

THE student finds it very difficult to get at Shakespeare for the commentators. Knight and other editors of modern times may be passed over, because they do not belong to the class of which I am speaking—the "improvers of Shakespeare." The first class of "improvers" are those who, when they found something plain, explained it. The next class are the men who are not content with attempting to mend Shakespeare's language, but desired to do the same with his morals, plots, characters, and incidents. I must now introduce you to the commentaries of a Mr Rymer, who thought that everything not classical was necessarily wrong. He wrote a criticism against the play of OTHELLO, which he regarded with very great horror. Some most amusing extracts might be given from his book. Rymer puts forward the play as a warning to maidens of quality, who, without their parents' consent, run away with black-a-moors. He was disgusted with Desde-

mona. The affair of the handkerchief he sets forth as a warning to all good wives to look well to their linen; and to jealous husbands to see, before their jealousy becomes tragical, that their proofs are mathematical. Desdemona's "swearing she loved Othello" arose, he says, from "the inability of Shakespeare to exhibit any of the delicate graces of feminine conversation," evidently thinking Shakespeare meant that she swore a good round oath. Othello, he says, ought to have cut his throat in the presence of the spectators, for the sake of the moral thereby inculcated.

I defend Shakespeare's conception of the character of *Othello*, as well as that of *Desdemona*, and the general plot of the play. I also consider the objections to KING LEAR are utterly without foundation. Nahum Tate's suggested "improvement" of the character of *Cordelia*, and the way in which some "improvers" would have the plays of HAMLET, ROMEO AND JULIET, KING LEAR, and OTHELLO concluded, deserve severe condemnation.

I will now introduce you to KING LEAR, as amended by Nahum, the son of Faithful Tate. I am a Shandyite sufficiently to believe that the name a man carries up and down the world has much to do with his character. It was my fate once to have a long argument with a gentleman named Podgit. Podgit was angry, fierce, and bitter. I said to him, "Podgit, I forgive you, for the man that has had to carry the name of Podgit for seventy long years may be easily forgiven." So Faithful Tate, having had Nahum for his son, one almost feels inclined to pity Nahum's absurdities. Of KING LEAR it is said that it is such an improbable story. Could any king be such a fool as to divide his kingdom upon so impertinent a consideration as the one set forth in the play? But what has a poet to do with the probability or improbability of an accepted story? It was sufficient for Shakespeare that the people loved and believed the story; and if men thought rightly, they would think that poetry was the proper museum into which those old traditions, which criticism will not allow us to keep as facts, ought to be carried, there to be safely and lovingly preserved. Niebuhr may have deprived us of the wolf that suckled the founders of Rome. Some unpatriotic wretch may have laid his hands upon William Tell, and shown that he was a small Alpine vestryman, without a particle of romance in

his story. Some absurd commentator may argue that there is no cave in Wales where it is likely the bones of King Arthur could be found. But shall Tennyson do wrong in giving us "Morte d' Arthur"? Of all dreary people that ever walked, the probability-monger is the worst. "Shades of Linnæus!" they say, "could a bean stalk ever grow to such a height as that of Jack?" "Is it within the bounds of probability that any giant could have been trapped into suicide by Jack's pudding-bag?" And so they go to work to burn the glorious old books, and give us versions of the story as like the original as are Hannah More's "Sacred Dramas" to the fair passages she paraphrases. Poets take the great beliefs of nations, not caring whether they are facts, but whether they contain truths, and are loved and believed by the nation. But these people would rob children of their story-books; and "Jack and the Wonderful Bean-stalk" and "Jack the Giant-killer" must go, because the stories "are not within the compass of probability." "Can a conscientious Christian parent," they ask, "put into the hands of unsuspecting youth, books whose contents cannot be asserted to be matters of fact or credibility?" They accordingly burn such books, to substitute the diluted morality of Hannah More's "Sacred Dramas." But Shakespeare did not much want the story. It simply served as a peg upon which to hang the glorious play that followed.

Johnson makes another objection. He says, "If *Lear* has made up his mind to divide his kingdom, why does he want those women to force him to do it?" What a dunce in human nature he must be who makes that objection! Who does not wish, when he has made an arbitrary settlement of a thing, to get some one who will seem to bring about the thing already settled? Did you never make up your mind to be offended with a man, and then go out and try to find the occasion for offence? Why should not *Lear*, having determined that the kingdom shall be divided, prop up what he felt to be unreasonable by putting a share of the cause upon his daughters? Then comes *Cordelia*, who seems to have been Tate's aversion. Forty or sixty lines are all she utters, and yet there is no character in Shakespeare more fully or thoroughly drawn. But *Cordelia*, the very incarnation of unselfishness, is all thrown away upon Tate. He it was who took hold of King David and drilled him to read like an English-

man, and to sing like a Precentor of a thirteenth-rate Presbyterian chapel. He was, therefore, the very man to improve LEAR. Nahum Tate admitted that the tragedy of LEAR was "a heap of jewels unstrung and unpolished," so dazzling that he perceived they were a treasure. Tate forthwith set to work to reduce this disorderly heap of jewels into true Tateian order. He would make a necklace, the string of which was to be a love-story. Tate could not see what business Shakespeare had to write a play which had not a love-story in it. But he is no worse than most modern writers in this respect. Why, the best novel in the English language, and the one most full of passion, has got no love in it, the most wonderful story in the language has no woman in it. "Robinson Crusoe" has got no woman in it, and doesn't want one; it has no love in it, and would not be mended by it had the heroine been the most gushing damsel that ever poured out nonsense in valentines "one penny plain, twopence coloured." So with "Caleb Williams," no woman and no love; and yet what book shall excel it in passion, or in absorbing plot. Shakespeare could do without the old theme of love. It is a mark of the clumsy dramatist again when he describes, instead of letting his drama tell its own tale. Tate preferred to tell us how it happened, and when, and why. Shakespeare never made that blunder. You catch the air of a valentine all through Tate. He having ordained that Cordelia must be in love, we find this woman, whose glory it was to forget herself, carrying on a little secret intrigue with Edgar all through the play. Cordelia, "royal fair," as Edgar calls her, asks that "dearest, best of men" to come to her arms, and "take the kindest vows that e'er were sworn by a protesting maid." And to this truly un-Shakespearean invitation Edgar responds, "Is't possible?" which is nearly the only gleam of sense in Tate's *Edgar*. The little love-string runs through the jewels, and of course the play ends "happily." It won't do for Cordelia to be killed, because she must be married, as the *summum bonum* of womanly felicity is to get married. Then Tate forthwith takes up his Davidian fiddle, rosins his bow, and scrapes out these concluding lines:—

"This bright example shall convince the world  
That whate'er storms of Fate decreed,  
Truth and virtue shall at last succeed."

Now, this is just what Shakespeare did not see in this world, and what Shakespeare, therefore, did not paint in his plays. Dr Johnson said that Cordelia, from the time of Tate, retired with felicity. Johnson voted for Tate; and Charles Lamb said, "Tate fixed his hook through the nose of the great leviathan, and enabled the showman to drag him about ever since." Tate was a blunderer, so felicitous in his blundering, that by no mistake did he ever leave a beauty of Shakespeare untouched. The finer the jewel, the more the Tateian file went at it, making holes, cutting facets, and going through all the tricks that lapidaries usually perform. Certainly Tate's *LEAR* is the masterpiece of all "improvement."

IN *ROMEO AND JULIET*, Garrick is the chief offender.\* He was a good actor, but a sorry understander of Shakespeare. He gives sixty lines of dialogue between Romeo and Juliet, which are not to be found in Shakespeare. He makes Juliet wake up in time to ask Romeo what it is all about, and puts into their mouths sixty lines of explanation as to how they died. What a comfort it would have been for the lovers to know all about the death they were to die, and what would be the verdict of the coroner's jury! Able Warburton introduces "the audience" as a party to the whole affair. He asks if Romeo could have had leisure to think of the apothecary's shop and its contents, and speaks of the description of the apothecary's shop as being "improperly put into the mouth of a person agitated by passion." He talks about "the audience" continually; but play-writers must forget the audience. If an audience had been consulted, how much of what Juliet said to Romeo should we have heard? Fancy an "audience" in the garden scene! But Warburton's objection that a person agitated by passion cannot describe details was based upon a great mistake. Could Romeo remember these minute details? The great things of life do not require committing to memory. No one supposes that Romeo committed the contents of the apothecary's shop to memory by rote, as a schoolboy would his Greek verbs. Who learns beautiful things by rote? The things a man *commits* to memory are usually the least precious. The great things commit *themselves* to memory. The best memory a man has is his passive memory. The best

\* *Romeo and Juliet*. By Shakespear. With alterations and an additional scene. By D. Garrick. London: MDCCLVI.

kind of memory is like a carefully-prepared photographic plate, on which everything describes itself. So it is with a memory made sensitive by strong passion or strong emotion. The apothecary's shop had written itself upon Romeo's memory. He had good reason to look at its contents and take note of the man. Out of that shop was to come his balm, his deliverance, his exit; and what wonder that its appearance should come freshly back upon him, and he describe that which had been written upon a memory well prepared for the writing by passion and strong feeling? The whole thing wrote itself upon his mind, and afterwards he could recall it in full.

The French commentators or "improvers" come next. The French, though a most cultivated nation, are the least calculated to like Shakespeare. The French are the best of critics, if the literature criticised be French. With the French, all the world out of Paris is "provincial." Anything from England must be rustic: there may be something good in it, but *it isn't French*. The acumen, the elegance, the beauty which they see in their own writings is one of the reasons why they never criticise anything else with propriety. French literature is correct, just, orderly, sober. The French are the most fastidious of critics, the nicest of artists, and the most exact of writers. If ever they use an image, it is to make a thought clear, and the moment it has done that duty, it is dismissed. Shakespeare used figures, metaphors, and images for their own dear sake: he ran riot in them. His figures pass down the page like jolly companions in couples, triples, and sometimes even four together. This is never found in French poetry. It was in consequence of this want of the sobriety, order, and correctness peculiar to the French style, that they considered Shakespeare to be "an inspired idiot." That is the feeling even of the modern French admirers of our poet, to whom Shakespeare is a madman, but inspired; drivelling, but with the droppings of inspiration. The last and perhaps the best of Shakespeare's French critics says he is "superior to reason by the marvellous revelations of clairvoyant madness." Clairvoyant moonshine! He goes on to say, "One stands arrested with marvel before the convulsive metaphors which seem to be written with a fevered hand in a night of delirium." Would you have Shakespeare praised on such conditions? A critic says something

about "drunk with his fevered hand." Certainly, in the French sense, Shakespeare was not sober. The merits of *soupe maigre* Shakespeare never knew; to the potency of *eau sucré* he was a stranger. It might suit French ideas if we clipped one of our two-century-old yews into a Gallic cock, or arranged some glorious bed of lark-spurs tri-colour fashion. The French are always uncosmopolitan in their criticism, judging everything by their own modes and customs. In true criticism, what is wanted is a central point from which all literature could be viewed with equal fairness.

An English gentleman has put JULIUS CÆSAR into Latin, but, though a marvel of skill, it is not possible to do it well. Publish it not at King Edward's [Grammar School], but, with all respect to Latin, it is a fact that it is but a thin, meagre language. It is like the Roman people in their better days—short, sharp, emphatic—a people who carried their roads straight over hill and valley—no dodging, no getting 'over a difficulty by roundabout methods, but drawing a straight line from here to there, and going right at it. They wore short swords, and would have detested those modern things which tickle an enemy's ribs two yards off. With them it was close quarters and emphatic thrust. Their literature, their roads, their government, had all an admirable brevity. Hence, Latin is an admirable language for epigram, for inscription, for monumental purposes—wonderful to record the doings of men who did more than they prated. "*Veni, vidi, vici*" is intensely Roman. But Latin will not do for Shakespeare. Of all languages, it is the one least capable of having put into it the overgrowth and undergrowth of Shakespeare's genius. Shakespeare is prodigal of beauty; his measure is the great scriptural one—full, pressed down, heaped up, running over—always flexible, and full to profusion. You cannot put a Shakespearean vintage into a Latin vat.

The French critics, however, have been fanatics of classicalism. Voltaire, who said that this country was the place where we cut off our horses' tails and our kings' heads, and where there are many religions and only one fish-sauce, could see no beauty in Shakespeare where he deviated from the Roman standard or the classic measure. I am no lover of Voltaire. Need I describe him? Need I tell you of his sneering, his snarling, his clear wit



his sharp gaze, and his narrow view? Voltaire did good service in Europe. He swept away much rubbish, and helped to put an end to many an abuse. But *he* understand *Shakespeare*? As well expect a man all perfumed and scented, a dandy, a conventional man of fashion, a marvel of dancing mastership and tailoring, to join with Hercules in his Labours, as think that this Parisian sciolist, this old curled and be-wigged Frenchman, could understand the excellent wildness, the great prodigality of Shakespeare. But let us do him justice. He gave Shakespeare his arm, and introduced him to Parisian society. Mr Voltaire, in his best wig, powdered for the occasion, and in exactest Parisian suit, did condescend to lend his arm to the wretched Englishman who had been caught running wild at Stratford, who *would* wear his own hair, who had a country tailor, and who used words he might have heard in a pot-house. Just as when a country relative of *yours*, you know, from whom you have expectations, comes to town. You must show him some attention, and besides this, taking him to a party gratifies your vanity by the admirable foil he is to your graces. His broad red hand will set off the whiteness of your aristocratic small one, with its blue veins setting forth the blue blood that "came in with the Normans;" and you go up to the lady of the house, and shrugging your shoulders, say: "Very excellent man in his own parish—made a deal of money—man I wish to respect—but, between you and me, he is country bred." This is just what Voltaire said: "Wonderful Englishman this I have caught; he has no wig, no *peruke*: he doesn't understand French; isn't well up in his Latin; he is guilty of such unpardonable anachronisms—he puts seaports in Bohemia, he makes kings talk like other people, and when Cæsar was sick and asked for water, he actually made him ask for it in the tone of a sick girl!" Incredible! All *Voltaire's* stage kings were heroic, and had loud voices. All Voltaire's kings *roared* for their drink, and *demand*ed their gruel, just as Mrs Siddons was accustomed to petrify linen-draperies by asking for a roll of ribbon in the same tone as that in which she rated her cowardly husband in *MACBETH*. Voltaire objected to *HAMLET*, and with a rapid generalisation spoke of Shakespeare as being in the habit of playing at bowls with skulls on the stage. Voltaire condemned the incongruities of *JULIUS CÆSAR*, and said that if Shakespeare had lived in the time of

Addison he would have been perfect ; meaning, perhaps, thereby that Shakespeare should have studied "*Cato*," only one line of which stumbles into true poetry (and soon stumbles back again). Voltaire was especially scandalised by the grave-diggers of Shakespeare. "Anything so gross and barbarous," he said, "would not be tolerated by the vilest populace of France." He knew there were grave-diggers in *Pere la Chaise*, but should they be upon the stage? If a grave was to be dug, should it not be done in royal fashion? just as extra thick crimson velvet and silver nails are now deemed requisite. Voltaire would no doubt have had Ophelia's grave dug with silver shovels. He would have HAMLET bereft of grave-diggers, would leave the *Fool* out of LEAR, and would excise everything that spoiled high tragedy ; without knowing that Shakespeare, broad, Englishman-like, depicted life *as it is*, with grief and laughter keeping very close company. Grief and smiles, laughter and weeping, go hand-in-hand with Shakespeare.

Some people think with Voltaire that the introduction of the joking gravediggers is improper. Now, if I can defend the introduction of the grave-diggers in HAMLET, I shall defend all the jests and follies in Shakespeare. I justify Shakespeare both as a painter of fact and a poet.

When your grave comes to be dug, will the diggers weep? Do any of you think that the grave-diggers will not joke and jest when they are digging your graves, although the rest of the universe may be in profound sorrow? There is no man so lofty but his grave will be dug with the old familiar jests of the grave-diggers. Shall you be angry with them because they get hardened? Grave-diggers get accustomed to digging graves, and become hardened to it. God has wisely decreed a certain hardness of the sensibilities of the physical system—a proper and necessary hardness. If a man has to use a shovel in his daily labour, his hand will corn and harden, and that is a merciful provision. If every grave-digger broke his heart over digging a grave, who should we have to dig them? We should have to get up a joint-stock company for digging one another's graves. Who is to kill the meat for dinner, if the butchers do not get hardened? It is all very well to shriek, "Oh, those hardened butchers!" If they did not grow hardened, how should we possess our softness? How if every British lady had to kill her own meat, when it is

thought by some women to be an exceeding sign of sensibility to faint at blood, to shriek at a snail, to howl at a toad? What would become of us if it were not for the "hard-hearted" surgeon? How would it be possible for a limb to be amputated if the surgeon were to be overcome by its beauty or by the awful separation that was about to take place? But, happily, the surgeon looks upon it as a work of art, and, while performing the operation, has even told of the earlier and the later styles of Liston, and in how many seconds So-and-so could perform it. "Dreadful!" some will say. Not so; it is a beautiful provision of Nature that those who have to do ugly things become callous to their ugliness. Some may say they do not like to see a man callous to these things. I do. So Shakespeare knew that grave-diggers ought to get hardened, though they may be worthy fellows underneath their hardness; that they would laugh, and joke the jokes of their fathers and grandfathers even at the grave of a king. What did they care for Ophelia? They understood it was a "young woman who had drowned herself." Afterwards they went to dinner. What would become of us if grave-diggers could not eat? Where do you think the undertaker's men will be when the parson is saying, "Dust to dust; ashes to ashes" over your corpse? Why, at the "King's Head," or the "Five Bells," taking their beer and talking their old traditional jokes. The combination of sorrow and joy pervades all mundane things, and Shakespeare's characters are faithfully portrayed in this respect. Was he right or wrong, then, in introducing these grave-diggers? Right, every way, and especially as an observer of life. When King George the Fourth died, I was a boy, and had a holiday. I closed my Latin Grammar, and was not so overcome by the solemnity of the event but that I could enjoy a glorious game of cricket, and even wished that kings would die oftener.

As a poet, also, Shakespeare was right. He knew that Englishmen cannot bear great emotion long, and that nothing makes sadness feel so sad as the mirth and joyousness of those who have no part in the sadness; that nothing makes blackness look so black as whiteness by its side. He knew that sadness was egotistical, and wanted everybody to be sad, but that your wish to have the *Dead March* will not prevent the band in the street playing "Yankee Doodle." So Shakespeare, true to

art, did what painters do—picked out a white cloud, in order that the dark cloud may appear all the blacker. Those grave-diggers make the tragedy more tragical, joking as they go on with their familiar work. Shakespeare was a correct painter of things as they are, and an admirable arranger of that which the painters call “effect.” Coleridge thought at one time that it would be almost better to leave out the *Porter* in *MACBETH*, but afterwards recalled his opinion. That knocking at the door, and the getting up to open it by the low-minded porter, heightens the tragic interest, and also gives us a rest to collect ourselves. Shakespeare knew that the best way to deepen emotion is to give it a little rest; and for this reason the Porter scene in *Macbeth* cannot be spared. To take away *Lear’s Fool* would be to take away the opportunities of showing *Lear’s* greatest sorrows.

Voltaire and Tate were alike great in their desire to see villains served out and virtue rewarded. They liked to see a play go off felicitously; and mended God’s ways by offering prizes to good people. So, calling up Cordelia and Hamlet (*à la Lady Bountiful* in the Sunday School), they presented Cordelia, for being a good girl, with a gold wedding ring and a marriage licence on behalf of the Society for securing Poetical Justice, with a hope that, when she was married, she would continue to practise the virtues which had secured her the prize; and presented Hamlet, as a reward of merit, after addressing him on the able manner in which he had discharged his duty and so nobly borne his sorrow, with a first-class certificate and the throne of Denmark. Some German “improvers” have absolutely furnished Hamlet with a nice little constitutional speech on his ascending the throne, on the pleasant text, “To be good is to be happy,” as illustrated by Shakespeare’s “improvers,” on which we might dilate at some length. Truth and virtue succeed, and Cordelia marches off with a husband, and Hamlet obtains a crown—the great objects of human ambition. Shakespeare, however, painted God’s ways, and not man’s justice.

III.

I propose to read to you Garrick's famous sixty lines of dialogue between Romeo and Juliet in the tomb, in which the lady exclaims, with true Shakespearian fervour, "Bless me, how cold it is!" The whole composition is after the best pattern valentine that could be procured, and intensely *un-Shakespearian*.

*Romeo* speaks:—

Soft—she breathes, and stirs!

[*Juliet wakes.*]

*Juliet.* Where am I? defend me!

*Rom.* She speaks, she lives; and we shall still be bless'd!

My kind propitious stars o'erpay me now  
For all my sorrows past—rise, rise, my Juliet,  
And from this cave of death, this house of horror,  
Quick let me snatch thee to thy Romeo's arms,  
There breathe a vital spirit in thy lips,  
And call thee back to life and love.

[*Takes her hand.*]

*Jul.* Bless me! how cold it is! who's there!

*Rom.* Thy husband,

'Tis thy Romeo, Juliet; rais'd from despair  
To joys unutt'able! quit, quit this place,  
And let us fly together.

[*Brings her from the tomb.*]

*Jul.* Why do you force me so?—I'll ne'er consent—  
My strength may fail me, but my will's unmov'd,—  
I'll ne'er wed Paris,—Romeo is my husband—

*Rom.* Her senses are unsestl'd—Heav'n restore 'em!  
Romeo is thy husband; I am that Romeo,  
Nor all the opposing pow'rs of earth or man  
Shall break our bonds, or tear thee from my heart.

*Jul.* I know that voice—its magic sweetness wakes  
My trancèd soul—I now remember well  
Each circumstance—Oh, my lord, my husband—

[*Going to embrace him.*]

Dost thou avoid me, Romeo? let me touch  
Thy hand, and taste the cordial of thy lips—  
You fright me—speak—oh let me hear some voice  
Besides my own, in this drear vault of death,  
Or I shall faint—support me—

*Rom.* Oh, I cannot.

I have no strength, but want thy feeble aid,  
Cruel poison!

*Jul.* Poison ! what means my lord ? thy trembling voice !  
Pale lips ! and swimning eyes ! death's in thy face !

*Rom.* It is indeed—I struggle with him now—  
The transports that I felt, to hear thee speak,  
And see thy op'ning eyes, stopt for a moment  
His impetuous course, and all my mind  
Was happiness and thee ; but now the poison  
Rushes thro' my veins—I've no time to tell—  
Fate brought me to this place—to take a last,  
Last farewell of my love, and with thee die.

*Jul.* Die ? was the Friar false !

*Rom.* I know not that—  
I thought thee dead : distracted at the sight,  
(Fatal speed) drank poison, kiss'd thy cold lips,  
And found within thy arms a precious grave -  
But in that moment—Oh—

*Jul.* And did I wake for this !

*Rom.* My powers are blasted,  
'Twi'x death and love I am torn—I am distracted !  
But death's strongest—and must I leave thee, Juliet !  
Oh cruel cursed fate ! in sight of heav'n—

*Jul.* Thou rav'st—lean on my breast—

*Rom.* Fathers have flinty hearts, no tears can melt 'em.  
Nature pleads in vain—children must be wretched—

*Jul.* O my breaking heart—

*Rom.* She is my wife—our hearts are twin'd together—  
Capulet, forbear—Paris, loose your hold—  
Pull not our heart strings thus—they crack—they break—  
Oh Juliet ! Juliet !

[*Dies.*

*Jul.* Stay, stay for me, Romeo—  
A moment stay ; fate marries us in death,  
And we are *one*—no pow'r shall part us. [*Faints on Romeo's body.*

This, I repeat, is intensely un-Shakespearian. Passing from Garrick to other “improvers,” I reject the opinion of Horace Walpole regarding the play of CYMBELINE. He found fault with the plot as being so long and so tedious and dreary during its five acts, that it seemed to him as if the people in it really went to Italy and back again. Then there was Pepys, who said that the MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM was the most insipid and ridiculous play he ever saw in his life. Perhaps that play was never looked upon by a more ridiculous person than Mr Pepys. There is a class of “improvers,” however, whose very love of

Shakespeare has made them fondly suggest a change. Goethe must just mend HAMLET, and Mr Knight must just alter a word, because the word in Shakespeare did not seem suitable to Ophelia's character. Perhaps not to Mr Knight's Ophelia, but how about Shakespeare's?

Passing again to the French school of "improvers," Voltaire's *Morte de Cæsar*, an imitation of Shakespeare's JULIUS CÆSAR, is a lesson in the broad features of difference between Shakespeare's imitators and Shakespeare. Read the speech of *Antony*, by Shakespeare, and that given by Voltaire, and mark the skill of the one and the poverty of the other. *Le Tourneur* has turned Shakespeare into poor prose. M. Leon Halle altered MACBETH to suit his own taste. He made *Lady Macbeth* adopt one of *Macduff's* sons, in order that the youth may rush betwixt Macbeth and Macduff during their bloody combat, and give a beauty of pathos to the murky splendour in which Macbeth's sun went down. The greatest French critic was J. F. Ducis. He published six plays of Shakespeare, and mended and patched them till Shakespeare himself would hardly have known them as his own. Ducis, in his own poor fashion, introduced to the French stage HAMLET, ROMEO AND JULIET, KING LEAR, KING JOHN, and OTHELLO. He gave *Lady Macbeth* the very Scotch and excessively Shakesperean name of *Frédigonde*; made Desdemona (whom he called *Hedelmoné*) the mistress of Othello, and not his wife; and arrested the *coup de poignard* (smothering was too brutal an exhibition for the Paris populace) by an explanatory chorus rushing into the room just as the dagger was about to descend. Ducis's greatest achievement was *Macbeth*. In his preface he speaks of having made considerable retrenchments, according to the wishes of the most enlightened judges—the public. He altered Shakespeare to make him suit the Parisian taste. The characters in Ducis's *Macbeth* have undergone absurd changes. There are no *Witches* in the play, just the same as in the French there is no Ghost in *Hamlet*, although we are kindly told what the Ghost said. The stage directions of the piece form about twice as much as has to be spoken by the *dramatis personæ*. In order to give you a perfect idea of the way in which *Macbeth* has been mauled by Ducis, I will recite to you several passages from the sleep-walking scene in the original French.

MACBETH.—ACT V., SC. VII.

(Sévar, Malcome, Frédegonde.)

FRÉDEGONDE.

*(Elle entre endormie, un poignard dans la main droite, et un flambeau dans la main gauche. Elle s'approche d'un fauteuil. Levant les yeux au ciel avec la pression d'une crainte douloureuse.)*

Dieux vengeurs !

*(Elle s'assied, pose le flambeau sur une table, remet le poignard dans son fourreau.)*

SÉVAR, *bas.*

Un forfait la poursuit.

Écoutons.

FRÉDEGONDE, *avec joie et un air de mystère.*

Ce grand coup fut caché dans la nuit.

La couronne est à nous. Macbeth, pourquoi la rendre ?

*(Avec la geste d'une femme qui porte plusieurs coups de poignard dans les ténèbres.)*

Sur le fils à son tour. . . .

SÉVAR.

Ciel ! que viens-je d'entendre !

FRÉDEGONDE, *en s'applaudissant, et avec la joie de l'ambition satisfaite.*

Oui, tout est consommé, mes enfants régneront.

*(Avec la complaisance et la plaisir de la tendresse maternelle.)*

Que j'essaye, Ô mon fils, ce bandeau sur ton front.

*(Tâchant de rappeler un souvenir vague à sa mémoire.)*

Qui m'a donc dit ces mots ? "Va, le ciel te fit mère."

*(Avec serrement de cœur.)*

S'ils éprouvaient les coups d'une main meurtrière !

*(Très tendrement.)*

O ciel !

*(Portant sa main à son nez avec répugnance.)*

Toujours ce sang !

*(Très tendrement.)*

Je verrais leur trépas !

☛ *(Avec larmes.)*

Moi, leur mère !



*(Avec terreur, se grattant la main.)*

Ce sang ne s'effacera pas !

*(Avec la plus grand douleur.)*

O dieux !

*(En se grattant la main vivement.)*

Disparais donc, misérable vestige !

*(Avec la plus tendre compassion.)*

Mon fils, mon cher enfant !

*(Se grattant la main plus vivement encore.)*

Disparais donc, te dis-je !

*(Se grattant la main avec un dépit furieux.)*

Jamais ! jamais ! jamais !

*(Comme si elle sentait un poignard dans son sein.)*

Mon cœur est déchiré.

*(Avec de longs soupirs, les plus douloureux, et tirés du plus profond de son cœur.)*

Oh ! oh ! oh !

*(Son front s'éclaircit par degrés, et passe insensiblement de la plus profonde douleur à la joie et à la plus vive espérance.)*

Quel espoir dans mon sein est rentré ?

*(Tout bas, comme appelant Macbeth pendant la nuit, et lui montrant le lit de Malcome qu'elle croit voir.)*

Macbeth ! Malcome est là :

*(Avec ardeur.)*

Viens.

*(Croyant le voir hésiter, et levant les épaules de pitié.)*

Comme il s'intimide !

*(Décidée à agir seule.)*

Allons.

*(Avec joie.)*

Il dort.

*(Avec la confiance de la certitude, et dans le plus profond sommeil.)*

Je veille. . . .

*(Elle regarde le flambeau d'un ail fixe ; elle le prend et se lève.)*

Et ce flambeau me guide.

*(Elle marche vers le côté du théâtre par lequel elle doit sortir. S'arrêtant tout-a-coup avec l'air du désir et de l'impatience, croyant entendre sonner l'heure.)*

Sa mort sonne.

*(Avec la plus grande attention, immobile, le bras droit étendu, et marquant chaque heure avec ses doigts.)*

Une . . . . Deux.

(*Croyant marcher droit au lit de Malcome.*)

C'est l'instant de frapper.

(*Elle tire son poignard et se retire, toujours dormant, sous l'une des voûtes.*)\*

Then notice the same author's rendering of OTHELLO. Coleridge was right in saying that Shakespeare had not made Othello a jealous man, for Othello never suspected until he heard, and without suspicion there can be no true jealousy.

Madame de Staël said some foolish things of Shakespeare, and one or two wise ones. George Sand has published a French version and alteration of AS YOU LIKE IT. She makes plenty of apologies for "daring" to lay her hand on Shakespeare, but says it is impossible to keep Shakespeare's plays in the shape they are, and that they must be changed according to the state of the times. She has the merit of saying, "My arrangement seems no better than useless disarrangement," which is admirable truth and excellent candour. She makes the little poem running through it "acceptable to reason." But when she talks of French reason, you must not think of Germany; for with her, reason means rule, as with most French critics. If it is necessary, I should allow curtailment of Shakespeare rather than change; but if change is allowable, I must say that Shakespeare has never been much better tinkered than by George Sand.

I next come to that more genial school of critics which the German nation has furnished, critics so loving in their study of the great poet that they even saw subtle meanings in his sending a youth to a college that did not exist, in his putting lions where lions never were, and in his giving the name of a French town (Limoges) to the Archduke of Austria. Germany is a much pleasanter country for Shakespeareans than France. Credit is due to Goethe and Schiller for having introduced the great dramatist to Germany, though it has taken a long time for that great nation to understand Shakespeare. Goethe and Schiller also called the attention of Englishmen to his merits. The first year that Shakespeare was spoken of in Germany was 1700, and in 1741 JULIUS CÆSAR was translated into German. The Germans

\* *Cœuvres de J. F. Ducis.* Paris, 1813. Mr Dawson's remarkable assumption of tongue, gesture, and emphasis created much fun for his audience, and elicited great applause.

were long under the incubus of the literary taste of France, which was under the incubus of classicality. Elias Schlegel wrote an Essay, in which Shakespeare is viewed as under a certain wild inspiration, and uttering some very extraordinary things, but utterly destitute of taste, regularity, and reading. This irritated Gottsched, who followed with his translations and curious preface in 1750. He says, "The English are loud in praises of his dramatic poems, which are numerous; but a certain Mrs Lennox has of late exposed the errors of his most celebrated pieces." \* Who was Mrs Lennox? Let her rest; she wants a long sleep after exposing Shakespeare! In 1750, in "Joecher's Lexicon," we find this notice, which to us sounds amusing enough: "Shakespeare (William), an English dramatist, born at Stratford in 1564, was ill-educated, and understood no Latin, but made great progress in poetry. He possessed a certain comic humour, but could, at the same time, be serious, excelled in tragedy, and had many subtle and ingenious contests with Ben Jonson, though neither gained much thereby. He died at Stratford on 23rd April 1616, in his 53rd year. His plays and tragedies, of which he wrote many, are printed in London in four parts."

Wieland, Von Eschenburg, and Lessing also laboured to "improve" Shakespeare. Wieland was far in advance of the French, but still unable to do Shakespeare justice. Lessing's genius was clear and cold. Schiller, the best translator, put into German literature a life borrowed from Shakespeare. The effect Shakespeare had on the minds of Schiller and Goethe, and through them on German thought and literature, is marvellous. Germany owes Shakespeare its greatest literary debt. The great actor Schroöder, the Garrick of Germany, was a great lover of Shakespeare; but I blame him for putting Hamlet on the throne, and making Cordelia share the kingdom with Lear. Then came Schlegel, a masterly translator; Voss; Otto Von Benda, the first to translate all the plays; Richter, an intelligent commentator; Ulrici; Tieck, good, though with some ludicrous mistakes. Some odd remarks of Tieck's I cannot agree with, as, for instance, that Hamlet seduced Ophelia, nor his opinion that *Timon's* saying, "He only saw one honest man, and he was a steward," was a delicate compliment to the Stuart (King James) then on the English

\* Shakespeare Illustrated, 3 vols. duo., 1753-4.

throne, nor that the magnificent and sublime passage wherein occur the words, "the great globe itself," had reference to the burning of the Globe Theatre. I object, too, to the change of words in HAMLET, proposed by Mr Knight, who would make Ophelia a veiled vestal.

We might spend a few minutes with the actors, and their stage directions of how certain things in Shakespeare should be done—observing how the great Kemble knocked a chair down, and how the great Garrick crossed a certain part of the stage when he came to a certain line of a certain passage. In an old quarto of 1603, the stage direction for the Ghost when entering the Queen's chamber, is, "Enter Ghost in his night-gown," not in armour. Now, why should the ghost of a gentleman go to his wife's chamber in armour? Fancy a ghost stumbling up-stairs to his wife's boudoir, armed *cap-a-pie!* The old editions sent him in his dressing-down, as a gentleman ought to go; but the modern ghost would be nothing without armour. Then, can anyone understand the clock-work way in which it is usual to talk the Ghost's speech? Have they a new sort of punctuation, a new code of grammar, in Purgatory, that a ghost should speak his words with such wonderful dashes, colons, and full points? Why make the Ghost give out his solemn speech with a series of jerks, as if he were anxiously listening for the cock-crowing? Spirit-rappers, if they choose, may summon Lindley Murray from the Land of Shades, and hear him answer, "Yes, I is;" but don't let us make *Shakespeare's* Ghost act in any other way than a gentlemanly ghost would be likely to do.

Then the character of *Juliet* is sometimes undertaken by such amateur actresses—ladies "fair, fat, and forty"—and such a bungle is sometimes made of that masterly ball-room scene, where the simple artfulness and innocent diplomacy of Juliet is so archly shown, that it may be safely said that if actors sometimes do their best, they very frequently also do their worst. But I will not be hard on the actors; for there are many who enjoy the labour of the poor players and then despise them—pharisees, who take their children from the school because an actor's daughter is one of the scholars, who probably would not be so

scrupulous about the children of directors of the Royal British Bank.\*

Shakespeare's plays are not always recognisable now-a-days. In some literary circles, if we want KING LEAR, we must ask for *Injured Love*; if RICHARD THE SECOND, for the *Sicilian Usurper*; if MEASURE FOR MEASURE, for *Law against Lovers*; if ROMEO AND JULIET, for *Caius Marius*; and so on. I suppose that by-and-bye THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR will be too vulgar, and we shall have to ask for *The Cheerful Partners-for-Life of Windsor*, or *The Mirthful Ladies of Windsor*, or something of the sort.

I warn you against commentators. There is much truth in the remark of a critic of critics, when he says, "After poring over the elaborate and controversial illustrations which are fastened upon every page, we can never read or remember any passage in the book without some indictable recollection of its base accompaniment; and instead of having our minds filled with the sentiments and imagery of Shakespeare, find them fatigued and depressed by the ponderous feebleness of his commentators." There is no getting a morsel of pure Shakespeare, in short, when we have once mixed him with these vile ingredients; and we recollect the happy days when we knew nothing of commentators and little of difficulties, with something of the same feeling with which we recall the irrecoverable innocence and simplicity of childhood. The aim of commentators appears to be to paint life, not as it *is*, but as, in their opinion, it *ought* to be. Shakespeare's chiefest merit is that he appreciated life as it is, and described it accordingly. He did not make kings necessarily heroes, nor heroes necessarily kings. These professed "improvers" of Shakespeare are all at fault. Happily, in the present day, Shakespeare is believed to be right until he is proved to be wrong. That he is wrong, wants a good deal of proof, and no one has yet been able to produce enough. Johnson and others took him to be wrong until they could prove him to be right; they commented upon him, patched him, misunderstood him, cobbled him, spoiled him. We of the present day are humble, but they were proud; we are rewarded, but they were abased. One looked down, the other looks up; the one went empty away, and the other is filled and rejoicing.

\* Rogues whose names were in the newspapers.

I hope that these lectures have combined instruction with amusement ; that they will assist in indicating the true beauties of our great poet, by contrast with the absurdities which have provoked your laughter. I will now conclude by re-asserting Shakespeare's unmendableness, and by advising all of you not to trouble yourselves with his "improvers."

SHAKESPEARE TERCENTENARY ADDRESSES :  
1864.

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT AN ENTERTAINMENT GIVEN BY "OUR  
SHAKESPEARE CLUB," BIRMINGHAM, APRIL 22ND, 1864.\*

THE task I have to perform is one which, if it could be as pleasingly done as it was pleasingly conceived, it would be well for the speaker. My duty is to welcome all present to this entertainment given by the "Shakespeare Club," a club which was probably, until now, unknown to many of you, but which I hope for the future may be sufficiently well known. If, in the entertainment this evening, you find anything faulty, you must consider that it is home-made, and excuse the faults; while, if there is anything pleasing in it, *we* may take a pride in it as being done by Birmingham people, and, for the most part, by members of the Shakespeare Club. I need not tell you that much of what you have listened to was the production of members of the Club, while in many matters thanks are due to gentlemen who have kindly come from a distance to help us. It may perhaps seem a little presumptuous for the members of a self-elected club to undertake in Birmingham the celebration of the tercentenary of the birth of Shakespeare, but we have waited for the great people of the town to move in the matter, and they do not. Neither the various learned bodies, nor the clergy, nor the artists, nor the musicians, have made any movement whatever towards the celebration of this great event. By what we have done, I think we may justify the title we have assumed, and prove our right to the name of the "Shakespeare Club," as having a great deal of reverence and de-

\* At this entertainment about 250 ladies and gentlemen were present, and the programme was as follows:—A Shakespeare Cantata, the words written by Dr Sebastian Evans, and the music composed by Mr Thomas Anderton; Address by Mr George Dawson, M.A., President; A Reading from the TEMPEST, by the eminent tragedian, Mr Phelps; and a Selection of Vocal Music.

votion for Shakespeare. For the majority of the club have taken up this matter in no spirit of play. There are among us men who thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon this country, and who feel that England has been granted few blessings greater than the birth of this poet, whose works were so long misunderstood, that the study of them may never be exhausted,—whose works are so wonderful that, although the patience of generations has been spent on them, yet for many long years still, able men must, with great pains and diligence, study them before they can get at a knowledge of all the wonderful depths to which his genius has pierced.

As members of the “Shakespeare Club,” we have all one object—to drive off the stage, out of print, out of the shop, and out of the parlour, all those detestable, mutilated, and altered versions of Shakespeare which are a disgrace to the nation. A mutilated Shakespeare, a Shakespeare made moral according to the morality of tattlers and tea-drinkers, we abhor and despise; and we are resolved to do what in us lies, so to set forth his excellences, and so to criticise his works, and so to get them represented on the proper place for them—the stage—as, by degrees, to turn out all these base, spurious, and foul alterations, “improvements,” and changes, which have made our literature disgraceful.

On this night we invite ladies to be present, because for men alone to celebrate the Tercentenary of Shakespeare, would be one of the most ungracious, ungrateful, unthankful, and barbarous things possible. If, when he was alive, William Shakespeare had been invited to an entertainment where there were to be no women, he would have been the last to come, and probably the first to go away. For, among the many excellences of that mighty and unfathomable mind, one of the chief was, if women only knew it thoroughly, that this man was their best friend, because he understood them better than any man who ever lived. We have reason to marvel how he knew all the passions of men, but how he knew all the passions and changes of a woman’s heart passes all understanding, and must remain one of the great mysteries which a future world only can clear up. Shakespeare was a man for woman to love. Those who knew him well called him “gentle Shakespeare,” and the word “gentle” did not then mean only meek and mild, but had the meaning which now



attaches, when used properly, to the word "gentleman." In this I do not mean the technical gentleman—not the snob of yesterday, made rich, and therefore made great; but the man of fine reverence for the feelings of other people; the man of tender heart and kind spirit; the man who always saw the good and evil of a thing, and who praised the good and excused the evil; the lover of little children, the lover of dogs, the lover of women, the lover of Nature, the lover of wine in moderation, the lover of all the gracious things in life. All this was William Shakespeare, who was the greatest gentleman this country has ever produced. If you doubt this, I would ask where will you find such a book of etiquette, in the greatest sense of the word, as in his plays? And, behind morality, men always need etiquette. It is not enough for a man to keep the commandments, to be loved. You cannot *love* a man for paying his debts, or for keeping sober. After morality, we need etiquette, to teach a man the grace of manner, of language, and of life, which must be added to morality, and of which Shakespeare was the greatest master.

He painted women so well that, whoever studies the great women of Shakespeare, studies every grace and charm proper for women to have. Some may say that it is impossible for a man ever to understand women; but against this it may be stated that the two sexes are in this world set to be spies upon each other. Man spies upon woman to find out whether she possesses what to him appears the very crowning-point of excellence, and women soon find out whether men possess the qualities they admire but do not possess. Of whatever quality man has and woman has not, she is a fine judge, and has for it a keen discernment. No woman can paint a woman thoroughly,—she can do it partially,—but it wants a man to do it thoroughly, and Shakespeare has done it thoroughly. Beginning with *Dame Quickly*, he has ascended as high as *Cordelia*, in whom he depicts all the virtues of womanhood. He knew the universal nature of women, and all their little weaknesses as well as their greatnesses. He was not a gallant man, for gallantry is nothing more than the ghost of a dead chivalry. He was a woman's man, but as for the ladies' man, the miserable mountebank of the ballroom—Shakespeare despised him. He did not call women "goddesses," because he knew that he could not live with a goddess. When a man calls a

woman a "goddess," how must he feel when he sees her eating bread and butter? And yet eating bread and butter is not a very wrong thing! In describing women, Shakespeare never gives an auctioneer's catalogue of their charms. Open any book of the time of Shakespeare, and you find women catalogued like pictures, their points set forth as though they were for sale, their love described as being of the earth, earthy; but open *his* works, and you find he could, without such cataloguing, picture heavenly and noble women among the ordinary beings of this life. There is a time in a young man's life when he wishes that women were immaterial, and that they did not eat so much—when he wishes they might have manna to feed upon, and that they would eat it out of sight. But this is a nonsense they get over in time, and a nonsense Shakespeare never shared in. He never flattered women; he never called them either angels or goddesses; he always called them simply women, and he knew all about them. Every woman who tells the truth must have wished she had had Shakespeare for a lover, since the man who painted *Juliet* must have understood everything connected with that noble passion. Then, if we mount from these things to *Cordelia*, we see Cordelia given by God to show how high a man must rise in the conception of a woman's character, and how it is possible for a woman to arrive almost at saintship on this side the Eternal Rest.

But Shakespeare did not invent these women; they were the noble women of England. He was a learned man, possibly not a graduate, but a learned man; one who knew men, and had read English history well. He had read of Alfred's mother, and how she taught him; he had heard of her of whom it was said,

"Hard was the hand that struck the blow,  
Soft were the lips that bled."

He had followed the history of Woodstock, and knew all that sad side of human life. He had heard the noble story of Margaret Roper, who, when her father was beheaded, with much prayer got the dissevered head, which she took with her home and kept until she died. When she went to her last rest, she ordered the head of her martyred father to be laid upon her bosom. Death came to see that sight, and the great conqueror must have then felt that love could outlive corruption, and was stronger than death.

These, then, are the reasons why women should love Shakespeare much: that he was such a gentleman, that he did so well understand all woman's excellences, that he so raised the ideal of what woman ought to be, and that he so much contributed to the slow effort which the wise men who love women have in all ages made to elevate them from the degradation to which they had been put by unwise and brutal men in old times. For these things, woman's heart ought to kindle in loving gratitude toward this true gentleman, this man who loved women so well, and understood them so thoroughly—the great Bard of Stratford.

As I have said before, it would have been ungracious in the extreme to sit down and celebrate Shakespeare and to forget the women. What would have been *Lea*r without *Cordelia*, Romeo without Juliet, Benedict without Beatrice? Take away from Shakespeare the women, and you leave much, but you have taken away the greatest and most glowing grace. I think you have done right, therefore, in inviting the ladies here to-night; the members of the Club are glad of the idea, and in the name of the Club I have to thank those who are present for accepting the invitation.

I now come to two pleasing duties—one is to stop talking, and the other to call upon Mr Phelps, who, with great kindness and great labour has come down this evening to give us a reading of the first part of one of the most glorious of the plays Shakespeare wrote—THE TEMPEST. Whatever may be the prejudice of individuals against the Stage, the Club does not share it, and if they do not like the Stage they can go away and read the play at home. I am happy to introduce to you Mr Phelps, whom many of you know well. He is one of the truest hearted, ablest, and most zealous members of that noble profession, the play-actor; a profession which has never sunk into disgrace, except when Shakespeare is neglected for the rant, balderdash, and licentiousness of an age which never understood his greatness, when scurrility was preferred to wit, and ribaldry to true nobleness.

SPEECH AT THE MAYOR'S BREAKFAST ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
PRESENTATION OF THE SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
TO THE TOWN, APRIL 23RD, 1864.

FOR reasons better known to others than to myself, I have been deputed to propose what is of course the toast of the day, "The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare." Now, there are few passions which God has implanted in man stronger than the love of permanence and perpetuation. Three score years and ten are allotted to man to live, and yet he aims at permanence. Some aim at obtaining a great estate, and to perpetuate it by the founding of a family who shall enjoy it after them; and others, to leave an illustrious and unsullied name recorded in the annals of their country. Almost everything a man does, in fact, is actuated by this passion at the bottom. If a man acquires large possessions, and begins to build a house, it is not a house for a day merely—he builds a house that will shelter his posterity for a length of time. If a thing is done well, permanence is contemplated, and posterity may find many a hope in this singular but glorious passion.

Homer, though he wrote some two thousand five hundred years ago, has never been changed in a single sentence, and his book has left a mark on the age which is indelible. Well, then, I say, let us have the books of old times. The man who invented a ship was thought to have invented the noblest thing that ever was conceived. Of all man's achievements the ship was one of the noblest, the most wonderful, and the greatest. But the ship sinks into its native vulgarity when compared with a book which, through the thought, the truth, the piety, and the devotion of centuries, is brought to us across the sea of centuries. Therefore I say, "Give us great books." Let us take the Old Testament. That is the ship of ships. The patriarchal piety, the grand Mosaic laws, the history of old David's sins and his repentances, are all handed down to us in it. And God has given us Shakespeare too, in order that we should find we had a ship of ships in his writings also—for there never was such a three-decker as Shakespeare. This great writer and thinker will endure to the end of time; and if ever the famous New Zealander should stand on the ruins of

London Bridge, and contemplate the material greatness of the past, he will find that the immortal memory of Shakespeare the dramatist and poet still survives.

If the Mayor will excuse me, I will say that the presentation of a Shakespearean library to him during his year of office will shed a lustre upon the Mayor's name, and I hope that I shall have the pleasure of putting his name in some of the books which will be contributed to the library. No institution, I am sure, will be regarded with more interest or delight than the noble library which it is our object to present to the town to-day. Already excellent, it will, in some few years time, form the finest collection of Shakespearean literature in Europe, except, perhaps, the collection in the British Museum. If he will only associate himself intimately with these books, we shall be enabled unaffectedly to exclaim, "He was a good fellow—God bless him." I give you "The Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare."

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ADDRESS GIVEN TO "OUR SHAKESPEARE CLUB," BIRMINGHAM;  
(APRIL 23, 1864).\*

THIS year is a year of years. Many of us have sailed up the world's greatest river, and have been impressed with the thought of the great crowd of historic remembrances of what it has borne upon its bosom. I am sure that those gentlemen from other lands who are present to-night will pardon me for saying that the THAMES is *the* river of rivers. Without wishing to be disrespectful to the Seine, or any of the great rivers of America, I must say the Thames is the river for me, for it bears upon its bosom the richest freights, washes the fairest shores, and its praises have been sung by the greatest of bards. If any of you have drawn near to London by that most beautiful highway, you must have been struck by the number and variety of the ships that sail its waters, you must have been certain that you were coming to some great centre of the world. There was the great big ship

\* Members and visitors present, about 120.

which had come across wide seas from far countries, and there was the little ship creeping slowly up the river, and carrying its humble contribution to the great central shrine. Then, when we come to look at *this day*—this three hundredth anniversary—and the barques of all sorts and sizes coming together in a cluster of books, cantatas, commentaries, plays, and performances; when we think of the central ship at Stratford-on-Avon, bearing its miscellaneous freight, and when we look at this little barque of ours, which is as well-built, better rigged, and pretty nearly as fully manned as the large vessel, we must believe that the cause which has brought us together is one of the greatest in the world; otherwise men so different in talent and in every other respect would never be sailing together towards the same great port, and doing united honour to the memory of the immortal bard with whom God blessed this England of ours.

I have a notion sometimes that—not talking much about religion myself, but, I hope, feeling it deeply—as every good thing is given by God, therefore William Shakespeare came not by any manner of accident. Whatever may be considered concerning the Divine will with regard to William Shakespeare, we cannot explain what was the difference between him and any little child born in Warwickshire on this day. There are those whose theory of human nature consists in chemistry—that the difference in genius is the amount of phosphorus, and that an increase of phosphorus is an increase of imagination. There are others who believe that whether a man is a Deist or a Polytheist depends very much upon his digestion and the development of muscle. I would ask those men whether there is any analysis fine enough, or any microscope sufficiently well adjusted to point out the great difference between Shakespeare and any other child born on the same day or in the same year; what were the special circumstances that operated upon him and upon no other English child? Whether we take the “phosphorus,” the “gorilla,” or the “digestion” theory, or whether we talk of what we do not understand, either in the low levels of materialism, or the impassable heights of spiritualism, we are driven back to this, that there was something in that man’s composition the presence of which we cannot detect, but which we must acknowledge. What it *was*, we do not know; what it *produced*, we can understand.

God gave to that wonderful mind much and peculiar power ; and when He gives much, it is that much to others may be given.

This man's works, it seems to me, were planned on a scale much too large for his own generation. We sometimes laugh at the dull people who take the poet in hand, but he has also been dealt with by great minds from the time of his birth up to the present ; and yet his study is not exhausted, or a Tercentenary would have been utterly impossible. Three centuries have passed, and he is not understood ; in three more, men will begin to understand him ; and in three more, or in six hundred years from now, men will be able to say, "At last Shakespeare is understood." I look upon him as planned with one great intention, that in him should be wrought out what, in deference to my clerical friends, I will call the lay duty of mankind. And, certainly, as the nations of the earth increasingly learn the English tongue—as they know it is their manifest duty to do,—if they embrace it as a duty, and go on to love it as a privilege, so it will be found that great men will increasingly confess all literatures merge in Shakespeare, all literatures are devoted to him, and all literatures end, as they all must begin, with him.

Though I cannot say that the critics of the great nation (France) we see so worthily represented this evening have treated Shakespeare any better than English critics have done—and if we say they have not treated him worse that is saying a great deal,—all of us who have seen the last contribution of French literature to our great bard, will know that France is just finding out his many excellences, just finding out his universal graces, and that when the crown is put upon his head—the crown not of a province or a nation, but of universal empire—one of the fairest jewels will be that of the French nation, which coming now just into the true understanding of him, has had that understanding, and the consequent love, intensified by its being fresher.

Shakespeare's works, by producing year by year fresh troops of critics, lovers, and admirers, will become the meeting point of all races. God confounded the tongues of Babel, and as a consequence different nations have distinct languages ; but why should not the pride of Babel be undone by the humility of Shakespeare ? Let all people sit at his feet and learn, and then of one tongue will

be all the nations of the world. But should other nations—as no doubt they will—obstinately persevere in speaking their own language, you will all agree with me that the spirit in which they speak being the same, the mere difficulties of language will be small in the scale. By this I mean that the study of Shakespeare is bound to promote the unity of mankind. As to Aborigines Protection Societies, he has nothing to do with them. I do not for a moment mean to assert that the bard will find a Zulu lover, a Kaffir commentator, or an original Red Indian admirer; but that that man was sent forth to be a true prophet of the great lay duties of man, and a representative of the human side of divine truth, I am year by year more forcibly convinced. When, later in the day, the clergy come in with their little frankincense and myrrh, their lateness is pardoned on account of the sweetness of the incense.

Amongst the clergy who hold adverse opinions to those entertained by the Shakespeare Club, there are some noble exceptions, for I remember an Archbishop who said the Bible and Shakespeare had made him an archbishop, and this to my mind is much more desirable than that it should have been done by Lord Shaftesbury or Lord Palmerston. On the other hand, there are many who take the opposite view, backed up by the dissenters, who are always too ready to assist them when darkness is their mission. You must have all read with delight the deliverance of some clergymen on this point. They have agreed, almost to a man, that the Bible shall remain in the pulpit, and that on their reading desks they will lay William Shakespeare,—not on Sundays, but on week-days. It may not be on the same lectern as the Bible, but upon one of a smaller pattern. If this were done, empty churches would begin to fill, strong benches would groan beneath the weight of attentive hearers, sleepers would be unfrequent, and the clergyman would cease to be looked upon as an anodyne.

Thus the great procession of William Shakespeare marches on. In some processions the place of honour comes last, and the clergy are now in the place of honour, come in time to give the benediction to the motley multitude that has gone before them. So we find unity to be established, because clergymen can unite with the laity in drinking, as we are about to do, in the style that



our Club does—not in mock solemn silence, because “he who being dead, yet speaketh” would ask no mock solemn silence—to the “Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare.”

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## OPHELIA'S FLOWERS : A WEEK-DAY SERMON FROM SHAKESPEARE

“There's a daisy:—I would give you some violets; but they withered all when my father died.”—*Hamlet*, Act iv., Scene 5.

HERE is a scene, whose surprising beauty saves it from being unspeakably sad. Such a medley of insane sorrow and fantastic thought! Such a mixture of heart-break and content. There is rosemary left, for remembrance; and there are pansies, for thoughts; and fennel, and columbines, and rue: but there is only one daisy left; and the violets are all gone, “they withered all when my father died.”

What an old story it is! The mood makes the world. The sun shines as brightly as ever, the hawthorn blossoms are as sweet, and the daisies and violets are all there, just as they always were; but, to the sorrowful heart, it is a dark and flowerless world. In truth, “things are not what they seem;” they are what we make them, or what others make them for us. If this were not so, we should be the fools we are sometimes said to be, for cherishing treasures that have not a marketable value. When we can be persuaded out of this “nonsense,” we shall sell our tattered banners for old rags, melt down our medals into shillings, make a bonfire of our ridiculous old parchments and worm-eaten books, and fling out of doors the little shoes and the old playthings, sacred to the memory of one who was once a child on earth, but is now an angel in heaven. Then, when we have done all this, we shall become wonderfully clever and perhaps cunning; we shall be disillusioned and sensible; we shall come to a “practical” knowledge of good and evil, and have our eyes opened; but we shall lose our Paradise, and not be able even to tell in what land to find it. When our little children die, we shall simply close an account; and when our heroes perish, we shall congratulate the nation on having saved a pension. We shall then have plenty of daisies, and endless violets, of a sort, when old friends die; and

the world will appear in no wise changed, because eyes that once shared the sight with us are now shut for ever. Of course, Ophelia was insane when she talked as she did ; that may explain her raving. And yet, O God ! ten thousand breaking hearts know what she meant, and how true it is, "I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died."

It was not that her father was anything exceptionally great, beautiful, wise, or good. He was, indeed, a far nobler character than he is generally thought to be ; a good father, too, and a wise man. Hamlet once aimed a shaft at him in saying, at the end of a conversation with him, "These tedious old fools !" But Hamlet was acting a part then, or, if insane, was not so much crushed with sorrow as "cracked" with a conflict of clamorous feelings. Polonius may have been a little "tedious," but he was not a "fool." Kind and considerate he undoubtedly was ; but, as I have said, not exceptionally great, beautiful, wise, or good. And yet, to this bright and beautiful girl, he was a part of the world's light and fragrance, and when he died, all the loveliest flowers withered. There were, evidently, other causes of grief, and other provocations of sorrow and insanity ; but it is clear that, with her father's death, the "rod" and the "staff" that "comforted" her were gone, and the poor brain reeled for want of them. But, in truth, it is always hard for love to explain itself, and love, in her case, if it could have soberly given an account of itself, instead of telling its sorrow in snatches of songs and pathetic sentences, would have found it difficult to say why such a loss should have bred such a sorrow, or why such a sorrow should have brought such an eclipse.

But we can give no account of this mystery of sorrow for the lost. It defies reason, it is proof against rebuke. No child can ever be so precious, and inhabit such deep recesses of the soul, as the child that is hidden out of sight.

"Not all the scalding tears of care  
Can wash away that vision fair ;  
Not all the thousand thoughts that rise,  
Not all the sights that fill the eyes,  
Shall e'er usurp the place  
Of that little angel face."

We must not be too hard with mothers who think and speak so, or complain of friends who think that the violets all died when

their old friends went away ; as though no more fragrance of love and friendship could be found again ; as though the world were henceforth given up to rosemary, for remembrance ; and pansies, for thoughts ; and fennel, and columbines, and rue ; but could grow violets never more.

Perhaps we are "wiser than we know" in this. What if, with the dust of the flesh, all that is weak, and common-place, and poor, really does fall away ? What if the face of the little child, who fled so early from its tiny nest on earth, is really a "little angel face" ? What if the father or the friend, who had his weaknesses and selfishnesses like other men, is now greatly promoted above his evil conditions, so that he is the wise, the good, and the gracious being love makes him out to be ? What if, in this, love, as in so many other things, is not blind, but wonderfully far-seeing ? What if our sense of loss, apparently so exaggerated, is really only a strange, misapprehended sense of gain,—as the possessors now of a child that has become an angel, or a father who has put away his failings, with his earth-vesture, in the grave ?

All our Ophelias do not go insane when their fathers die, but none the less do the violets wither for some of them. And, truly, they stand greatly in need of charity's tenderest sympathy, who, having been cared for all their lives by a good father who planned and strove that they might want for nothing, but live in the sunshine and be beautiful and happy, suddenly find that life means toil, and strife, and forethought, and the "hope deferred" that "makes the heart sick,"—who have to pay the world's price for daily bread, so difficult always for girls to win. Summer friends, who had known them when the world was as a garden of roses to them, and every day a holiday, will know them no longer. Eyes are red with work and weeping ; the sweet fragrance of youth is going, and the gay colours are all gone. Alas ! alas ! thousands of beautiful young Ophelias, not insane, are saying to-day— "Here is rue, in plenty ; and one poor daisy left ; I would give you violets, as I used to do, but they withered all when my father died."

This is not a fate to be lightly spoken of. It is so natural to wish to be bright, and winning, and free from care ; it is so hard to forego the sunshine that we may earn wages, and to see the face lose its beauty that the hands may win bread ; it is so pleasant to be sought, and loved, and admired ; it is so hard to

mix only with masters, bargain-makers, and self-seekers; it is so pleasant to have the hands filled with violets; it is so hard to put down the flowers and take up work. Farewell, old home, old pleasures, and old friends; there are no violets now: "they withered all when my father died."

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THE PRIESTHOOD OF POETS: A DISCOURSE AT THE CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR, BIRMINGHAM, ON SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 1864.\*

"As certain also of your own poets have said."—ACTS xvii. 28.

THE thoughts and words of a really great and wise man are ever valuable, if only as a guide to others in their own thoughts and words, and furnish a justification, if any such were needed, for the honour to be paid to a poet, when this quotation of the great Apostle of the Gentiles can be given as an example that he was familiar with the poets of old time, and was ready to use them in illustration of his words. St Paul recognised the fact that he had told them nothing new, that the old poet had held the existence and fatherhood of God, and the people then addressed had fallen away from the better faith of old times, and had become degraded and debased. In modern days, people have too commonly taken the New Testament as a code of laws. They have forgotten that it is a book of principles and not of laws; that it is meant to rule the spirit and regulate the passions of man, and not to lay down all the petty details of ordinary life. They have sought methods of government, forms of worship, commercial regulations, and common rules of life, in what was primarily meant only to lay down the principles from which all good must flow. The New Testament was not meant to settle the many questions which have been constantly referred to it. It was not meant to show that usury is wrong, or that commercial freedom is right, but to lay down noble principles for the general guidance of life, leaving to other books and other men the necessary details which national and individual life wanted.

\* There was a large congregation, and the members of "Our Shakespeare Club" were present.

Hence, the New Testament has nothing to say about the universal passion, the love of man and woman, the matrimonial state, and a score of other matters most interesting to all ; it leaves the task to other and perhaps more fitting guides. It gives us the marriage at Cana, and the glorious turning of water into wine, as consecrating the relations of ordinary life ; but it has no directions in detail for many of the momentous businesses of life. It leaves directions on these things to be sought from other sources, and to be learned from other guides. Hence, in all places and all times God has sent some great poet to express the national loves, and hopes, and fears ; to elevate, ennoble, and refine a people by hopes of the future, reflections of the present, and pictures of the past.

In our land we have been celebrating the birth of one whose genius has made his name famous throughout the world, and whom every class of Englishmen should honour as he deserves. All who have any true poetry within them must have felt, with fitting reverence, how cold and passionless are the pages of the New Testament so far as the glories of God's great world are concerned. Sometimes a ray of glory lights up the page when the "Man of Sorrows" takes the lily for a text, discourses upon the sparrow's fall, or walks with his disciples through the golden fields, ripening for the harvest under a Syrian sun. Still, the men who wrote as if their lives had been passed within the cold walls of a convent cell, where the glories of the natural world are never seen, had a high and noble work to do—to rebuke the sins and crimes of the old world, and bring the people back to God. The other work, of seeing God in his great creation, has been left for other hands, and the poet comes to look with clear eye upon the glories of the world, and to show what is beautiful and loveable in Nature and in man. The Church has its great work in later days to follow out the Scripture teaching, and bring man back to God. It has to administer, as it were, the holy rite of baptism to those worn and stained with sin and sorrow, just as a mother looks lovingly after her little children, prepares them for their school or play, and receives them when each is over into her gentle care. The good old phrase of "Mother Church" means more than is usually thought ; for no church which is not motherly in its love, and tenderness, and care, can ever win the love of the masses of man.

kind, or of the truly thoughtful in all ranks of life. Outside the church, there is the great work of life to be accomplished ; and, just as in ordinary life, when the service of the day is over, the intercourse of ordinary life is renewed, as after hearing the glorious words of the Master, the hearers rejoined their friends, and strolled among the glories of the natural world ; so, in the truest spirit of poetry, a wise man will leave the great lesson of St Paul, and step into the church porch to talk with good George Herbert or William Wordsworth, and to mix with the great world of men and women which William Shakespeare has formed.

The true poet is the true interpreter of the passions of men, and the true observer of what all feel but few can express. It is his work to put into clear, plain words what human hearts have felt and suffered, hoped and feared ; and just as in a deputation, when the spokesman has not come, the poor dumb members are speechless, waiting for him who alone can put into proper words what they all feel and have come to say, so, in the works of every great poet, and of Shakespeare above all, every phase of human hope, every variety of human passion, all its sweetnesses and sadnesses, all its woes and hopes, are eloquently and gloriously set forth.

All the great questions about religion and science, religion and poetry, religion and common life, might be fully solved by recognising that every great man has his special and apportioned work to do. The Scriptures and the Church have to lay down and enforce the great principles of truly religious life, and the poets and the men of science have their work to do, in showing God's great beneficence in the natural world, and leading men to know each other and themselves. In the vast world in which we live, all things work together harmoniously, and tend to one great end, and while the so-called serious world looks with suspicion upon poets and all which is not to be found within the pages of the Sacred Books, the wiser among men will look upon all great poets as God's great ministers for enlivening life when church work is over, to help the dumb and inarticulate in the expression of love and reverence to God and man, and the humble and lowly, as well as the noble and the gifted, to see in all creation the marvellous work of an Almighty hand.

[\* \* \* The reporter confesses that this is but a brief and imperfect sketch of a most impressive and eloquent discourse.]

## PLAYING AND PLAYERS :

A SPEECH GIVEN AT THE ANNUAL DRAMATIC SUPPER,  
OCTOBER 26TH, 1866.

IN this town we have broken through the custom, which I think rather an absurd one, of drinking to the "Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare" in what is called "solemn silence." Why there should be any solemn silence about the honouring of the toast I could never see, and so I am glad we have broken down the idle practice. The toast I have to propose is "The Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare," a toast often proposed in this town (never too often), and always received with the greatest zeal. And I am sure that in the present company, in which there are so many—I will not call them actors, for that is not William Shakespeare's word, but players, a good old word, and to my taste better than the modern one, I am sure, I repeat, that in this company there can be no long apology necessary for bringing such a toast forward.

Let me remind you that in drinking such a toast as this we are drinking to the memory of a man who could join together all the orders, classes, professions, and callings in this great and varied life, of which they are all parts. William Shakespeare, if men were wise, might be read in Convocation; archbishops might gather together and settle his text; and learned deans might do themselves great credit in determining his meanings. He might be taken up by preachers: indeed, I have heard a preacher quote Shakespeare thinking it was Solomon. The preacher was rather confused in his references. I can honestly say that it did not matter; for what the preacher did say was so exactly true, so awfully wise, and so admirably put, that whether it was written by Shakespeare or Solomon mattered little; for God has many voices, and it is as likely he should speak through the one man as through the other.

Then there is no profession and no calling of consequence to

which William Shakespeare has not been supposed to belong ; but, happily, he refuses to belong to any parish or party, or to any sect—his works are the unity binding together the civilised humanity of all the world. In William Shakespeare the nations see their greatest scholar, and in the study of his immortal writings lies one of the greatest hopes of true community by all the civilised peoples of the world.

I have the greatest possible pleasure in proposing this toast in company to me, I must say, somewhat novel, for I never had before to preside over a supper that bore the title of a Dramatic Supper, and if I were to say that when I was first asked to do so, a remnant of some old puritanical scruple did not, like a ghost, for a moment cross the scene, I should not tell the truth. But, as I do with all ghosts, outward or inward, that ever trouble me, I looked him in the face. I remembered how *Hamlet* challenged his father's ghost to tell him whence he came, and so, to this dim ghost of a scruple as to whether a man of my cloth ought to preside over a supper of men of the player's quality, I returned a steady look in the face, and found that a more dismal, wretched attempt at a ghost no man was ever haunted with—it was the dreariest, turnip-headed sheet-and-lantern impostor that could possibly be ; and, therefore, I have exceeding pleasure in being present on this occasion, because thereby I hope I may be able to strike a blow at fogeysim in religion. I have a profound contempt for those who, granting that the players, when on the stage, and ministering to their pleasures, show the possession of a great amount of intellect, are content to look upon the same players off the stage as something quite out of the pale of their little society. If the majority of those who see a play had a tithe of the brains of those who play the play, the work of national education in this country would be almost done, and we might close our libraries, shut up our schools, and believe that the millennium had come. Therefore, I have very great pleasure to-night in being in the present company. It is not for me to speculate why I have been asked to preside; whether it is to lend a dull decency to the scene, or whether it is to learn some professional hints from those present, and so mend my elocution, I cannot tell ; but suffice it to say that you have thought it fit to invite me, and I have seen it not only fit but highly pleasing to accept the invitation.



I have great pleasure in proposing the toast (which I have often proposed before in other companies) to men like those I see before me—men who not only read, know, and understand Shakespeare, but who are able to make others see and understand him, for it is not given to every man to understand everything at first hand. A large and important class in this world are the interpreters, those who come between the mighty master and the humble, enquiring multitude, which would never see what there is in Shakespeare if it were not that his written words become spoken words, that the human eye with all its wondrous power, the human voice with all its wondrous inflections, the human limbs capable of suggesting everything that can be suggested, are brought to the interpretation of the text. When men become wise, they will understand that going to see a play is not only the most intellectual pastime they can have, but is the appointed means of interpreting the written word to the multitude of mankind. It is not given to many men to get at all that Shakespeare means by reading him; and when some man who can read him well and then play him thoroughly steps between them, the mighty master is made plain to the lowly people—for a good actor lays one hand in the hand of the poor and ignorant, and the other in the hand of the great man whose works he interprets, and so becomes an admirable ambassador between the two, by whose agency that which without his interpretation had not been possible is rendered easy and plain. Therefore it is that I propose “The Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare.”

[“The health of Mr George Dawson” having been proposed, Mr Dawson responded as follows:—]

I was early brought up to believe that there is only one thing of which a man ought to be ashamed in this world—doing what he knows to be wrong. Short of that, all crafts and callings in this world, provided they are right in their intention, just in their carrying out, and honourable in their end, are honourable—there are, of course, degrees of honour among them, but there is no degree of right and wrong. I am reminded of the old words of George Herbert’s which say, “He who sweeps a floor, if he but do it dutifully, sweeps that floor to God.” I have no patience with those miserable lines of latitude and longitude which are drawn by some people in looking at the nature of things, and deciding what is right and what is wrong.

I am sorry that any apologetic tone should have been assumed, either by myself or by anyone else in speaking of my appearing here. I have certainly had great pleasure in being here. I think I can call to mind, not one actor only of eminence, or one actress only, that I have seen listening to me. I have seen them on Sundays more than once; and I have seen some very celebrated actors in London come—I believe between the pieces—to hear me lecture, and I have been warned beforehand that if they went out before I had done I was not to look fiercely at them, as they had to return to the theatre to discharge their duties. I remember once Mrs Stirling taking a snatch of hearing me, and having to run away before I had finished to return to the theatre. It is but fair play, then, that those who have listened to my performances should expect that I should also listen to theirs. I can only say that from players I have received many a lesson of expression, and hope that if I do my duty as well as some of the gentlemen present, we shall alike receive the honour that is due to us. I say the honour that is due to us, because I consider that every man or woman that attempts to make any other man or woman a little less a fool, and a little more intellectual than he or she finds them, is working in the one great work of lifting men up from their near neighbourhood to the apes and to the beasts that perish, and bringing them at least one step nearer to the truest neighbourhood a man can have—God-likeness in feeling, in conscience, and in heart.

I thank those present for the very hearty way in which my health has been drunk. Alexander wept when there were no more worlds to conquer. I do not know if I may flatter myself, and say that I have conquered the dramatic world of Birmingham. I have this day been amongst the clergy, amongst aldermen, amongst men of various callings, and I never am so delighted as when I can, in the course of one day, go from the North Pole to the South. I do like to see a wedding and a funeral, and hear a play and a sermon, in one day, because that is but a representation of this many-coloured life to which we all belong; and if, therefore, I have won any of the hearts of my hearers to-night, I am exceedingly happy, and I only hope I shall have the tenacity to hold what it seems—if I am to believe those present—I have had the grace to win.

## ANNIVERSARY SPEECHES.

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE MAYOR'S DINNER, APRIL 23, 1868,  
TO CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF THE SHAKESPEARE ME-  
MORIAL LIBRARY.

I THANK the Mayor, on behalf of "Our Shakespeare Club," for his Worship's gracious invitation and generous hospitality. Our Club, which always dines on the 23rd of April, has pleasure in giving way to a Corporation which has shown itself to be one of genius, intellect, and learning, as I have always found it to be of good public government and economy. I thank the Corporation for their enlightened and generous conduct in reference to the Shakespeare Library—the greatest monument ever raised in this country to the greatest man this country ever produced. Town Councils have not often such an opportunity, and when they have are not often quick to avail themselves of it. In writing the history of this generation, it would be one of the most significant items that the Corporation of this great industrial and manufacturing town had given a *carte blanche* for the raising of a monument to Shakespeare, to consist of all the literature which that wonderful genius has created.

Sometimes the Town Council may think that their peculiarities provoke a smile and their eccentricities a laugh, that their wisdom is questioned, and so forth; but babies are not so often pinched in hatred as in paroxysms of love. Town Councils are connected with all that is noble, healthy, and great in old England, and I am proud to see the Birmingham Town Council emulate the glories of the Councils that ruled over Italy in the days of her freedom. Having watered the streets, seen to the drainage, lighted the lamps, and laid down stones with a prodigality which at least puts a check on the pride of horse-flesh, it is surely creditable to see them turning their attention in quite another direction, and first providing libraries for the people, and afterwards raising the most admirable monument yet built to a genius; for in a few years the

Shakespeare library will be one of the quaintest in existence—it will be unique. It is already one of the greatest curiosities in Birmingham, and the Town Council, which has found time to attend to it, with multifarious other duties, has shown that the range of its love and interest is the range of humanity. I thank the Corporation most heartily for the large and generous spirit in which they have indulged what at first may have seemed a hobby, but in which I am sure the Town Council will in a few years take as much pride as I do myself.

Lest a few members of that body should feel inclined to think that a great deal of money has been spent on a little, I would have them remember what town it is that they belong to ; and also that while a ring on the finger may seem a small thing, the beauty of the workmanship, the pureness of the stone, the admirableness of the genius which has worked upon it, and the labour used to polish it, form the true measure of value. Though the room opened to-day is a little one, I am sure the Library will shine as a gem of the first water on the finger of the Corporation of Birmingham.

I congratulate the Town Council on their promotion, and hope they will never come down from the lofty position they have taken. They may think I am jesting ; but can anybody point out any other Town Council that has met under its Mayor on Shakespeare's birthday, or has ever raised such a monument? It is not celebrated in English story, and I am glad the Birmingham Town Council is the first to do its duty in that wider sphere in which local parliaments, if true to themselves, may have traditions as noble in their kind as those of the imperial Parliament itself.

I have to propose "The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare." What a great subject, and what a feeble exponent ! But, of the many things that might be said, what shall I say? In the first place, as an Englishman, I maintain that England is the choicest place on the earth. I don't wish it to be pre-eminent by keeping other nations in the background ; I wish it to be chief among many brethren. Manufacturers come home in a cold shiver from Paris to say that we can no longer be supreme in the manufacture of tea-pots. But England is likely to remain supreme in one thing at least—the genius of William Shakespeare. The Germans confess themselves, with delight, his disciples. The French are

beginning to understand that all their poets combined and multiplied tenfold, can only reach to about the shoe-tie of Shakespeare. The people of the United States are proud that they speak the language of Shakespeare. In short, whatever danger there may be of England failing to excel the world in the manufacture of tea-pots, she is supreme in intellect, and that is the supreme gift. Kant said that two things struck him dumb—the starry heavens, and the sense of right and wrong in the human soul. To these I would add a third—the genius of William Shakespeare.

In what was he different from other men? One illustrious *savant* said there was no imagination without phosphorus; another lays great stress on the necessity of gluten; but, leaving these things,—which are all inadequate to explain the mystery of genius,—refuge must be taken in the Book of Job, and the genius of Shakespeare must be confessed to be "the inspiration of the Almighty." But it will be asked, "Is it quite so certain that Shakespeare was a great man? Didn't William Cobbett think he was a good deal overrated?" Cobbett could not find any advice in Shakespeare about growing turnips. How should Cobbett know? How shall they whose talk is a cackle understand William Shakespeare the poet? The characteristics of a poet are the seeing eye, the feeling heart, the eloquent tongue. In illustration of the manner in which everyday incidents are spiritualised by the poetic faculty, take Burns' exquisite imagery, comparing sensual pleasure to snow-flakes falling on water:—

"A moment white,—then melts for ever."

In conclusion, I call upon you to drink, with heart and soul, "The Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare."

TOAST AT "OUR SHAKESPEARE CLUB," APRIL 23, 1869.

IN proposing "The Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare" for the fourteenth time, I have to congratulate you on the moral growth of Shakespeare, as shown by the increasing popularity and

appreciation of his works. The partial and prejudiced views of even a few years ago have been out-grown, and the genius and glorious influence of Shakespeare are now fully and generally felt wherever our English tongue is known. Not only so, but his works are translated into nearly every civilised language, and the wondrous fidelity of his personations and universality of his genius are now accepted beyond all question.

Mr Dawson concluded one of his best addresses amid great applause, and the "Immortal Memory" was duly honoured.

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SPEECH AT "OUR SHAKESPEARE CLUB," APRIL 23, 1871.

MR DAWSON, in giving "The Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare," said—Once again I have to propose this toast, though I have to apologise for not being amongst you last year (for I think that ill health requires an apology sometimes, because it is unworthy of a man). I cannot pity you for your loss, nor can I expect pity from you for my misfortune, for I understand that our vice-president, Mr Sam. Timmins, so well performed his duty, and so well filled my place, as to make some of you regret that two should be present when both are so entirely able to do the work of the one. If anything could reconcile me to being far away from the gathering last year, it was that our vice-president showed how fit he was to have been what I have long desired him to be, our president, for I am capable of descending to his place with satisfaction, and to see him ascend to mine with sincere admiration and applause. But though I lost your company last year, I had, as you know, the company of strange scenes in strange lands, of palm trees and Bedouin, of camels, and the glorious river Nile. Nor was I deserted by Shakespeare: his all-reaching genius was present in that strange land, and I beheld Cleopatra as she floated down the Nile, and, thanks to his wondrous skill, Egypt glowed to a glory, borrowed from an Englishman, that all the pyramids have not been able to shed upon that woe-begone and God-forsaken land.

With this apology for my absence, I take up the broken thread of two years ago. I have to propose to you a man whom to propose is to stop all eloquence, and to beggar all thought; for there is confusion in profusion, and he who has the task to choose often hesitates which road he shall take. He who has ne'er a coat is ne'er pestered which he shall put on, but he who rejoices in a multitude of garments is oftentimes bewildered as to which he shall don, and which shall have the sweet duty of exhibiting to the world his multitudinous charms. There are some men whose lives are perhaps limited in their width, small in their proportion, and arid in their barrenness; but, speaking of Shakespeare, one cannot but recall to mind a short but one of the bitterest satires of Juvenal, who, having Rome for his field, and human nature for his subject, said

" Quidquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,  
Gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli est," \*

or, as translated for those who, like Shakespeare, do not happen to have had the advantages of a grammar school, not, however, in my own language, but as rendered by De Quincey: "Yea, all that is done by men,—movements of prayer, panic, wrath, revels of the voluptuous, festivals of triumph, or gladiatorship of intellect,"—there poor Juvenal stops in enumerating the materials of his book; and there, where the Roman is exhausted, the sublimer Englishman seems to begin. Shakespeare touches the Romans, and they grow great under his touch; he baptizes them in his Christianity, and they grow greater than the originals. When Juvenal had said all his little say, and exhausted all his little stock, the Englishman—born in this changeful climate, in this island of islands, in this marvellous land of sunshine and shade, of gloom and gladness, which the world cannot exceed in beauty—takes it up, and where Juvenal stops, Shakespeare begins. The full meridian smell of flowers, the glories of Nature, the simplicity of the shepherd, the sweetness of the forest, the deep gloom that oaks do throw—these things were unknown to the Roman; but the great Englishman carries us to the fair forest of Arden, and brings before us once again the glory of our childhood, and shows us once more the beauties that lie around us.

To me—though it has been my lot to propose "The Immortal

\* *Juvenal*, First Satire, lines 85, 86.

Memory of William Shakespeare" for many years—this subject is not exhausted. I am not tired of it, and I only trust that you are not; for there is no exhaustion in a cup of so vast a character. That mighty fountain has never run dry; no man ever carried a cup to Shakespeare's fountain and came away dry, except his conscience was stained, his soul soiled, his intellect marred, and his nobleness ruined and trampled down in the world. He who holds the cup to Shakespeare's fount comes home full to the brim with the water of life—I say it very solemnly—the very water of life. Paul himself might have envied Shakespeare's large knowledge of humanity; for he preaches best who knows best to whom he preaches.

We have to congratulate ourselves on the fact that Shakespeare is now being studied by the young as an English classic; that slowly and surely the wanton waste of the mind of this country with regard to our literature is disappearing, and that our little Club has done something to put an end to that most shameful state of things. In the teaching of this country, the youth of England are left unacquainted with the literature of England. What are Shakespeare, and Milton, and Marlowe, and Chaucer, but a forest of unexampled greatness—the whole garden of God, full of bloom, and beauty, and sweetness, such as no other literature or language can give? Classical languages are taught at the Universities without an insight being given into classical literature. The capacity for enjoyment, in youth, of the works waiting for them in English literature, and the power for taking in greatness, are being brought about by the study of Shakespeare. We have lived, we have fought, we have wrestled, until at last our good fortune is to see such a school-book as Shakespeare.

Why should Shakespeare be tinkered with and altered as has been the fashion in this country? Let all who would do this, study Shakespeare, know what he means, understand what he says. At last, then, they have condescended to a school book of the mighty master. No longer does the mighty master walk about the world dressed in the queerest of dresses. Poor Shakespeare! they used to give him a pair of trousers of the reign of George III. Shakespeare's works are not for men to alter, but to simply sit down and imitate, admire, and adore. We have come to see that Shakespeare is to be understood, that he is to be allowed to have



a grammar of his own, that his language is a wonderful language by itself, and that it is sufficient of itself, not to be altered, amended, tinkered with, or apologised for, but to be reverently studied, set forth, and understood. So, at last, we have come to see the day when fiery youth is to be allowed to walk knowingly and reverently into the great garden of Nature, and when there is a prospect of the former state of divorce being ended, and youth, with its passionate power of enjoyment, and Shakespeare, with his passionate power of development, shall come together—enlarging the knowledge of youth, heightening its intellect, and increasing its power.

Since I met you last, a miserable bugbear has been raised, called "the effacement of England." I have heard that poor old England is to be "effaced." The whole phrase savours of cant, and sounds of hollowness. If "the effacement of England" means that we have ceased to meddle with complicated continental squabbles for ideas, and that England has withdrawn from cloudy disputes to bring about things that are not, then I am glad to be "effaced." But I feel that as long as Shakespeare remains to be studied, and is studied, there are few moments when the glory of England can be touched.

Yet, if this land should fall into misery, who knows but that the power to quote Shakespeare may, like a mystic touch, enable an Englishman, when away in other lands, to feel himself a brother, and at home. Our point then is this, that it is in vain—and who can help it?—it is in vain to keep personality out of these matters; and though there may be anniversaries which are a misery to keep, though there are days in a man's life which he would fain blot out, yet in meeting together to celebrate the memory of Shakespeare, there is no growing age, and no increasing frost upon the head,—though frost upon the head is no guarantee of frost upon the heart. Ofttimes the snow descends upon the heads of mountains whose hearts are full of fire. I have seen Etna with a hoary head, while still the volcanic fires burned below. Count not, then, that a white head means necessarily a cold heart. If we lived to the age of the patriarchs, and then took our departure to the tomb, Shakespeare would be there with his book, and, turning to some wonderful passage, would say, "Did I not tell you so?" As men get older, Shakespeare is just as dear to

them as when young. Should you and I meet twenty years hence, although that is not likely—would to God it were so!—at three score years and ten Shakespeare will be just before me still, beckoning me to go on, opening some new object, revealing some new meaning, throwing upon life some new beauty, and adding to the glory of youth the calm patience and deep understanding of manhood.

So I have simply once again to call your attention to this immortal man, the greatest of mortal intellects, the largest receptacle of human emotions; and I had the same pleasure in doing so twenty years ago when I loved him with a passion, as I have at fifty years of age, when I love him with a passion and with an understanding. Shakespeare still remains master, supreme, king, and my experience is that every year in life increases our understanding of him. If therefore we reverently study to the end this great man, he will remain to us what he has been to many others—the one great guide and interpreter of man in his greatness and in his lowliness, in his nobleness, and in his meanness too.

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SPEECH AT "OUR SHAKESPEARE CLUB," APRIL 23, 1872.

IN proposing "Our Poet" Mr Dawson said—I dare not think how many years I have had to propose, not only "The Immortal Memory," but the constant regard, patient study, and continued priesthood of William Shakespeare. For, if ever there was a primate of all England, Shakespeare is that man. Nay, more than that; looking into a curious little book, written by a dear lover of Shakespeare, I remember that the author calls him "the plenipotentiary of the human race." I admit that "plenipotentiary" is rather an ugly word, but what does it mean? *Fulness of power* in a people's representative. That man knew the human race through and through, from Caliban to Hamlet, from the lowest sensualism up to the loftiest piety; he knew the whole human race, and of the thousand characters he has drawn, everyone has

got a character of his own. That tells the poet, the artist, the master. He never draws portraits, he only pushes forward people. To draw portraits is cheap—the sun will do it after a fashion; but to throw life into a thousand characters, and for each of them to be as individual as though they were living characters, each of them one only, himself and no other—it never has been surpassed.

But this is not the point on which I wish to enlarge now. My peculiar theism will perhaps shock some, but if it does, it will be because it is a deal deeper than theirs. My sublime theism is: not an occasional God, looking in now and then upon a nation, and inspiring here and there a prophet, but having every creature that He ever made entirely in his love, under his eye, and under his hand, so that, at every moment, every man, woman, and child, every grain of sand, every fleck of sea-foam, every leaf is exactly where it ought to be, for the eternal good of all. My theism is this: that God has never forgotten any man, forsaken any man, any nation, or any thing; that there is nothing but what He intended, meant, ordered, and arranged. Therefore, in this overpowering theism, which is the joy of my age, I have no difficulty about Shakespeare; God intended him, meant him, sent him; sent him exactly where he was, exactly what he was; taught him, enabled him to do what he did.

Speculating in sleepless nights, it occurred to me, Why did Shakespeare have so comparatively obscure a life? Why was he such a gentle, genial, straightforward, thoroughly natural man that nobody took much account of him? He had no eccentricities; he was too wise. Why was it? In order that he and his teachings might sink down quietly into an unthinking race, and that thinking they had got a book of plays, they should find they had a Commentary on the Gospel, the newest Bible, the sweetest, truest teachings of the truths of the future that the world ever had. Are people angry because he was not a bishop? Had he been a bishop he might have burnt Puritans, or been reviled by them. Emerson says—and at first I revolted against it, because it seemed to be true—that the fault of Shakespeare is that there is nothing of the priest about him, that there is no conscious attempt to lift man from where he is to where he ought to be. No "conscious attempt"—that is where it is; the stupid world receives a book

of plays, and knows not what it has got. If Shakespeare's teaching had come in evangelical form, the world would have scorned and rejected his book as a moral treatise ; but—only a book of plays—oh, they took it, and a choice soul here and there knew what it was, and it sank into the world, and edition after edition has come out.

A player ; only a player, and only a poet. But what does a man find who reads Shakespeare? The sweetest teaching of gentle, humanising, gracious influences that has ever been known since the days of the Apostles. In an intolerant and bigoted age, he taught tolerance, longsuffering, patience, mercy ; in a barbarous and warlike age, he taught peace and gentleness ; in a day when manhood was considered to be in prowess, he taught it to consist in gentleness, mercy, and forgiveness. If he had been a preacher, the fools would not have heard him, or we should have had a sect called "The Shakespearean," to do what most sects have done—dog's-ear the book of their master, misunderstand his precepts, and caricature him before the world. That has been the manner of churches and sects. They have dog's-eared Moses and Jesus Christ, and drivelled, and dabbled, and messed over any great man that came into the world, until they have made a sect out of him. But this man was only a poet, an author, a dramatist ; nobody seemed to know much about him ; his book was brought home, and there quietly it lay till, like some bulb, in due time it expanded, and out of this treasure, which would not have been brought home if it had been labelled "Religious Sect," "Politics," or "Party," grew the sweetest flowers and finest fruitage that has grown out of the works of any man of the modern world.

You and I have long passed those foolish stages where divines and pious people of all sorts discourse whether Shakespeare was a moral writer. If he were *only* that, I should not care much for him. I might then put Shakespeare along with Mrs Barbauld, Dr Doddridge, and Dr Watts. Morals! Shakespeare rises above morals. There has been no sweeter preacher of the religion of Jesus Christ since Christ lived than William Shakespeare. No man ever drank in more fully the distinctive features of the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not morality, is not teaching men how to keep themselves clean, but teaching them divine-

ness — the divineness of forgiveness, of perpetual mercy, of constant patience, of endless peace, of perpetual gentleness. If you can show me one who knew these things better than this man, then show him; I know him not. In an evil day, Shakespeare taught the most gracious and gentle precepts—too good to have been received if men knew what they were taking. There are things in Shakespeare that he would have been burned for, if he had not been a player. There is heresy enough to have carried him to endless stakes, political liberty enough to have made him a glorious Jacobin in evil days, and carried him to destruction and doom. If he had appeared as a divine, they would have burned him; as a politician, they would have beheaded him. What would the Tudors have made of him if they had been wise enough to understand him? But God made him a player.

I do not ask for Shakespeare that he teaches us anything entirely new. I value the scientific man according to the newness of his discoveries and the strangeness of his works; but the human heart has no fashions and customs. Shakespeare deals with the secret of tears, and the anatomy of tears has never changed. What is the crowning glory of a man? It is mercy. For to me the eminent beauty of the Christian faith is, that it preaches of God always merciful, at all times and under all circumstances, and I know no human chorister who has lifted up so holy an Amen to the sweet cry of the perpetual mercy of God as English William Shakespeare. His were not merciful days, but fierce, fighting, stern, bloody, barbarous; and this man, whom people thought simply jolly, wrote such lovely books that now the world treasures them in hundreds of editions. Who can tell how many people have pondered over them? and they teach this—that kindness is nobler ever than revenge:

"Earthly power doth then show likest God's,  
When mercy seasons justice."

He teaches that this work of retribution in human hands is havoc, and not justice:

"Though justice be thy plea, consider this,  
That in the course of justice none of us  
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy." —(*Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1.)

And when Warwick says, "So bad a death argues a monstrous life," what does Shakespeare say, speaking through the king? "Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all." Shakespeare's book being only a book of plays, the sinners bought it. Some of us, if we see "Divinity" marked on the back of a book, do not purchase it; but if we see "Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare," we buy it. And is it not a precious thing that the world has been taken in? Is it not charming that this genial, gracious man, who never looked a parson, who never wore bands, who never was smug, who liked his glass, and loved the world, and enjoyed it through and through; is it not a beautiful thing that this man should have embalmed and embodied in his works the lessons of peace, gentleness, mercy, patience, and long-suffering? He was no priest, he waved no censor, and troubled the world with no incense; he understood his God too well to suppose that he was to be pleased with things like that. Who can tell, when we consider the thousands of souls who have learned the lessons of Shakespeare, how much he has done to humanise, nay, to Christianise mankind? If this Club had power to canonize anybody as having done well to humanity, and deserving to join the choir of the saints, I know no man whom I could propose, and no man whom it would be so difficult for any man to be Devil's advocate against, as William Shakespeare. All the fathers combined could not hit the heart of humanity as this poor poet player. He did not try to make men better, he had no need; he only needed to write, and he gave an inheritance of betterment that will last the world as long as it lives. His doctrine "distils as the dew," and many a man who has read the "Merchant of Venice," and that sad drama of a sinful soul, and that terrible attempt to pray of the *King* in HAMLET, has read homilies more precious than the homilies of the Church, lessons as sweet or sweeter than any that have fallen on the world since the days of the Apostles. Those who have read Shakespeare have found the Scripture to be true—"Entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." I opened my house to Shakespeare, and found I had entertained an angel messenger of the Almighty God.

## SPEECH AT "OUR SHAKESPEARE CLUB," APRIL 1873.

IN proposing the toast, Mr Dawson said—Gentlemen of the Shakespeare Club, and visitors, whose presence is much desired and much enjoyed, in rising once more—I dare not tell you how many times it now makes count—to propose the great toast of the evening, let me remind you that a fraternal kindness of yours continues to put this task upon me. It is impossible for me to remember what I may have said before. I am certain that anything I have said before, if I had to say it again to-night, would be better said; for if it should lack something of the fire of youth, it would have the lowliness of experience, of sin, of sorrow, and of suffering. If, therefore, I go over any part I have before spoken upon, forgive it.

In fixing on what I should say to you, it is natural that, in a company which may be almost looked upon as a brotherhood—for there is hardly a man here whom I may not reckon as almost a brother of mine in kindly feeling, and in real manly love of the Elizabethan kind, when men were not ashamed to call one another "dear," and to love one another as men ought not to be ashamed to love—it is natural, I say, that I should look upon the age at which Shakespeare died. That age is mine. But I call to mind the privilege he had which is not mine, and, as far as I can see, it will be long delayed; and that is, the privilege of what is called "retiring from life." Now, I do not know in the history of manhood anything so utterly wondrous as the retirement of Shakespeare, as it is called, from life. He retired when he was comparatively young; but remember, he did not throw up what he had never known—he did not affect to throw away the pomps and vanities which he never had the opportunity of trying. This man had moved in one of the heroic ages of the world; he had moved amongst the most splendid group of men the world has ever seen. Old Jewry, old Greece, and old Rome had lived, that a still nobler race of men might be formed after them. He had walked all familiarly with such men as Drake and Frobisher, with Raleigh and Spenser, with Gilbert, with Cecil, with Southampton, with Bacon. You will agree with me that this world never did see a constellation of men so glorious as those Shakespeare knew. He

had known manhood in its prime ; he had seen the heroical ages at their best ;—and that he knew what he had seen you can understand, for if you want to see the glories of old Rome revived, you have to go to Shakespeare, and when he takes pen in hand, Julius Cæsar lives as he never lived before, and Brutus is truer to himself than even in his great time of old. The Middle Ages start into life under his touch ; and if there is one reason to regret that he did not know Greek well, as he appears not to have done, it is that he did not draw the character of Pericles, and that Marathon and Salamis are not made more glorious than any Greek could possibly make them. Shakespeare had seen man at his best ; he had known the pomps and vanities of the world ; he had known the greatest Queen the world ever had, for he had seen Queen Elizabeth in all her glory,—(and I am old-fashioned Englishman enough to believe there never was such a sight. There is the Queen of Sheba, but she is comparatively mythical, and compared with Queen Elizabeth she is as nothing. Queen Elizabeth was beautiful when young, and I do admire the men of England who thought her beautiful when old—men as chivalrous as the man who looks on the wife of his youth and sees but her youth, in her decrepitude sees but her early beauty and grace). He had seen Elizabeth, one of the greatest queens the world has ever seen—who, as one well says, if she did not make men love her, made them fear her. There are but two things for women to make men do, and she did both. Shakespeare was no mean man. He had walked with the nobles, lived with them, and loved with them. Did he know the world, and the pomp of the world? He knew it all, through and through. He had seen men heroical, women lovely, the State glorious ; he lived on the verge of the most heroic things the world has ever seen. Did he know human passion? No man better. Had he drunk of the cup of human passion? No man deeper. Who reads his Sonnets as I read them knows he had loved, and sinned, and suffered, and repented. He knew this world in its glory, he knew it in its baseness ; he loved Nature with a passion, he adored God with fervour. And now, the time had come when, having known all the shows of this world, he simply “retired from life.”

But to do what? Men have retired from life when they have sucked it dry, and have then scorned the sweet juices upon which



they have lived. Few men have more contempt than I for those who abuse the world they have no more power to relish—it is easy to find fault with what you have lost the passion to enjoy. Shall Shakespeare turn monk, and waste the latter half of his life, because he thinks he wasted the former, and weary the God he has forgotten by drivelling out his praises in endless reiteration? He was not such a fool. The God he adored was not the God some of my countrymen are pleased to adore—a God who is told seven times a day how adorable He is. Shakespeare turns no monk, believes no mummery, does not forget the world he has lived in, does not build a half-and-half concern and live in it in an intermediate state, and, by forgetting all the beauty and geniality of life, try to prepare himself for the next world. Not he. He never got a hair-shirt—nothing of the kind. No; he came down to Stratford, bought an estate, was contented with the world God had put him in. There is nothing more wonderful in history than this—the greatest man retired from life into life; that is, he retired from its shows into its realities, and found the simple life of Stratford-on-Avon, the men and women there, the Nature around him, the daily life of the little place, wide enough, large enough, good enough, and true enough to finish his days in. A lover of Nature, he came down to Stratford; and what more did he want? He had no heroics about mountains, did not believe that the higher you get above the sea level, the higher you get above the vulgarity level; he had no dream that because you can hardly breathe, therefore you are fit for heaven. There was the River Avon—enough of beauty; it reflected day by day God's eternal sky above it. There were enough of old English flowers—of which he has sung so sweetly. He chose no foreign country. He did not, like some intelligent Englishmen, flee to foreign climes, in the hope of finding themselves of more importance than ever they could be at home. Not he. He finds Stratford-on-Avon, in the county of Warwick, sufficient hermitage for him to retire to. He finds its lovely scenery, its green fields, its soft flowing Avon, its sweet undulations, quite enough for him. He, I say, turns no monk nor hermit, wears no sackcloth, rushes up no mountains, goes into no cave, does not punish his body or afflict his soul, to come into quietness. He does not seek after great people; he has seen what are called "great people," and

has had enough of them ; he comes back to small people, and there lives a quiet, genial, and godly life.

Of course, he was able to do it. The sublimest genius, he was the completest man. There were no "wrongs" of genius about him ; he wasn't going to be wronged. The east wind went all round him, and found no crack. He wrote *MACBETH*, and knew the multiplication table ; he wrote *KING LEAR*, and would have beaten a surveyor at his own craft ; he wrote *HAMLET*, and knew the exact value of the land he bought ; he wrote *OTHELLO*, and made a will ; he wrote *ROMEO AND JULIET*, and bequeathed his second best bed to his wife. He was all round and complete ; had the most consummate genius, and the profoundest common sense. Why should he find fault with the world ? It was God's world, and good enough for him. I know of no place more honoured than Stratford. Some places are honoured because men are born in them ; they did not intend it. But Stratford is famous because the choicest genius of the world elected it out of his free will, and made it his own. He was born there by accident ; he came there afterwards by choice. When I look at that little town, with its commonplace people, and its English scenery, and its ordinary life, and remembering that the greatest man the world has seen came back by choice and finished his days there, I think, "Could he narrow himself to that?" But I am rebuked. This world, I find, is large enough for all, big enough for the biggest.

Men sometimes want a little time to prepare for another world, and forget the ways they have ; but the only way is to stop in this as long as you can, and live in it as honestly, justly, and truly as you can. Shakespeare did not retire from life, but from pomps and vanities ; he came home to essential life, after trying accidental life. Some of you are fast getting rich, and I tremble for you, and remember you in my quiet moments and secret devotions. I want to lay this upon you. Think of what this greatest man could do when he stopped work—come to the old, simple life of every day, and live lovingly in the middle of it, despising no man, finding nothing common or unclean, tolerant as God is tolerant, long-suffering as the Almighty is long-suffering, never angry. He watches everybody, child and beggar, peasant and king, ever curious but never scornful of them, because they are

all of his own humanity. He watches them, but it is because his whole heart beats with them.

I have pondered sometimes, wishing very much to retire from life, or from the stir and jar of it, and have had foolish notions of turning monk, and thoughts of flying to a distant country; but I have had experience enough of distant countries, and have found generally that the chief use of them is to make you wish to get back home. So, anxious to retire, and knowing that some of you have the same passion, I thought I could not do better than speak to you of what this great man did. His life was like his works, the largest expression of catholic faith, tolerance, consistency, geniality, love for all men—for, with one exception, he never painted a single man or woman so bad but he put a redeeming touch. Even Richard, so bad, even in his saddest and shamefullest moments says, "I think nobody loves me," and that shows he felt it, for no one utterly done with human love would put down the want of it amongst his woes. So I have pondered about having done with the world, and have sometimes thought that Shakespeare might be a lesson to us in this respect, and that the best way to prepare for another is to quietly live out our time in the world in which we are, to let our days be "bound each to each by natural piety," to live lowly and walk humbly to the end. The primrose is as sweet as ever, and I like to see the first swallow come back, and bless God that he has given me to see that sight once again; to listen for the cuckoo with an awed attention I never had when a boy, and to find in its monotonous note the richest variety; for he who understands monotony and its true position in Nature has learned much—he who deeply feels shall utter but two notes, and the largeness of feeling shall generate the monotony of the expression.

Shakespeare was wiser than King Solomon, for when Solomon had had his fill of the cup, he said, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." This wiser man, who had all Solomon and much more, who had been grown in better soil than Solomon, closed his life without one bitter report about it; he was one of the few men who never wrote anything about *vanitas vanitatum*. He came back to the old English life, and died in the quiet enjoyment of those blessings which he thoroughly understood, and his sweet painting of which has never been excelled. Think of this; how he tried

the world but never abused it, and came back when he had done with it to its sweetest and homeliest things, and died as he had lived—the simple, modest, much enjoying, sympathetic man; tolerant of everybody, fond of everything, loving everybody, and, I doubt not, loved by everybody too.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr W. Kenrick proposed the health of Mr George Dawson, which was, he said, a toast indissolubly associated with the “immortal memory of William Shakespeare.” He had often heard Mr Dawson enlarge on the inexhaustible topic of Shakespeare, in a manner ever fresh and ever new, with that wonderful faculty of expression which made of what was in many men’s hands a stubborn Caliban a delicate and tricky Ariel. Their Chairman had a broad sympathy with all that concerned mankind, all that came home to men’s businesses and bosoms, and a wonderful knowledge of men. He had sometimes doubted, in hearing Mr Dawson, whether he was listening to the interpreter or the poet. It was Mr Dawson’s peculiar province to interpret Shakespeare, and he did so with a racy Dawsonian vigour which, as it was borrowed from no one, it would be idle for anyone to attempt to imitate.

Mr Dawson, in response, said—I feel it an honour to be President of the Shakespeare Club, and to be the perpetual president of these annual dinners. The vice-chairman knows that I have endeavoured to shift the honour to his shoulders, but he is as unwilling to take it as I am willing to drop it. It is not because I value it little, but because I value it much, that I thought it was not right I should have a monopoly of such a distinguished honour. I remain at your head because of your constantly and unmistakably expressed wish, and I count it one of the greatest honours of my life. Honours in the common sense I have never coveted, and the world has done me the credit of thinking I did not want them. I have never been presented with an honorary degree, and I have never been made a knight. But the honour which this Club does me is a sweetness and an affection, because I have met from the members and from those who come to the meetings, an old-fashionedness of love which savours rather of old times than modern times. I have known the love of man to man,—love of that kind that has been said to pass the love of woman—I thank

God I have known love of *both* sorts. In this town I have met with love of the old kind—brave, tender, manly, and true. That love has outlived my faults and foolishness; it has seen my youth, remained with me in my manhood, and promises to stay with me in my age. As you wish me to continue your chairman, I remain so, and I accept the office, not as a barren honour bestowed on a man because there is an interest in bestowing it, but because it is an outward sign of an inward, deep, and tender grace.

SPEECH AT "OUR SHAKESPEARE CLUB," APRIL 1874.

IN proposing the toast of the evening, Mr Dawson said—I think it well to remind you that (without any very nice antiquarianism) this year is the 400th anniversary of the introduction of printing at Westminster. The date, sufficiently accurate for all wise purposes, was 1474. In no company more properly than in this, could we remember that most wonderful event, happening in the most august place, perhaps, that this world has—for so I regard Westminster. If we look at the beauty of its building, the scenes that it has witnessed, and the noble men who are gathered there in their graves; if we remember that there the first English book was printed, there the English Parliament has for centuries sat; there is no place in this world, except perhaps one or two which shall be nameless, that calls up all the best feelings of a wise man's heart more than Westminster.

Shakespeare himself had perhaps very little to thank the printers for, of his own time, or those who immediately succeeded him; yet those who are assembled here this evening owe to printing an incalculable debt, since but for it Shakespeare might have remained the privilege of the few.

I do not remember how many years it is that I have been called upon to address you on this anniversary, nor do I remember how many subjects I have spoken to you upon. I have, however, some remembrance of having endeavoured, feebly enough, to express my sense of the wonderful power of Shakespeare as an

artist ; how he understood that first great rule of art—that there must be beauty ; how he knew that beauty was only the form ; and how the soul that he always put into beauty was goodness. We have dwelt sometimes upon Shakespeare's happy life, and the way in which he tried the things that this world thought great, and found they were not great enough for him. I also remember pointing out to you that, as we get older, Shakespeare grows greater, and that Coleridge was right when he said that, with every accession of wisdom and experience a man gains, he still finds Shakespeare is as much above him as he was before ; as we grow he grows, and as we greaten he greatens.

It is now becoming somewhat difficult for me to find a fresh theme, and yet it ought not to be so ; for, remember, as age begins to steal upon some of us, we ought to know more of Shakespeare than some before me now, who look very little more than lads, can possibly do. Whilst most of those present have known the glories of gain, some of us have known the bitter sorrows of loss, and he who knows nothing but gain has not known the richest beauties of Shakespeare. When the shade of death is on a man, and the sense of loss is great—when “the grasshopper becomes a burden,” and “the daughters of music” begin to fail—then is one of the greatneses of this great poet for the first time truly understood. Though young people like to play with sorrow, men who are older find that sorrow is too great a giant to be played with—they have wrestled with him, and had their fall. Therefore, with every year there comes some new merit, some new beauty in this great poet, and we may take as true the words of Johnson, who says, very felicitously, “The stream of time which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare.” Now, that was said more than a hundred years ago : it was true then, it is no truer now, but the truth is now more apparent, for the stream has had a hundred years more work, and has washed nothing of Shakespeare away, but only some of the absurdities of his commentators, and the foolishness of his critics. The longer the stream washes, the less power it seems to have over the adamant.

On the present occasion the question naturally arises, What is the secret of the eternal youth of this man, and how comes he to

defy the attacks of time? Just as the lawyers go to their case-books to know what the law of a case is, so the wise man, who is a student of human nature, goes to the great dramatist to know what are the laws of human nature. The lawyers, even in a certain long and famous trial, might, with advantage, have consulted Shakespeare; for then would their metaphysics have been more clear, and, instead of airy possibilities, they would have had the proved probabilities of human nature. Shakespeare had one amazing advantage, that he was an observer without preconception. Now, he who should approach poetry with the canons of mathematics, would be a fool for his pains, and a bungler in his results. The student of physics is under the control of mathematics; the student of poetry is not. Many of the students of human nature, if they can be called such, are under control, having their preconceptions either metaphysical or theological; but they will find that preconception is fatal to observation. Now, Shakespeare observed just what was before him, without any preconception. He had no *isim*, no theory: when he saw a man he did not trouble what was his faith; if he looked at a woman he had no prejudice either for or against her; and the consequence is that he of all men has set down, with an accuracy which time cannot shake and experience always confirms, the exact state of the case with regard to the human passions, fears, desires, failings, and weaknesses. You may depend upon it that is why he lives for ever. Shakespeare was not here to say what human nature ought to be, or what St Augustine declared it to be: he was here to say what he found it; and as he took in the whole range, from kings to beggars, without preconception, he was the most thoroughly fit man to be an observer of human nature. His observations, then, are never out of date.

Then, there is this other feature of Shakespeare—that he uses all mouths; but whoever speaks, or whatever is done, goodness must be the result. Shakespeare is the most pious man I have ever met with in my studies—the best religious teacher, and the most brave and courageous apostle of modern times. However little foolish people may haggle over single passages, Shakespeare is always a preacher of goodness. In a warlike age, he was a lover of peace, and before the Peace Society was heard of he had preached its doctrines better than they could. Duelling he set

down as stupidity and wickedness ; slavery he hated ; caste he abhorred. In these days, when people are calling out for a basis for Ethics, I could, if I had time, make out of Shakespeare a school-book of Ethics for the use of Board Schools. Through whatever mouth he speaks, Shakespeare teaches the same great lesson—that men should dwell together in loving-kindness and charity. I give you “The Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare.”

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SPEECH AT “OUR SHAKESPEARE CLUB,” APRIL 1875.

THE President, Mr George Dawson, in proposing the toast of the evening, said—

By a kindness which is more to be commended for its graciousness than to be praised for its wisdom, I remain the perpetual president—or, at least, it threatens to be so—of the Shakespeare Club. Therefore it falls to my lot for the nineteenth time to propose to you the one great toast of the evening—“The Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare.” What I shall say this evening I do not remember to have said before ; but if I have done so, and value it, I shall say it again. If it is old, it is the better for being old, and if it is new, it will have the charm of novelty.

Every year brings us something fresh about Shakespeare. We learn nothing new about his biography, but we have long ceased to fret about that. We know as much about him as we want to know,—his soul, his spirit, his hopes, his aims, his passions, his desires, his faintings, and his failings—they are written in his works. The last novelty about him is that it is said that if he had lived till now, he would have been an Ultramontane. I have spoken on that subject the other evening, and now simply dismiss it as the last cobweb spun by an overworked German student.

In America, I found another controversy being carried on—that old threadbare subject that *we* had discussed years ago—whether “Shakespeare” was not written by Lord Bacon. I



believe there are a few men in Birmingham who hold that opinion now. To me it is utterly inconceivable. External and internal evidence are lacking, and when we have neither the one nor the other, it is difficult to support anything. I am prepared against any gentleman to show that Lord Bacon was written by Shakespeare.

Much of the commentation upon Shakespeare arises out of two great impatiences—one that we have so scant a biography of him in the vulgar sense of the term, and the other that he had no regular classical education. I should be ashamed if it were thought for a moment that I advocate an irregular or scanty education. Some of us know too well what we should have done but for education. We value it too much, and strive too much to make it common for that to be true. I cannot suffer, however, even masters of grammar-schools, nor dons, nor doctors, to limit the prerogative of genius. Lest, however, it should be thought that it is necessary to genius to be irregularly educated, uncultivated, and wild, we can point to two great masters of genius—Milton and Goethe, who were cultured. Shakespeare was loose, and wild, and irregular—didn't go to school much, or if he did, neglected his studies with that persistent truantism some great men have been guilty of. Whilst, therefore, worshipping Milton and Goethe, we think the mission of the schoolmaster is not necessary to genius. The greatest wit the world ever had, had an irregular education—Dean Swift. Alexander Pope, too, read what he liked, when he liked, where he liked, and how he liked. He had two or three seedy schoolmasters, and was under their care a very short time. Samuel Johnson read what he liked, was lazy when he liked, went to college, and distinguished himself there by leaving undone things which he ought to have done. Oliver Goldsmith never did anything he ought to have done. The things he ought to have done, he neglected, to write ballads. His education was irregular, and yet what delicate touches of genius, what sweetness of love, what largeness of charity, and what a genial soul he had! Then we come to the ploughman of Scotland, who touched the heart of his nation and thrilled it as no nation had ever been thrilled before, until Scotland, grave and grim, and Calvinistic, had to forgive his sinful childhood to listen to his songs, and almost made a rent in its creed in the hope that such a soul should be taken

into grace. We must all admire his genius, reverence his charity, mourn his fate. He fell into low ways and low courses. When thinking of him I cannot help calling to mind the words, "My love hath lain among the pots." What white wings Burns had, and how strong, to carry him to heaven's gate! Yet I can only say of him, "My love, my darling, hath lain among the pots"—the white wings were soiled by the pots, by communion with the things of this world. Here, then, are men of consummate genius who were wild and irregular. And yet, Shakespeare is to be annihilated, turned out, sunk into a shadow, a kind of appendage to Lord Bacon, because he hadn't a regular education. Therefore I am obliged to lay down a proposition I should not like to venture upon in any other company—that education is not necessary for a man to be a Shakespeare, and that no amount of education will make a man into a Shakespeare.

I am thankful that Shakespeare was not an educated man. He knew enough of the old world to catch its aroma and understand its universal humanity without being classical enough to sell his own genius and take to being a Greek. I would rather have the JULIUS CÆSAR of Shakespeare than anything from the pen of Mr Browning. Shakespeare's work was to touch the heart and sound every depth of human nature. Did he need to go to school for that? Shakespeare had Ann Hathaway, and that taught him all about love—and I daresay about hate. He got his education from simple things. So may we all. There were once two little boys, one of whom had a peach. The mother told the holder of the peach to divide it on Christian principles with his brother; that is, to give Tom the larger share. Handing over the peach, he said, "Let Tom take it, and divide it on Christian principles with me." Could any classic talk beat that? Perhaps there was a contested election for Beadle at Stratford, which would make Shakespeare understand the Montagues and Capulets. Who cares about Shakespeare's mistakes? If he liked to put a sea-port in Bohemia, I don't care. I am rather glad he did so. Shakespeare's education came from the blooming flowers, the falling rain—from loving a woman older than himself, and perhaps being disenchanted afterwards. He had Plutarch's Lives. He went to London, and what men he saw! Walter Raleigh, Drake, Sydney, Frobisher! The men of the Elizabethan period, and Plutarch's

Lives were education enough for any man to do as Shakespeare did. He loved Ann Hathaway, he had seen the falling dew, he got into trouble for deer-stealing, he had read Plutarch's Lives, and he had seen Queen Elizabeth—that was an education.

Now, after this, we must not have people saying, "I have had no education, I am a man of genius." The question is, *are* you a genius? If a man is uneducated, and is not a genius, it is a dismal look out.

As to Shakespeare, I may safely leave you to go into your own hearts about the matter. The deepest knowledge of human nature and its ways is not what we learn at school or get out of books. Shakespeare was irregularly educated, and yet there is no spring of the human heart that he cannot tune or play upon. If you ponder over these things, you will see that there is an impatience amongst people that Shakespeare was so great, and yet, as the world counts it, so small. If he had only been an LL.D., if Oxford had only conferred on him the title of D.C.L., and Cambridge had joined chorus, wouldn't it have been more comfortable? If a copy of Latin verses and the trochaics he wrote at school could only be produced, would not his *OTHELLO* be more understandable? If he had only been a Fellow of the Royal Society, we should understand the sorrows and troubles of *King Lear* better. If he had been an F.G.S., *MACBETH* would have been easy to comprehend, and if he had only taken holy orders and entered the church, how easily should we have understood the mysteries of *HAMLET*! If he had been a bishop, could we not comprehend his pleadings for charity? But being only a poor man, living at Stratford, loving a woman older than himself, being suspected of deer-stealing, and going to London to cadge about the Globe Theatre—how could he know *HAMLET* and *MACBETH*? how could he know *JULIET*?

I will not even allow that Shakespeare went to Italy, as some people claim—though I will admit that he went to Dover. He neither needed to learn Greek, nor to go to Italy, nor to know French nor Italian. His eyes were bright, and he had a large, passionate, sympathising heart. That is sufficient to account for all he has done. I hope I have shown you that almost all the crotchets about Shakespeare arise out of an ignorant impatience that works so great should have been produced by a man whose

education, in the scholastic sense, was so lamentably irregular and so deplorably small. I give you "The Immortal Memory of William Shakespeare."

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SPEECH AT "OUR SHAKESPEARE CLUB," APRIL 1876.

MR DAWSON said—Before I propose the usual toast of the evening, I think it but right, in a company like this, that we should pay some passing tribute to a man whom many of us knew well, a peer, a scholar, a gentleman, polished, cultivated, genial, an Englishman of fine type, a lover of all that is sweet, of all that is honourable, of all that is right, and of all that is good. Of course I refer to Lord Lyttelton, whose scholarship in such company I need not praise. Of course the circumstances of his death make his death more to be regretted, and I need not say that those circumstances add to our sorrow without increasing our fear. He has gone to the Eternal Judge, who is also the Eternal Lover, he has gone where all is known, seen through, wisely judged, and forgivingly allowed for. I do not think it right that at such a club, and with such guests, we should not say a word of condolence with the family whom Lord Lyttelton has left behind, and of admiration for a man whose qualities were of the rarest, truest, and noblest character.

By your extraordinary, and, I think, misplaced indulgence, it falls to me, in my capacity as president, for about the twentieth time to propose the toast of the evening, and though I admit that the subject is one which is incapable of being worn out, nevertheless, however excellent a string may be, the cunning of him who plays upon it may lessen, and with the best of will there may be a decay of power. I would not have you think for a moment that twenty years twenty times told could possibly exhaust all that could possibly be said about Shakespeare; but I would not have you forget that it is not given to all of us to have, twenty times, the opportunity of showing how easily a well may run dry, or how quickly a stream may cease to flow. If, however, it were possible

to think over all that has been said on the twenty occasions to which I refer, it would hardly be possible to say the same things again; for, though time may not damp the fire, it may increase wisdom. The second thoughts of a man may be more precious than his first, and it is possible that the best wine has been kept till the last. I do not think that is my case, and I very much fear that it is not.

I remember some of the subjects on which we have discoursed before, and if I were to go over them again, how changed would be the view I should take of some of them! The time was when, with almost vexation and anger, we thought of the exceedingly calm way in which England seemed to have received Shakespeare during his lifetime, and bemoaned the little impression that he made. We were almost angry with our forefathers. But we find that there is a second view of that, which is that England was so great at that time that Shakespeare could not astonish it. If we remember that what was said of Lord Bacon was true of *him*—that within his view and time were born all the wits that could possibly help or serve a nation—we shall easily be able to understand that England could not be astonished in the days of Shakespeare. I presume that no star is astonished at the glory of another star, but that stars of lesser glory are so accustomed to their lesser glory that they look on brighter stars without either envy or undue admiration. I have, therefore, got good-tempered with my forefathers, though they do not appear to have seen how great the man was. When a man has within his view Bacon and all the great men who surrounded that glorious "*king*," Elizabeth, I think it is a sign of national greatness and excellence that Shakespeare should have come and gone, trailing so little glory and marvel after him.

Some of you will enter into my feelings—when we used to be impatient that we knew so little about the man; but now some of you will agree that it is a mercy that we know no more than we do. I do not know that our knowledge of poets adds very much to our enjoyment of their works. When I look at Pope, his personal appearance and some of his ways, his poems gain very little from the look. When I look at Wordsworth, his greatness gains nothing by his littleness: and when I look at Byron, his fiery erratics and ecstatic madness, I do not know that any of his poems

gain much from the knowledge of his lordship's person. I do not know that a minute knowledge of Homer would add to the value of the "Iliad," and I am now exceedingly glad that I know little about Shakespeare. Let us remember that he who knows his *works* knows the *man*, and the vulgar impatience to know dates and archæology, to gather together the foul bones which he has picked and thrown away, is to me a poor desire to know the shell and the husk of a man whose whole heart, soul, brain, and spirit are in every page that he wrote. Therefore, I am quite content now to know no more about the man than I do know. I do not care for the archæologists in this business, and wish they would be quiet. All that they can do, they have done; and when men show the foundations of the house in which Shakespeare lived, and cover those foundations with wire-work, then I think it is time to close that department, and turn to the solids—to the real life of his soul, which is immeasurably better than the mere archæology of a poet.

Thus my discontents have all passed away. Perhaps at one time we were all impatient that Shakespeare appeared so exceedingly calm and so exceedingly careless. He does not appear to have joined any party, or to have rushed to any poll; for voting he appears to have cared little, and for the politics of his day still less. There was a time when we almost wished he had belonged to a party, but now we are glad that the man looked down from a serene height on all these troubles, and we are thankful that nobody can claim him, though they all have tried. It is amusing to see how people have laid their hands upon him, and have tried to get him to go to their meeting-house. The Papists have said he belongs to them,—I will not say what Shakespeare's reply would have been had he been in the flesh,—and the unbelievers of all sorts have ranked him as one of their apostles. The fact is, Shakespeare was above them all; he sympathised with all of them, but joined none of them. Therefore, I am perfectly content with that. There is a time in a young man's life when he gets the fantastic notion that, because a man is a genius, therefore he ought to make himself a fool; but now I believe we have got over all that, and our admiration is for a genius whom we should not have known to have been a genius but for his *work*. I have no doubt that Shakespeare drank his beer and

smoked his pipe, and I rejoice in him as a man who had common sense in perfection. I look at him as a man sound all round, who knew the multiplication table, and wrote *HAMLET*. He was a man who bought an estate, and knew how to raise the money to do it. He left a will, which shows that he had something to leave. We are told that he had two beds, and he left the second best to his wife. The lawyers have rushed in to vindicate his reputation, and with a great show of parchment and dust have attempted to make it understood that the best bed was rightly willed—by some sort of primogeniture—and went somewhere else. My delight, however, is in the man who could save money, who could make money before he saved it, who could leave money; who could be quiet, who could live like an ordinary mortal, with no tricks, no erratics, no spasms; who understood Macbeth's crime, and who bought an estate. One comes to look at all that as a sign of health, and of glorious soundness. I am reconciled upon that point now, and I admire, above all things almost in Shakespeare, his completeness, his healthiness. The east wind blew around him as it blows around most men's houses, but it found no creaking in him; he was one of the truest, simplest, soundest men that ever lived.

Then we come to one thing which we have never failed to admire, and which I admire now with tenfold vigour—the constant generousness, the kind-heartedness and tolerance which distinguishes the man. Shakespeare's sense of humour, too, is perhaps the finest the world has ever seen. When humour is rightly understood, it is one of the most priceless blessings with which a man can be endowed, one of the most wholesome and necessary gifts in passing through this world. The eternal contrast between the great and the small which only provokes a smile (and with a wise man never ends in a sneer)—that perpetual seeming jest when we think of a king in his finery, and that king sleeping and possibly snoring in bed—that humour goes all through life, from the days when it is cause for a smile, back to the days when it was heartily mirthful. I see humour in all things—unintentional, sometimes. If I open the New Testament, I find it there. For instance, there is that public meeting described in the Acts of the Apostles, where the people roared for two or three hours, and not knowing what the dispute was

about, filled up the time by shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" and that speech of the town clerk's—there is nothing in Shakespeare which can exceed that in humour. Then look at the solemn and unintentional humour of Peter, who, when waiting in expectancy of the greatest gifts, and his memory full of the solemnest of histories, said, "I go a-fishing," and the great honest man went away to fish—he had no ecstasies to do, he had fish to catch. The humour of Shakespeare is always hearty and wholesome; he never makes mock at men, but he loves everybody, because he understands everybody. There are very few times when his great gifts lead him to paint anybody detestable. There *is* a wretch, you will remember, in MEASURE FOR MEASURE, who is the most irredeemable blackguard that possibly ever was drawn; Falstaff too, is bad, but Shakespeare cannot dismiss him without making him "babble of green fields."

As for clowns, the world is full of clowns, and he is the wise man who likes to watch their paint, their pig-tails, and their follies. Shakespeare knew why kings kept jesters, clowns, and fools. Everybody must have times when they can talk without buckram and without restraint, and anybody surrounded by courtiers must have longed for the presence of a fool, one to whom he could tell his secret thoughts, and to whom he could make fun of the Lord Chamberlain, Silver-stick, Copper-stick, Pewter-stick, and others.

The watching of everything that is going on, as the wise man watches it, with large, loving, tolerant eyes, leads to toleration becoming a temper instead of a principle. I have known men who held toleration as a principle, but who, having done that, have failed either to feel it or to practise it, and have only used it as a political flag to flaunt in the face of the other party. They were tolerant, but give them the chance, and they quickly showed that they regarded toleration as much too good an article to be spared from the true Israel, or to bestow on unbelievers or gentiles. A course of Shakespeare, however, will make toleration a man's humour, until at last he sees something pleasing in everybody. I rejoice to see the growth of toleration of men towards one another, and amongst the causes that have made that larger spirit of to-day more a temper of men's minds than a principle of their politics, I count the increased study of Shakespeare. Not that



Shakespeare teaches anything that is new in these things, but he teaches it in so seductive a manner, he teaches it so sweetly, that men sit down to read him crabbed, and rise from reading mellow, ripe, kindly, and generous. His large generousness, his infinite toleration, his good-humoured enjoyment of all kinds of people, his ability to look at any living creature and find something pleasant, his ability to put good into everything—all these things have done us good.

I have found from diligent study of Shakespeare the increase of all those things that men most love, a decrease of all that men least admire. I find that Shakespeare ministers far more to kindness, long-suffering, patience, geniality, and grace, to righteousness and love, to jollity and mirth, than he ministers to envy, hate, pride, presumption, or pretence. When he pours out his oil, it is wholesome, full of light, and life, and love, and truth. This is only the *ergo* from Shakespeare's understanding everything and everybody. While one man sees to sneer and make mock, the great soul whose memory we are met to honour saw to love—to love everything and everybody. I appeal to the members of this company to say whether Shakespeare has made you less genial, less gracious, less generous, less good-tempered, less good-humoured, less mirthful, less kindly, less full of power to enjoy this wondrous world and all the good things that are therein. For my own part, I can say that the man has enlarged my horizon, deepened the little good that was in me, ministered never to what was evil. I therefore look upon him not as a great genius, but as a great teacher, who has given the greatest of all lessons that a human teacher can give,—increase of knowledge in a wise soul is increase of love. I give you "The Memory of William Shakespeare."

## SPEECH AT A BURNS ANNIVERSARY DINNER.

MR GEO. DAWSON (Chairman) said—I rise to propose the Memory of Robert Burns, and do so with a sense of the honour done me by the Scotch gentlemen who have invited an Englishman to preside at the anniversary of the birthday of their greatest poet. Burns was Scotch in his talent, his life, and his nobility, and no greater man ever lived in the country than the ploughman, afterwards gauger, Robert Burns. We, like Burns, will not believe a man greater because of the whiteness of his hands, the nobleness of his blood, or the idleness of his life; for we are, or have been, all hard workers, and our love for Burns is not so much for Burns as a poet, as that he was a thorough-going man. To us, as to Burns, the accident of a man's title and the ancestry of his family are but as gold lace upon his coat, and he has tenderly and truly said, that an honest man is above a king's might to make.

I am not here to speak of the faults of the poet; but I can show that he was a loveable man. Some men I have known—and they were the best I knew—I could never like; and their step had only music in it when they left me. They were good men, correct men, paid all their accounts, and were respectable, but to me they were like a figure of Euclid's on legs; the dog got under the sofa when they entered, and the children slunk into a corner. For those I should be happy to subscribe towards a snuffbox, if living, or a tomb, when dead; but they were not *loveable* men, like Robert Burns, who was merciful, forgiving, kind, noble, and just—who could sing of the daisy and think of the poor mouse, and made himself worthy of being loved. In my short life, I should wish, if I had an opportunity, to write a book upon loveable men, and foremost amongst them certainly would be Robert Burns. What God has said, surely we may say, and it has been written of old, that “she shall be forgiven much,

because she loved much." The same we may say of Robert Burns.

Though he loved much, Burns was a generous hater ; he hated all shams, hypocrisies, and hollowness ; like Shakespeare, he went through the compass of human feeling in his songs, and since the great life of our English poet, none have sung so feelingly, so honestly, or so sweetly as Robert Burns. When we think of how much Burns suffered, how many battles and how many trials he went through, let us think how much in our own little measure we can help the struggling one, so that we may prevent him going down to the grave like the poet, whose memory we shall best celebrate in taking our duty from his sufferings. Burns' greatness does not show itself naturally to me, for I have had hard work to understand him, and have needed the glossary often ; but remember my appreciation is none the less, my love no less, for the man best earns the kernel who has the hardest shell to crack. My love for Burns is no less than that of his most ardent admirers. I propose "The Memory of Robert Burns."

## DON QUIXOTE.

CERVANTES, BORN 1547, DIED 1616.

WILLIAM GODWIN has said that at forty he thought "Don Quixote" clever, and that at sixty he thought it the most admirable book in the world. Those words very clearly point out that "Don Quixote" is one of those books that every wise man will read twice. We read them when we were children for the sake of the story, indifferent to any undercurrent of metaphysics or politics that might be in them; but when we, later on in years, come to review the books of our childhood, it is impossible to read them as we once did. We find out that the book which we once thought had only a story, or about whose story was our only regard, is a book of sound wisdom, sound philosophy, and terrible satire. "Don Quixote" has been declared to be the most admirable of books and the most mischievous of books. The most sad man never read it without laughing, and the wisest man never read it without bitterness and without tears. If there are any present who believe it to be simply a romantic story book, let them remain in the faith; others of us can find many wondrous things, and let us leave such to their delusion.

There can be no idea whatsoever of a great book like "Don Quixote" not being curiously plunged into by youth; and I see nothing to hinder us, as old, sad, worn, and I hope wise men, from again taking a few looks at its pages. Each time we read such books we find, and understand things which we have not found and understood before. "Jack the Giant Killer" requires to be read twice. That book is a great and noble parable upon the stupidity of great things and great people in this world. It is a fight of the little against the great; and it is curious to notice how Nature always provides little people with some allowance against the great. The stories of "Baron Munchausen" and "The Life of Robinson Crusoe" may be referred to in illustration of this point. The metaphysics of "Robinson Crusoe" are

as marvellous as the story ; it is a treatise upon self-education, a book on self-enquiry, a dissertation on self-happiness. Put a man by himself, can he be happy? can he serve himself? what will happen to him? We have in "Robinson Crusoe," a very remarkable answer of the thesis. If a man in a state of European civilisation fall into the primæval conditions and habits of a savage, how will he enjoy himself? The "Pilgrim's Progress" of Bunyan, again, is one of the most admirable treatises on Calvinism that was ever written, and it has—what is more than Calvin had—a smile on its face, and its singing robes on all day. It is to this class of books that "Don Quixote" belongs, if it is not the chief of the order.

We shall pass on shortly to see what metaphysics there are in the book—what a picture of life it contains—what good solid advice not to run our heads against a brick wall. "Don Quixote" has taught people the greatest lesson that was ever taught in this world. It is one of the deepest wells that was ever given to the world, and the bucket must go down several times before it can be drained dry.

But before treating of the story of "Don Quixote," I will offer a word about its romantic and chivalric author. Miguel de Cervantes was born at Madrid, of an old Spanish family, in 1549. He was present at the battle of Lepanto, fought in 1571, in which he had his left hand so maimed that he lost the use of it. He served in different parts as a volunteer, and was captured *en route* to the Low Countries by Algerian pirates. He was carried into Algiers by the Moors, and incarcerated there for five years and a half, when he was liberated from prison by ransom. He then returned to Spain, and endeavoured to improve his straitened means by becoming agent for various bodies and various individuals. It is said that he afterwards became a tithe collector, and that through some mess in his accounts—not dishonest—he got into prison ; but I believe the story is doubtful, and some of the best Spanish authorities are fathers of the doubt. Still we will keep it that he went to prison, because it makes his history a little more romantic. He then applied himself to writing comedies and tragedies, all of which were well received. Then he brought out the first part of his "Don Quixote," which soon became famous, but it brought him little profit. People admired the

book very much, but then, having done that, they thought their duty was done. Cervantes was a prophet in his own country. How can you treat a man as a prophet who dined with you last week? But a prophet always is of honour in his own country when people from another country come to ask anything about him; and so it was with Cervantes when the French Ambassador went to see him.\* We cannot make much of men who live in our own street, till somebody comes to inquire about them. In 1615, Cervantes got out the second part of "Don Quixote." He was at that time nearly seventy, having lived a life of weariness and poverty; and when he found death drawing on he entered a Franciscan order—he put on the habit on purpose that he might die in the guise of the religious. On the 2nd April, the shadows of death gathered around him, and we find that extreme unction was administered to him; but afterwards the flame, which was thought to be dying out, rose again, and he wrote a dedication to his book—a dedication full of humour, full of solemnity. If you want to see the light of earth and heaven blended together, you will find it in the dedication to that book. Cervantes died on the 23rd April 1616—in the same year, and on the same day that our immortal poet Shakespeare died, and at nearly the same time. Two of the greatest geniuses of their age! Cervantes' funeral was a poor one—they put him away cheaply; people had seen him threadbare and had known his necessities, and that meant a poor funeral.

\* "When the Archbishop of Toledo visited the French Ambassador at Madrid, the gentlemen in the suite of the latter expressed their high admiration of the writings of the author of 'Don Quixote,' and intimated their desire of becoming acquainted with one who had given them so much pleasure. The answer they received was that Cervantes had borne arms in the service of his country, and was now old and poor. 'What!' exclaimed one of the Frenchmen, 'is not Señor Cervantes in good circumstances? Why is he not maintained, then, out of the public treasury?' 'Heaven forbid!' was the reply, 'that his necessities should be ever relieved, if it is those which make him write; since it is his poverty that makes the world rich!'"—*Smiles, on CHARACTER.*

"M. Du Boulay accompanied the French Ambassador to Spain, when Cervantes was yet living. He told Segrais that the ambassador one day complimented Cervantes on the great reputation he had acquired by his 'Don Quixote'; and that Cervantes whispered in his ear, 'Had it not been for the Inquisition I should have made my book much more entertaining.'"—*Disraeli's CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE.*

There, again, we have a great genius, for whom the world cared little and who had little of the world's gear, gaining an immortality by writing—what?—the marchings of a madman and a clown. We find some nice critics endeavouring to upset the great book—it is “Quixotic.” What do they find to make such a to-do about? But such had better give in, as the decision of the world is sure to be right. There have been eleven distinct English translations of “Don Quixote.” What do you think of a book that has done that? The individuality and universality of the characters drawn by Cervantes are remarkable. “Rozinante” is the name applied to every lean, lank, visible-ribbed horse of the present day. Who does not talk of “Mambrino's helmet”? and where is the young man who has not called a young woman “Dulcinea”? Cervantes' names have labelled thousands of characters; and we may be sure that, when a word is coined for a nation for ever, the coiner had some fine gold when he coined it. I would remind you, also, that “Don Quixote” has provoked some of the finest flashes of living genius from the pencil of Gustave Doré, who has never exceeded his best illustrations to that work. I thought I knew “Don Quixote” before; but, after having seen those illustrations by Gustave Doré, I knew him for the first time. His battered knight with the rueful countenance is sufficient in itself to make him immortal.

One of the chief characteristics of Cervantes is his close imitation of men and manners and the condition of society. When we read Don Quixote's experience of a Spanish inn, how can we fail to see its reality? Spanish inns are in much the same condition now as they were then—in order, as it would seem, that Don Quixote should not enter them; but the fact is a touching tribute to the faithfulness with which Cervantes described his subjects. The character of Sancho Panza applies, in his characteristic style, to such men of the present day as those who offer us pamphlets with the title, “Paradise within the reach of all,” showing how everyone may be paradisiacally rich. There are many “Sanchos” in the railway world, who hold out expectations of large dividends with an occasional bonus—men who are up to everything and down to everything—men who run a railway from one end of their garden to the other, with a judicious junction at

the celery bed ; and how many of us are bitten by such men ? We cannot see that Mambrino's helmet is a barber's battered basin. Then, how beautifully the characters of Don Quixote and Sancho are juxtaposed—the one romantic and impracticable, the other wide awake, up to anything, and knowing a thing or two. I find in our own town not many Don Quixotes, but of Sanchos there are scores.

In this world-famed and world-loved book, nothing is more noticeable than the positive character in which the poverty of Don Quixote is delineated, and the riotous wealth of absurdity into which he is continually plunged. Notice his gripes and his grumbings, his lentils, the difficulty with which he managed to get a Sunday suit, the suit put so carefully on to save the better one, Rozinante with the ribs, Sancho and his ass, the attacks upon the windmills, and upon the troop of mourners, his setting free a troop of galley slaves, flooring a monk, pitching into a friar, upsetting the clergy, without intending anything so dreadful ; cutting open a wine-bag, taking it for the head of a giant ; his standing all night upon Rozinante, tied by the wrists, a horse coming, Rozinante moving and the knight going down ; his falling on his knees to a country wench and mistaking her for a Princess Dulcinea, her endeavouring to get away and vaulting on to the ass man-fashion, Quixote remaining undisenchanting ; for when one thought rules the mind, all things arrange themselves in accordance with it. One of the greatest peculiarities of human nature is, how the senses go for everything with which the mind is possessed. Don Quixote saw a windmill with his eyes, but not with his soul. Then his wonderful helmet which served Sancho in his negotiations with the shepherd for curds, and, whilst the curds were fresh in the helmet, Quixote calling for it, and the squire, having no time to empty it, giving it to him full of curds, in which state it went on to his head, and the curds, falling about his beard, the Knight exclaiming, “Methinks my skull is softening or my brains melting, or I sweat from head to foot !”

These are a few of the absurdities of the story, but the consistency with which Cervantes keeps his character a poor but upright *gentleman* in all his troubles is just that which makes it so admirable and so wonderful. The marvel of art and genius is that this man, placed in situations so mean, miserable, and



ridiculous, never once becomes contemptible—the nature of the gentleman is preserved throughout all his adventures and all his encounters. If any of you want to know what a gentleman is, you should study “Don Quixote” well. His chivalry was pure, his heroism great, his sacrifices true, his patience and vigilance, night-watchings and love, admirable and genuine, as though they had not been found associated with delusion of any kind. Chivalry has never been painted in its essence more admirably than by Cervantes, it has never been thrown away upon circumstances so ridiculous as by Don Quixote. Chivalry was admirable in its day; but it was misapplied and out of date in the time of Cervantes. The essential necessity of *learning* to the perfect gentleman is also admirably shown.

A great deal of attention should be given to the squire—a wonderful foil in every respect to his immortal master. The conception of him was not more admirable than is the execution. The contrast is always picturesque and striking—the two men stand up, one long, lank, lean, bony, cadaverous; the other short, fat, oily, obese; one caring for nothing but chivalry and honour, the other caring nothing for chivalry and honour, except as they may lead to some old portmanteau with a dish of crowns, some helmet with curds in it, [or to some island of Barataria; one heroic and courteous, the other selfish and servile; one full of high-flown fancies, the other a bag of proverbs; one always starting some romantic scheme, the other always keeping safely within the bounds of tradition and custom. Rozinante and Dapple, Don Quixote and Sancho, illustrate, supplement, and complement each other.

And it is wonderful to remark the ascendancy acquired by the cracked knight over the squire, who is all for sense and reality, and what he can see, and especially what he can eat. He sees clearly that country wenches are not princesses, and windmills not giants—he is not to be taken in; but promise him some island of Barataria, and he is as cracked as his master. Cervantes knew what he was doing. The fine brain, though a little twisted, is born to rule over the thickheads of common sense. The rulers of commerce, the men who know what’s what, who are up to a thing or two, and down upon two or three more, are always ruled by Quixotes. All the labour done in this world—its politics, its

commerce, its trade—are all the thoughts of men who, in their time, were Quixotic. To the student of human nature it is worth while to observe how the squire becomes a sort of body to Quixote, who is the soul. Sancho's credulity and ignorance are wonderful. Common sense is always very gullible. All men are to be caught by a properly selected bait—one swallows a marvel, another a promise; one a church bait, another a bank bait; and all some bait or other. Through his credulity Sancho becomes a knight-errant himself—becomes a lay brother of the order, and acquires a taste for adventure in his own way;—the discovery of the 100 crowns almost completed his conversion. The one visible marvel makes all the other marvels possible. His regret at giving up the pursuit of knight-errantry almost equals his master's, and he seizes with the greatest avidity the proposal of the knight that they shall turn shepherds; but in that state, whilst the Don is ingeniously torturing the names of his humble acquaintances into classical terminations, and contriving scenes of gallantry and song, Sancho exclaims, "Oh! what delicate wooden spoons shall I carve! what cream shall I devour!"

But the deepest, wisest, most satirical, and most profitable part of the book, is that relating to Sancho at Barataria. The book here becomes a manual of politics, a satire upon Royalty, and a quiz upon etiquette. It puts the nonsense of mankind into the pillory; and more genial mirth was never made of it before or since. It is well to observe how Don Quixote and Sancho are both educated by the events in which they are engaged. The Don progresses in all, except that he retains his monomania; Sancho graduates, so that when he nears the island of Barataria, he is no longer a simple clown. Cervantes always looks further than the amusement of his readers, though he never forgets that; and in this part of the book he teaches that the so-much-boasted science of Government is not the secret of a family, cannot be monopolised by a caste, and cannot be communicated in universities; but that the chief things necessary are sound sense and good intentions. So that Sancho Panza, instead of making a fool of himself in Barataria, judges like another Solomon. No bench of magistrates could decide more wisely than he did; the law will not allow them to decide so justly. A woman comes screaming that a man has committed a great outrage upon her. Sancho

orders the man to give her a bag of money in reparation ; but as soon as she has left the Court he sends the man after her with permission to regain the money by force. But the woman is now fully capable of resistance, on which Sancho tells her, "If you had taken as much care of your virtue as of the money bags, you would not have needed to come here."

Then the code of instructions of Quixote to a man about to take the office of governor contains the soul of things : "Abuse not him in word whom you are resolved to chastise in deed. In judging delinquents, consider the miserable object, man, subject to the infirmities of our depraved nature, and, as much as lies in your power, display your clemency and compassion ; for, although the attributes of God are equally excellent, that of mercy has a better effect in our eye, and strikes with greater lustre than justice. If you conduct yourself by these rules and precepts, Sancho, your days will be long upon the face of the earth ; your fame will be eternal, your reward complete, your felicity unutterable, and when your course of life is run, death will overtake you in a happy and mature old age. The remarks I have hitherto made are documents touching the decoration of your soul ; and now you will listen to those that regard the ornaments of your body. With respect to the government of your person and family, Sancho, in the first place, be cleanly, and pare your nails, and do not let them grow, like some people whose ignorance teaches them that long nails beautify the hand. You must never appear loose and unbuttoned ; for a slovenly dress denotes a disorderly mind. Abstain from eating garlic and onions, lest your breath should discover your rusticity. Walk leisurely, speak deliberately, but not so as to seem to be listening to your own discourse ; for all affectation is disagreeable. Dine sparingly, and eat very little at supper : for the health of the whole body depends upon the operation of the stomach. Be temperate in drinking, and consider that excess of wine will neither keep a secret, nor perform a promise. Be very moderate in sleeping, for he who does not rise with the sun cannot enjoy the day ; and observe, O, Sancho, industry is the mother of prosperity, and laziness, her opposite, never saw the accomplishment of a good wish."

"Signor," says Sancho, "I plainly perceive that all the advices you have given me are sound, and good, and profitable ; but of

what signification will they be if I forget them all? Indeed, as for the matter of not letting my nails grow, it will not easily slip out of my brain; but as to those other gallimaufries, quirks, and quiddities, I neither do retain them, nor shall, any more than the sky does of last year's clouds; and therefore it will be necessary to let me have them in writing, for though I myself can neither read nor write, I will give them to my confessor, that he may repeat and beat them into my noddle, as there will be occasion."\*

Armed with this admirable code of justice, morality, and decency, the Squire entered upon his studies; but he was not long in learning the embarrassments attendant upon greatness. A physician with a black wand prohibited the use of the most toothsome dishes, and he was told that he must conform to the manners and usages established for governors. He could not eat what he wanted, because the doctor feared it would not "sit easy on his stomach," whereas Sancho, being a strong man, didn't want his dinner to sit easy. What was the use of a dinner to him, if it sat easy? He wanted to loosen a button, and feel that he had done a day's work. It was a pitiable plight for a man to be in to want his dinner to "sit easy." So Sancho looked at the physician and cried, "Hark ye, Mr Doctor, get out of my presence this instant . . . what is the good of a post that does not afford victuals?"\*

In reading romance, it is well to try to find historical parallels, because a thing happening in fact is a justification of its happening in fiction; and John Wesley's directions to his preachers were not unlike those of Don Quixote to Governor Sancho. They were not to lay claim to the character of gentlemen—they had no more claim to it than to that of dancing masters; they were not to marry rustic and ignorant wives; they were not to write books without letting Wesley see them; and then there were paring-of-nails rules, very like those of Quixote.

Well, a great deal of discussion has taken place as to the real character of "Don Quixote," and the motives of the great man who wrote it. Over very few books has there been so much battling. Charges have been brought against it of being a mischievous and melancholy book. A great book must always be

\* Mr Dawson's quotations are seldom *verbatim et literatim*, but give always the sense and substance. Compare DON QUIXOTE, Part II., Chaps. xlii. and xliii.

melancholy ; but that it must be a mischievous one, I doubt. One has regarded the book as having given a mortal blow to chivalry ; but chivalry was dead before it appeared, and it was but the ghost of chivalry that survived. Spain was flooded with romances of chivalry, so that men thought there could be no nobleness, because the old forms by which nobility had previously manifested itself could not be revived. Cervantes came with withering sarcasm and glorious absurdity, and made a clean sweep of the whole mass of rubbish, and taught men that though forms might pass away, righteousness, truth, and beauty were eternal, and were indifferent to forms, being as ready to take the highest as the lowest. It was said "Don Quixote" had ruined Spain. It was the old story—somebody always was and always will be ruining something ; but, in reality, the virtue that can be killed by a laugh must be near dying of itself. But chivalry is not dead, after all ; no day passes without a deed of chivalry being done. Howard was Quixotic and chivalric ; there were Quixotes to explore Africa and seek the North Pole ; Quixotes to charge at Balaclava ; and every man who mans a life-boat on a stormy night is as good a knight as any knight of the Middle Ages, though people may be slow to recognise a knight in tarry breeks, under a slouched hat, with a quid in his cheek, and manifesting very plainly, occasionally, what is there. Among other witnesses to the character of "Don Quixote" was Lord Byron, who said :—\*

" . . . . . If I sneer sometimes,  
It is because I cannot well do less,  
And now and then it also suits my rhymes.  
I should be very willing to redress  
Men's wrongs, and rather check than punish crimes,  
Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale  
Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts fail.

"Of all tales 'tis the saddest—and more sad  
Because it makes us smile : his hero's right,  
And still pursues the right ;—to curb the bad  
His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight  
His guerdon : 'tis his virtue makes him mad !  
But his adventures form a sorry sight ;  
A sorrier still is the great moral taught  
By that real epic unto all who've thought.

\* DON JUAN, Canto 13th.

“ Redressing injury, revenging wrong,  
 To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff ;  
 Opposing singly the united strong,  
 From foreign yoke to free the helpless native,  
 Alas ! must noblest views, like an old song,  
 Be for mere Fancy’s sport a theme creative ?  
 A jest, a riddle ? Fame through thick and thin sought ?  
 And Socrates himself but Wisdom’s Quixote ?

“ Cervantes smiled Spain’s chivalry away ;  
 A single laugh demolished the right arm  
 Of his own country ;—seldom since that day  
 Has Spain had heroes. While Romance could charm,  
 The world gave ground before her bright array ;  
 And therefore have his volumes done such harm,  
 That all their glory as a composition,  
 Was dearly purchased by his land’s perdition.”

The lines are amazingly brilliant and wonderfully witty, and the rhymes are admirable ; but where is the sense ? Who can tell what disappointments that sublime Quixote (Byron) felt when he went out to deliver the Greeks, his mind full of Marathon and Thermopylæ, Miltiades and Socrates ? Had he no Mambrino’s helmet on ? “ Don Quixote ” was written as a protest against mistaken methods ; and Byron never wrote anything more brilliant or more false than those lines, which must be looked upon as the decision of a dyspeptic hour, but in no sense whatever as a statement of the laws of the world. I believe that “ Don Quixote ” was written to rid the world of the pestilent romances that kept the ghost of chivalry after the death of the body ; and that object was gloriously accomplished.

## THE DEATH OF CHATTERTON.

(A LECTURE DELIVERED BY MR DAWSON, *apropos* OF THE EXHIBITION IN BIRMINGHAM OF WALLIS'S MARVELLOUS PICTURE.)

THERE was, some months ago, in this town a picture—the noblest that was ever painted by an Englishman, and nearly the noblest ever painted in this world—Mr Holman Hunt's picture, "The Light of the World." At that time it struck some of you that there was usually a great mistake made with regard to the criticism of pictures; that, indeed, the criticism of them oftentimes fell to artists, who, themselves taking no other interest in them beyond the excellences in manipulation and execution, told the public of nothing else but that; and it was thought that it would be a good thing if some man who was not an artist would spend some time in instructing the public in a thorough understanding, not in the manipulation, but in the thought, the object, the intention of the picture. I was tempted to come forward, and I did so, to explain about that picture. The greatness of the subject, the excellences of the picture, and not the clumsiness of the explainer, so satisfied some people, that on the arrival of this picture of Mr Wallis's, I have been requested to repeat the experiment. I have, therefore, again come forward, not as a painter, not as wishing to pretend to any profound knowledge in that art, but simply as one who believes that the power to paint a great picture is one of the gifts of God to teach men religion, as much as the power to preach is; for I am not one of those who believe that religion is a thing to be taught only by those dreary things called "tracts," but that there are hundreds of my fellow-men who may be taught by a picture, a short great lesson, that all the sermons in the world may fail to inculcate.

Having thus introduced my subject, let us look at the picture. It is one of that school—the only great school of modern painting

—nicknamed and misnamed “pre-Raphaelite,” and it triumphantly vanquishes, by its marvellous fidelity, all the melancholy arguments and forebodings of the dreamy children of convention.

To fully understand its truthfulness, however, it will be necessary to know the history of its subject. When I was younger, I would have presumed on the knowledge of my audience, and have given them credit for knowing as much of Chatterton as I did; but now that I have grown older, and have had more experience in the ways of the world, I always presume on men’s ignorance, and consider it necessary to treat a subject as if people had never heard of it before. (Mr Dawson then, in his usual happy style, minutely traced the history of Chatterton from the first dawning of his reason to his melancholy end.) Chatterton was the most wonderful boy this world ever had—the strangest, saddest meteor that ever fled across its sight. He was as proud as Lucifer, and certainly cultivated a vulgar ambition; but he who can speak of Chatterton’s faults as a censor, enjoys but a small gift of true charity; for Chatterton was fatherless, and, as a genius, friendless, a sheep without a shepherd, a prophet in a wilderness, a marvellous genius shed upon a stupid city. If he was an impostor he was a glorious impostor, for he invented a poet who must be reckoned fourth or fifth among England’s glorious sons; and he perished because there was not a great man in his day with a soul large enough to overcome his wounded vanity, and to see that, although the boy had deceived him, the genius which could invent a Rowley and a Rowley’s poems must be one of grand magnitude and worth cultivation. No boy in any land ever had a genius so great, an industry so marvellous, an imagination so vivid; and, when he left the world, he left it at once the disgrace and the glory of the century in which he lived.

Of his failings or his sins it is not for us to judge; he has gone to One who is all-merciful, all-seeing, all-wise. That One will judge him justly, try him truly, and it will be for us to see to it, to lay the story of Chatterton to heart, so that when a poor struggling genius passes by us, we may remember that such another went down to death in the budding of his glory, because no genial spirit held out to him the right hand of guidance or the heart of good fellowship.

Turning from the history of Chatterton, however, to speak of



the picture, it is of all human works I have ever seen, the most perfect; I cannot find one fault, although I have searched diligently. There is no one thing untrue about it; subject good, treatment adequate, execution up to the choice of subject, details all perfect, end to be fulfilled fulfilled, all complete—all perfect. Every detail is adequate, honest, and truthful; the perfect anatomy, the excellence of the drawing, the rigid hand of death, the terrible colouring, the face—a face telling its own tale—death from starvation brought on by pride—are all marks of its marvellous fidelity. That one rigid arm, hanging lifeless, stiff, cold, is a study for a lifetime.

Do any say the clothes are too fine? he spent the last money he had to purchase them—he was proud, and sought high company. It is not a miserable pauper dying in wretchedness and raggedness; it is the proudest genius in England dying of pride. You can see it in the whole picture. Then there is a hole in the silk stocking—a small hole. Why? O, it is an eloquent little rent, is that. The coat can be purchased, but where is the mother's love to mend up the little hole? His mother is down at Bristol there—far away, and he, the poet, eaten up of pride, will he condescend to ask the milliner with whom he lodges to do it? No.

Then, again, the light—no mortal man has ever painted better the gray dawn of a London day, and how beautifully has the artist distinguished between that which comes through the half-open casement of that wretched garret, and that which comes through the dirty glass! Then, again, the rose in the pot. The master dead, the flower follows—its drooped petals tell of nature's sympathy truly enough. The last smoke of the candle, too, just hastening away; the pen upon the table, stumped, broken, no more to do; the fragments of his writings torn up and scattered, all help to tell the story. Oh, it is a great subject, greatly thought out, laboured over lovingly—carelessness nowhere, beauty everywhere—and it has met its reward. Many a man, looking at that picture, will breathe a prayer that the Good Shepherd will be pleased for the time to come to gather such a wandering, uncared for sheep to Himself, and thus the mission of the picture will be partly fulfilled, and the painter meet part of his reward.

## LITERARY FORGERIES AND IMPOSTURES.

ANTERIOR to experience it might be supposed that within the kingdom of literature all men are honest ; but, unfortunately there is no power in literature to cure human passion—no necessary power to produce honesty or truth. Within the realm of literature, therefore, there are rogues of all sorts and sizes. But the literary detectives are at present sharper and more numerous than ever, and it is possible that the rogues of literature may serve some great final end in sharpening the critical acumen of the literary world. Human passions will grow everywhere. The sacred pale of the church cannot keep them out. Christ's twelve apostles included a traitor. They who in the educational debates of to-day say that education will not tend to diminish human immorality, err. It will *tend* to destroy immorality, but cannot destroy it altogether. It will at least soften it, and if I must be robbed at all, I would prefer to be robbed *without* being garotted, to being robbed *plus* the garotte.

The success of a great number of literary impostures is owing to the readiness—the eagerness—of men to believe ; and to believe something big. A great many literary impostures are not to be classed as lies. They are not *invented* by anybody—they grow. The old travellers were wonderful people for getting up marvellous things that never existed. One of the most charming books is, “The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundeville.” Recounting “Merveilles of Inde,” &c., Maundeville tells of nations of men that have tails, of one-legged men who use their one leg as a sunshade, of birds that take up elephants as easily as an owl takes up a mouse. But Maundeville never told a lie in his life ; he was a thorough English gentleman, and believed all he said. He was told of these wonderful things by priests, pundits, and kings, and he believed them all.

The phoenix was a wonderful bird in its day,—in these days even the poets have done with it, and it is ending in a fire-

plate; but the phœnix, like Maundeville's stories, was a joint-stock imposture—it grew out of some mistaken sight or sound of a man in a strange land, and “still the wonder grew,” as the story passed from one to another, one supplying a head, another a tail, and so on. Herodotus was the first who introduced the phœnix into the domain of history. He said, “There is also another sacred bird, the name of which is the phœnix. I have not myself *seen* it, except in a picture, for it seldom visits them, except, as the people say, every 500 years, and they say that he only comes when his sire dies, and he is—if he is like his picture—of size and shape as follow:—Part of his plumage is gold colour and part crimson, and he is for the most part very like the eagle in outline and bulk, and they say what is to me beyond belief, that setting out from Arabia, he brings his sire to the Temple of the Sun, and that he conveys him thus:—First, he forms an egg of myrrh as large as he is able to carry, and afterwards tries whether he can carry it, and when he has made the trial he hollows out the egg and puts his sire into it, and covers with other myrrh that part of the egg where he had made the hole through which he put in his sire, and when his sire lies inside the weight of the egg is the same. And, having covered him up, he carries him to Egypt, into the Temple of the Sun. Such are the things which they say this bird performs.” Here Herodotus leaves the phœnix, and Tacitus takes him up, not exactly believing in him, but not being prepared to fly in the face of so much tradition. I bow down to the authorities, but I entirely doubt the matter. Tacitus had a brain as sharp as his sentences, and eyes as clear as his glorious style; yet he recorded that there was a concurrence of opinion to the effect that the phœnix was sacred to the sun; that it differed from the rest of the feathered species in the form of its head and the tincture of its plumage, that the common persuasion was, it lived 500 years, but by some writers the date was extended to 1460;\* that the facts lay too remote, and covered, as they were, by the

\* This was the Sothiac period or Canicular cycle of the Egyptians, so named after Sothis or Sirius the Dog-star. Sirius at one time heralded the rising of the Nile, by appearing just before sunrise; but as the Egyptians counted only 365 days to the year and neglected the odd six hours, the star and the inundation got increasingly out of accord—one whole day in four years, two days in

mist of antiquity, all further argument was suspended. As the last phœnix had appeared after an interval of only 250 years, it was inferred by many that it was neither of the genuine kind, nor came from the woods of Arabia; that the true phœnix built a nest in its native clime, and there deposited a principle of life, and that it was the first care of the young bird to perform the obsequies of its father; that when it had gained sufficient confidence in its own powers, it took up its father's body and carried it to the Temple of the Sun, where it was consumed in a flame of fragrance; and there was much fable in the accounts given of this bird, but that its periodical appearance in Egypt seemed not to be doubted. The next development of the story of the phœnix was, that it killed itself, and arose again out of its ashes. Then the Rabbinical authors took it up, and accounted for its long life by saying that it was the only bird that did not eat of the forbidden fruit in Paradise. The phœnix was a good bird, and not only was rewarded by living 500 years, but had the high privilege of burying his own father. The next authorities to befriend the phœnix were the Christian fathers. Cyril said the phœnix was provided by God on purpose to silence unbelief. In the same way, I have heard a clergyman say that God has put the fossils in the strata, all just as they are, to convince the incredulity of the nineteenth century. The Christian Fathers loved the phœnix because they considered him to be an emblem and proof of the resurrection, and one of them \* said, "This bird sings no psalms to God; it flies abroad through the skies, but knows not the Only Begotten Son. Is, then, resurrection given to this irrational creature that knows not its Maker, and to us, who ascribe glory to God, and keep his commandments, shall no resurrection be granted?" Godless phœnix! it said no prayers, and yet resurrection was given to it; should not, therefore, resurrection be given to us? Well, the story of the phœnix does not end here. The last traces of it are curious. Camden says that Pope Clement the Eighth sent a present to Lord Tyrone, head of the Irish rebels, of a feather of the phœnix. Some of the Irish rebels seem, by their doings, to

eight years, 365 days in 1460 years. But to be behind by a whole year was to be again coincident, 1461 years of 365 days were equal to 1460 years of 365½ days. This then was the cycle, and it was no sooner ended than its successor began to live.

\* Clement of Rome.

be wearing the feather ever since. How the Pope got the feather Camden does not say, and of what Lord Tyrone did with it history makes no mention.

There is a sort of modern parallel to the phoenix story—the deadly upas tree. Some Dutch sailors came from Java, bringing wondrous stories of the upas, and after some kind of an investigation, the upas tree became a recognised fact. It did a deal of duty in oratory, and is still employed in Temperance Meetings for the purpose of comparison—“the liquor traffic, that deadly upas tree.” The tree, however, did not have so long a run as the phoenix. It was believed, however, that somewhere in the centre of Java, there was a tree of moderate height, so deadly poisonous that birds were killed in flying over it, and the valley in which it grew was strewn with skeletons of birds, beasts, and men. When a man was condemned to death, he had his choice of being executed, or going to fetch a box of poison from the upas tree. If he chose the latter, as was generally the case, he was furnished with a silver or tortoiseshell box. (There is nothing, if you wish to deceive, like being accurate, and, if possible, gorgeous. A *deal* box might have been doubtful, but a *silver* or tortoiseshell box carries conviction at once.) Near the deadly valley dwelt an old priest, and his duty was to get these poor wretches ready for their desperate adventure. He prayed with them, and heard them say the catechism, or whatever might be the mode of preparation in Java; gave them some prudential directions, and sent them out just as a chaplain attends a criminal to the gallows, and declares that he never saw a man leave this world so touchingly before. Seven hundred men that priest was said to have dismissed, and only twenty-two had ever come back. Dr Erasmus Darwin has given us a poetical description of the upas tree, in a work which he wrote “to enlist imagination under the banners of science.” In the deadly valley, he says, no “refluent fin the unpeopled stream divides.” Wasn’t that a neat way of saying that no fish could live in that water? No “revolant wing” beats the air; and no creatures “breathe the soft hiss, or try the tender yell.” Who but Darwin could have written that line? And what on earth does Darwin mean, further on, by a “beakèd worm?” Bye-and-bye, some scientific men, who did not care about having imagination enlisted under the banner of science, went out to Java, and,

provided with a dog, a fowl, a pole, and a piece of cord, tested this wonderful story. They found there was a tree called the upas tree, eighty feet high, from which poison could be got by incisions in the bark. So far, so good. But it was otherwise harmless; plants twisted about its stem, and little birds settled in its branches. The "refluent fin" could glide beneath its umbrageous shade; and the "revolant wing" flew over it. There was also a deep ravine of volcanic formation, which emitted mephitic vapours dangerous to life. The scientific men looked down, and did not like it; so they let the dog down to see how he liked it. In a quarter of an hour he was on his back, and the fowl, which they also let down, died in a minute and a half. There were skeletons about, probably of rebels. Out of these facts, therefore, well mixed up together and confused, grew the story of the deadly upas tree.

The love of mischief is natural to mankind, and may no doubt be traced to apes, from which, it is now said, we have ascended—or descended. A rudimentary tail-joint, I am informed, may yet be found by any man who takes the trouble to search. For a red herring to be trailed across the scent on a hunting morning, is trying to the huntsman, but great fun to those who trailed the herring. I consider that the monkey which, finding that another monkey has put his tail through a hole, ties it in a knot so that it cannot be drawn back, is on the road to humanity. Many a laughable hoax has been practised on antiquarians—such as passing off an old sheep-fold for a Roman encampment.

But, to speak of literary forgeries, we will first notice those of Steevens. He was a Shakespearean commentator, and the plague of Malone—a malicious hoaxer and corrupter of history. A story is attributed to him, about some Italian ladies, who, struck with Milton's beauty, pinned verses to his garments as he lay asleep. Then there are those of Horace Walpole, who loved fun if ever man did; and the celebrated imposture of the *English Mercuries* in the British Museum. Against the author of this last-named imposture I have a deep grudge, for the *Mercuries* had roused feelings of patriotism, and given to this nation the honour of having published the first newspaper—and they were all forgeries. A literary detective went to the British Museum to see them, and in five minutes it was all over. The type, the spelling, and the

watermark told the tale ;—the watermark gave the letters “G. R.,” and no stretch of fancy could put George Rex in the time of Elizabeth. I do not know who the author of the forgeries was. Then there were the Addisonian impostures. There is a way of getting credit for a thing without saying you have done it. A friend meets you in the street, and says, with a significant look, “I know who wrote that fine article in the paper.” You smirk, don’t say you haven’t written it, and he goes away under the impression that you have. All the time you know you have not. You are a liar all the same. So Addison published in the *Spectator* some beautiful short poems in such a way that they were attributed to him, and he never denied the authorship, though they were stolen from Andrew Marvell, and have since been found among his manuscripts. Joseph was no doubt a very good man, but he was undeniably canny.

The trick of literary forgery has crept in everywhere. In the great branch of bibliography, what liars and knaves have been at work ! Dates have been altered, fictitious titles put to books, and title-pages have been reprinted in order to cheat a single purchaser. In buying an old book, it is really necessary to have a literary detective by you, in order to secure you from fraud. Dates, titles, colophons, vignettes, plates, everything has been forged—even the colour of the paper and the watermarks,—everything upon which these men, either from mischief, like Horace Walpole, or for fun, or from the sheer love of pestering the Royal Society, could exercise their ingenuity—until we come to a set of sordid cheats and impostors ; and to-night I shall have to introduce you to a family of liars, a factory of frauds—where father, son, and daughter all lived, and loved, and lied together. I shall also have to introduce you to the latest eminent literary forger, who has sent into the world no less than twenty thousand forgeries—including autobiographies of Cleopatra, Pascal, Newton, and Moses for aught I know.

Among the oldest and most clever of literary forgeries are the famous “Epistles of Phalaris,” the forger of which ought almost to be pardoned, because he called forth the masterly scholarship of Bentley, which was displayed in the controversy. People were taken in—even knowing people were deceived by these letters. They deceived even Sir William Temple, who broke out into ill-

considered eulogy of them, and in his essay on "Ancient and Modern Learning," he said: "It may perhaps be affirmed in favour of the ancients that the oldest books we have are still of their kind the best. The two most ancient I know of in prose, among what we call profane authors, are 'Æsop's Fables' and 'Phalaris's Epistles.' These have more race, more spirit, more force of wit and genius than any others that I have seen, either ancient or modern." He declared that "he must have little skill who cannot find these Letters to be original. Such diversity of passions upon such different occasions, . . . &c., &c." This praise was extravagant, and became ridiculous afterwards. For Bentley came down upon the "Letters of Phalaris," and soon punctured the wind-bag. He showed, for example, that words were employed in the "Epistles of Phalaris" which were not in use till about five hundred years after the period when it was alleged those Letters were written. That is one of the commonest means of literary detection.

When Daniel De Foe wrote his glorious imposture, "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters," it was intended for an imposture. He pretended to be a Churchman, and he pretended to go into the camp of the enemy, and count their strength and come back again. He pretended to draw their secret thoughts out, and in his book he said, "Exterminate the creatures." But it would be objected that there were so many of them. The answer was, "The sooner you begin then the better." One poor clergyman broke out into a rapture on that pamphlet, and said that "next to the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Comments, this was the very best book that he had ever read." Poor clergyman! One would like to have seen his face when he learned that it was written by that dissenting draper.

The Phalaris controversy had scarcely subsided, when there started up one of the strongest vagabonds, one of the most charming scamps, whose extreme impudence and fine finish of imposture were admirable—that famous fellow, George Psalmanazar. His very name was a forgery, and an admirable forgery it was. Psalmanazar! It was sure to get over people; it sounded so like a converted Jew, or the last of some ancient race. I admire him for that name. It was a stroke of invention. What his real name was the world never knew—he never told anybody; but he called himself



George Psalmanazar, and it sounded admirable. Had he been George Green, his other impostures would have been impossible. His "Memoirs" are fascinating; the account of his impostures is rich. He was a native of the South of France; was born about 1680; had a mother who believed in him, and thought him a prodigy; and his first schoolmaster—an ignorant monk—took great pleasure in him. Pride, laziness, acuteness, and dislike of regular work were the characteristics of his boyhood. But though lazy in matters where he ought to have been industrious, he worked like a horse when he took to cheating. He managed to pick up a good deal of Latin, in a not very grammatical way, and went to a Jesuit's school, where he increased his knowledge. He thought of going home to see his mother; and it occurred to him to disguise himself as a pilgrim, and he did so. He dressed himself up, and, on his way home, mumbled bits of Latin, and looked a very fascinating pilgrim indeed—on his way to the Holy Land on a pious pilgrimage, so that pious people dropped a great many half-pence into his hat. He cadged up and down for some time till he enlisted as a soldier, and got some hard hitting.

Later, it struck him one day that he would turn heathen, and then get converted; for he knew that that was a very paying game. So he disguised himself, and set up to be a native of the island of Formosa. Now, there *is* an island of Formosa, but Psalmanazar invented another; he borrowed the name, but wrote an account of an imaginary Formosa. Not knowing anything about the island of Formosa, he blundered, of course. He invented a language—alphabet, grammar, dictionary—creed, religion, idols, and astronomy. Supposing that, as the Japanese were an Oriental people, they would do as other Orientals, he made them write from right to left. But, unfortunately, they *don't* write from right to left. This error came from want of fulness of knowledge. He made a Formosan Almanack, and, in order to have something to tickle the scientific people, he reckoned twenty months in the year. The pious people were to have the happiness of converting him from idolatry; the men of science were to have the delight of correcting his notions about astronomy. He used to go through religious mummeries—worshipping the sun at its rising and setting, muttering prayers, &c.—and he ate raw flesh to prove that he was a savage. That eating the raw flesh was a master-stroke. When

a man gave such touching evidence of his heathenism as to eat raw flesh, every cook was bound to believe in him at once ; and, accordingly, it was declared by them that he was the most fascinating heathen that had been seen in court or camp. This young Formosan was at length in due order converted, and was brought to a Jesuit. He there kept up the farce of being a native of Formosa.

He afterwards made his way to Sluys, in Dutch Flanders, and the commander thought it desirable that the young Formosan should be put into communication with the chaplain of the regiment. He was thereupon introduced to the chaplain—a Mr Innes, a Scotchman. Innes saw that Psalmanazar was a cheat ; for, being a rogue himself, he had a fine eye for a brother, and speedily detected Psalmanazar. But, instead of exposing him, he determined to use him, and though each knew the other was a rogue, each pretended that he thought the other an honest man. One of Innes's schemes for obtaining promotion is noteworthy. A poor Scotch clergyman published anonymously "A Modest Inquiry after Moral Virtue." Innes took the book, representing himself as the author of it, and sent a copy to the pious and learned Dr Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, who showed great favour to Innes. The Bishop of London was charmed, and gave Innes a living in Essex. But the poor Scotch clergyman found it out, and would not stand it. When Scot meets Scot, then comes the tug of war. His injured countryman not only made Innes recant in writing, but compelled him to shell out all the profits he had got by his imposture—a thing which none but a Scot could have made a Scotchman do. Innes was said to have lost his character—it was a slip of the pen ; he never had any. After that, Innes determined to become Psalmanazar's patron, and introducing him to some Dutch ministers, he was determined to baptize him. But Psalmanazar couldn't stand that—to be baptized by Innes ! So he refused. But Innes had his revenge. One day he gave Psalmanazar a passage from Cicero to translate into the Formosan language. Psalmanazar did it easily and quickly, and forgot it. Innes was satisfied, and pocketed the translation. But, some time afterwards, Innes produced the same passage for translation, and Psalmanazar, not remembering how he had "translated" it the first time, made something very different now. His second trans-

lation contained only about half as many words as the first. Psalmanazar thought it was all over with him. But did Innes denounce him? No; he wanted still to use him, and only recommended him a little more caution. Innes came to England with his "convert," and availed himself of his connection with the cheat—who at once became a "religious lion"—to obtain preferment in the Church.

Psalmanazar published a pretended catechism in the Formosan language, and, to the shame of English philology, some learned Englishmen pronounced it to be a real language, and the reason they gave is exquisite—"because it is like no other language." He also published a "Geographical Account of the Island of Formosa, by George Psalmanazar, a native of the same." Not content with giving a fictitious text, he gave fictitious plates, and a view of "a country house in Formosa" and "a town house in Formosa." What a gigantic labour! A history, a geography, an alphabet, a whole language! The book sold, and a second edition was published, with a vindication. Everybody got excited about this Psalmanazar. Some said he was a Jesuit in disguise. Catholics said he was a Protestant hired to bring disgrace upon the Church; Protestants said he had been hired to cry up Episcopacy. The imposture of Psalmanazar was maintained with marvellous ingenuity; but after a time his little game broke down. Some man induced him to lend his name to a rubbishy article called "Formosan Japan." The japan was white, and wouldn't stick, and it was a failure. Psalmanazar considered this failure a providential warning, and he fell on his knees and repented.

At about the age of thirty-two, he withdrew from public life, and used his pen more honourably than he had done, writing and compiling works of repute, particularly the "Universal History." On his death, in London, in 1763, it was found that he had left a Memoir, in which he told the story of his life, and confessed all the frauds he had been guilty of. Some people were very disgusted, and would not believe his confessions; for there is in human nature a pertinacity of belief, not in what is proved, but according to fancy. Nathaniel Hawthorne, in the "Scarlet Letter," touched a secret spring of human nature when he said that after the miserable clergyman had confessed his sins, there were people

who would not believe, but held that he condemned himself for humility's sake—that he stuck the thorn into his flesh to keep himself humble.

The most audacious nest of liars there ever was, were the Ireland family. Samuel Ireland, the elder, was the Titus Oates of literature. He told lies, and then told more lies to explain the first lies. He pretended that his son, while looking over some deeds at a nobleman's house, came upon a great "find." A "find" is always suspicious. In this case the "find" consisted of several of Shakespeare's writings never before published. Among the papers was a letter purporting to be written from Queen Elizabeth to Shakespeare. There was also a letter from Anne Hathaway. Think of a thief forging such a letter! Rising by impunity into audacity, he forged a copy of verses from Shakespeare to Anne Hathaway. Then, growing profane and blasphemous, he wrote Shakespeare's profession of faith. He also, in order to give himself an ancestry, forged a deed of gift from Shakespeare "to my good friend Master William Henry Ireland for pulling off his jerkin and saving me from drowning." That last was a fine touch of Ireland's, inventing an ancestor to befriend Shakespeare. There were also, "Tributary Verses to the aforesaid William Henry Ireland;" and a great deal besides. But Malone, who was an honest man, and did the world some service, began to suspect that there was something wrong. Perhaps he was jealous that anybody but himself should have had such a find. At any rate, he attacked Ireland's "Shakesporean Miscellanies," and charged Ireland with imposture. Ireland was indignant, and attacked Malone in return, and "vindicated" his own character. He got numerous affidavits made concerning the genuineness of his documents. But bye-and-bye, when there was no more sale for the Shakespeare "finds," it was time for a new volume, and Ireland's son, William Henry, was set to confess all about the imposture; and they sold the "Confessions." Then the father vindicated himself against the son's confession, and they sold the "Vindication." Then the son confessed that the first confessions were false; and so they confessed and re-confessed, and sold the "Re-confessions," and when the bubble burst, the son *forged the forgeries*, and sold them. It came out at last that the father was the originator of the whole scheme, and that the

young man was partly a cat's-paw and partly an accomplice. The intricacy of the deception justifies me in describing the family as a nest of liars and their house a factory of frauds.

The strange life, astonishing forgeries, and sad end of the marvellous boy Chatterton, whose genius was so glorious, and whose fate was so sorrowful, that his name is at once the glory and the shame of England, are also very noteworthy. When he was only eleven years old, he took mighty men in. Horace Walpole doubted the genuineness of the poems which Chatterton alleged to be the work of the old monk Rowley, and said the verses were too smooth for the time in which it was said Rowley lived. Chatterton's ready answer was that the harmony of Rowley's poems was not so extraordinary as the harmony of Joseph Iscanus's; and this answer for a time deceived even Horace Walpole.

The "Poems of Ossian" also created a good deal of controversy at the time of their translation by Macpherson in 1758, which has scarcely subsided among the critics at the present day.

Then there was Simonides, who, in his career of literary imposture, deceived some of the greatest scholars in Germany with forged palimpsests, the name given to parchment, from which, after it has been written upon, the first writing has been wholly or in part rubbed away, for the purpose of the page being written upon a second time.

The famous Perkins folio of Shakespeare, in connection with which Mr J. Payne Collier rather came to grief, you will all remember.

The gigantic frauds just perpetrated upon M. Chasles, the eminent French mathematician, by one who called himself a palæological archivist, will also be present in your minds. By this "palæological archivist" twenty thousand literary forgeries have been sold as genuine to M. Chasles, and distributed over the world.

However the world may degenerate in other things, it will have to be written in the history of the literary impostures of late ages, that "there were giants in those days."

## FREE LIBRARIES.

THE Birmingham Free Reference Library was opened by the Mayor (Mr Edwin Yates), on Friday, 26th October 1866, and Mr George Dawson, M.A., had been invited to deliver the Inaugural Address. At half-past one the Mayor took his seat, supported by the Town Clerk (Mr T. Standbridge) on his right, and Mr Dawson on his left, and with the manuscript catalogue of the Library on the table before him. The room was crowded by the Members of the Town Council, the Magistrates, the Clergy and Ministers, and the principal inhabitants of the town. At the request of the Mayor the Venerable Archdeacon Sandford offered up a prayer, after which the Mayor briefly reviewed the history of the Free Libraries of Birmingham, and Mr Dawson then delivered his address, at the close of which the Mayor expressed a hope that Mr Dawson would allow it to be printed for general circulation. As the address was not written, the following report is from the short-hand writer's notes, carefully revised.

Mr George Dawson, M.A., then rose and said :—Mr Mayor, gentlemen of the Town Council, ladies and gentlemen : There is, probably, no word in the human vocabulary which brings a greater crowd of thoughts to the educated man's mind than that blessed word "library"; for a library is one of the greatest causes, as it is also one of the greatest results of man's civilisation. Out of this crowd of thoughts, which shall we select? Those which come from looking carefully at what we are doing to-day. Let us see what it is to open a Library; see what it is for a Corporation to open a Free Library; what it is for a Corporation to open a Free Reference Library; and perhaps a few words upon each of these heads may make us so enamoured of what we have done, as to pledge us to continue this good work with the like generosity and with the same spirit, and so to carry it on that we may be as proud of the quantity of our books as we already are of their quality. Were I to tell you all that I think a library is, your

patience would be exhausted and my strength would be in like plight. But there are one or two things it will be well to call to mind. A great library contains the diary of the human race; for it is with the human race as with the individuals of it: our memories go back but a little way, or, if they go back far, they pick up but here a date and there an occurrence half forgotten. But when a man keeps a diary of his life, he can at any time bring the whole of its scenes before him. The memory of the human race is just as short, as fragmentary, and as accidental as the memory of the individual; but when the books of mankind are gathered together in a room like this, we can sit down and read the solemn story of man's history, from his birth through all his mutations, and so in learning the history of man we reverence our ancestors, ascertain our own pedigree, and find the secret sources of the life we ourselves are now living. Remember we know well only the great nations whose books we possess; of the others we know nothing or but little. The great Hebrew people—their solemn thoughts and their glorious story lie open to us because we have their books. We know the Greek, we are familiar with the Roman, but as for the nameless tribes which peopled the far deserts of the world,—unchronicled, bookless, libraryless,—we have but a name, a date or two, a few myths, some trumpery legends, and that is all. But here in this room are gathered together the great diaries of the human race, the record of its thoughts, its struggles, its doings, and its ways.

The great consulting room of a wise man is a library. When I am in perplexity about life, I have but to come here, and, without fee or reward, I commune with the wisest souls that God has blest the world with. If I want a discourse on immortality, Plato comes to my help. If I want to know the human heart, Shakespeare opens all its chambers. Whatever be my perplexity or doubt, I know exactly the great man to call to me, and he comes in the kindest way; he listens to my doubts and tells me his convictions. So that a library may be regarded as the solemn chamber in which a man can take counsel with all that have been wise and great and good and glorious amongst the men that have gone before him. If we come down for a moment and look at the bare and immediate utilities of a library we find that here a man gets himself ready for his calling, arms himself for his pro-

fession, finds out the facts that are to determine his trade, prepares himself for his examination. The utilities of it are endless and priceless. It is, too, a place of pastime ; for man has no amusement more innocent, more sweet, more gracious, more elevating, and more fortifying than he can find in a library. If he be fond of books, his fondness will discipline him as well as amuse him.

Let me point out to you some of the blessings of a good library. Suppose we (as many of us are apt to do) get exceedingly hot in the midst of the various discussions—ecclesiastical, political, and social—of our day. Men are very apt to think that the universe is pinned to their little creed, that the world really hangs upon their little conventicles, that their form of faith is the upholding of the Throne of God, and that their little nostrum in politics will be the salvation of the world. I go to one of your meetings and get hot and excited perhaps. I come to believe that if you will carry my bill the millennium will follow ; or I think if you carry this other proposal the world will come to an end. When a man has worked himself into this unwise heat a good place for him to go to is a great library, and that will quiet him down admirably. It will have upon him the same effect that Emerson finely says Nature has upon man. He says, “Nature will not have us fret and fume. She does not like our benevolence or our learning much better than she likes our frauds and our wars. When we came out of the caucus, or the bank, or the Abolition-convocation, or the Temperance Meeting, or the Transcendental Club, into the fields and woods, she says to us, ‘So hot? my little sir.’” At once you are calmed and at once you are quieted. Sometimes we give ear to our prophets, our clerical prophets and our lay prophets, foretelling doom, the millennium, or the setting of England’s sun in the sea. And we grow quite alarmed until we go into the library and take down book after book and find that this is a very old story after all. I can show you in this room now, how many times the millennium ought to have come. I can show you how many times the sun of England’s prosperity ought to have set in the sea. But the day is as distant (I believe, although I am no prophet), as the day of doom when that sun shall set. I can show you the eclipse of the universe and the end of all things several times repeated before our day ; I can show



you the waves of infidelity coming in like a flood a great many times, and the flood happily drying up again just as often. I can show you too that the heats and passions of our times have been before; and when I find that these things have been so oft repeated I cease to feel the sting of fear, and I go out quiet, calm, and tranquil. I have a half mischievous pleasure in my library in putting the great men of old times side by side according to their divergences. I put Calvin close to Arminius, and it is wonderful—in a library—how pleasantly they do kiss one another. I put my great Tory next to my Radical, and they lie down together as the wolf and the lamb. So when hot, fanatical, or furious I simply go home and watch those great men as they lie there in quiet peace, and then I go forward to think of those better days when man's clear knowledge of what is infinite and eternal, separated from that which is but passing away, shall bring us into that blessed peace, that deliverance from the foolishness and the sins of the flesh which is promised shall be given to all who truly seek it. I go into my library as to a hermitage—and it is one of the best hermitages the world has. What matters the scoff of the fool when you are safely amongst the great men of the past? How little of the din of this stupid world enters into a library, how hushed are the foolish voices of the world's hucksterings, barterings, and bickerings! How little the scorn of high or low, or the mad cries of party spirit can touch the man who in this best hermitage of human life draws around him the quietness of the dead and the solemn sanctities of ancient thought!

Thus, whether I take it as a question of utility, of pastime, or of high discipline I find the library—with but one or two exceptions—the most blessed place that man has fashioned or framed. The man who is fond of books is usually a man of lofty thought, of elevated opinions. A library is the strengthener of all that is great in life and the repeller of what is petty and mean; and half the gossip of society would perish if the books that are truly worth reading were but read. When we look through the houses of a large part of the middle classes of this country, we find there everything but what there ought most to be. There are no books in them worth talking of. If a question arises of geography they have no atlases. If the question be when a great man was born they cannot help you. They can give you a gorgeous bed, with

four posts, marvellous adornments, luxurious hangings and lacquered shams all round ; they can give you dinners *ad nauseam* and wine that one can, or cannot, honestly praise. But useful books are almost the last things that are to be found there ; and when the mind is empty of those things that books can alone fill it with, then the seven devils of pettiness, frivolity, fashionableness, gentility, scandal, small slander, and the chronicling of small beer come in and take possession of the mind. Half this nonsense would be dropped if men would only understand the elevating influences of their communing constantly with the lofty thoughts and the high resolves of men of old times.

But as we cannot dwell upon all the uses and beauties of a library, let us pass on to see that this is a Corporation Library, and in that we see one of the greatest and happiest things about it, for a library, supported as this is, by rates and administered by a Corporation, is the expression of a conviction on your part that a town like this exists for moral and intellectual purposes. It is a proclamation that a great community like this is not to be looked upon as a fortuitous concourse of human atoms, or as a miserable knot of vipers struggling in a pot each aiming to get his head above the other in the fierce struggle of competition. It is a declaration that the Corporation of a great town like this has not done all its duty when it has put in action a set of ingenious contrivances for cleaning and lighting the streets, for breaking stones, for mending ways ; and has not fulfilled its highest functions even when it has given the people of the town the best system of drainage—though that is not yet attained. Beyond all these things the Corporation of a borough like this has every function to discharge that is discharged by the master of a household—to minister to men by every office, that of the priest alone excepted. And mark this : I would rather a great book or a great picture fell into the hands of a Corporation than into the hands of an individual—for great and noble as has been the spirit of many of our collectors, when a great picture is in the hands of a nobleman however generous, or of a gentleman however large-hearted he may be, he will have his heirs, narrow-minded fools perhaps, or a successor pitifully selfish and small ; and this great picture that God never intended to be painted for the delight of but one noble family, or the small collection of little people it

gathers around it, may be shut up through the whim of its owner or the caprice of its master, or in self-defence against the wanton injury that some fool may have done it. But the moment you put great works into the hands of a corporate body like this you secure permanence of guardianship in passionless keeping. A Corporation cannot get out of temper, or if it does it recovers itself quickly. A Corporation could not shut up this Library. It is open for ever. It is under the protection of the English law in all its majesty. Its endurance will be the endurance of the English nation. Therefore when a Corporation takes into its keeping a great picture or a great collection of books, that picture and those books are given to the multitude and are put into the best keeping, the keeping of those who have not the power, even if they had the will, to destroy. The time of private ownership has, I hope, nearly come to an end—not that I would put an end to it by law or by any kind of violence; but I hope we shall in the open market bid against the nobility, gentry, and private collectors, for it is a vexation when a great picture or a great collection of books is shut up in a private house.

A few of you perhaps know one room of one noble house in this country. If any of you have had the pleasure of passing an hour or two at Lord Spencer's, at Althorp, you know that shut up in one little room is one of the most priceless collections of the wonderful books of the world. To spend a day there is a joy to a lover of books. In that room—and it is but a small one—there are collected books of which thousands of pounds would not give the value. There are the first books ever printed; and the earliest editions of almost every great book. The lover of black letter dotes upon them. The very odour of the room is ecstatic. The moment you enter you bid the world farewell, and if you never saw it again it would matter little to you provided flesh and soul could keep company without it. But whatever may be the generous spirit of the owner those books are shut up. The public are allowed to look at the backs of the books but are not trusted to do more. The books are kept behind prison bars, and you may stare at the glorious prisoners. If you are initiated—a member of the solemn order of book lovers—then the bars are opened, and you may touch these precious books and handle these sacred relics. There are very few who have the privilege;—but bring

those books here ! What a noble thing it would be if the nobility should take to giving their precious collections to Corporations. Bring them here and then they would be open to the multitude ; for the spirit of corporate ownership is necessarily different from the spirit of private possession. I have one or two books in my library which I confess—with all my love for the people—I do not know that I should like to see many people touch. For I am afraid I should have “John Smith his mark” and “Benjamin Grey his sign” left upon those title pages the solemn purity of which I prize. I hardly like to see my books worn out ; but a Corporation will learn to rejoice at wearing out as a sign of success ; a proof of its wisdom, a justification of its design. The Mayor and Aldermen as they listen to the yearly report will look out with rapture for the return of “books worn out by honest use 5000,” and will with zeal order 5000 new volumes to take their places, or the rebinding of 5000, with a delight which it is not in the nature of the private owner to feel. If my library be spoiled, it is so much the worse for my boy, or injured, so much the worse for my creditors. A man must have a very large heart if he can leave the word “property” off his books. But the books here are to be thumbed, worn, used, to show marks of age, to be worn out by good and diligent use, and the quicker they are worn out honestly, the gladder all of us will be.

Therefore I am glad that this is a Corporation Library. I hope, in time to come, this Corporation may become as rich in pictures and works of art as it has already become in books, for I believe that one of the highest offices of civilisation is to determine how to give access to the masterpieces of art and of literature to the whole people. There is no object higher and nobler than that—to make Raffaele common, to make Michel Angelo intelligible to the multitude, to lay open to the workman and the peasant what heretofore only rank and riches could possibly command. When we speak of this as a Free Library we simply mean that the use is free. We all know that the library must be paid for, and we shall all of us, I believe, rejoice in paying for it. But in opening it we open it for everybody. There are no restrictions in this library. We simply ask a little wholesome cleanliness on the part of the reader’s skin, a little fitness on the part of his thumb and finger. We pray him to remember

that pages are white, and thumbs sometimes a little black ; and that he will, if possible, bring thumb and page into some likeness of colour and fitness for communion. With this little exception, we say to all men, in the solemn spirit of the Gospel, "Buy here without money and without price." This is the great genius of the Christian religion, our religion : all things for all men : the highest to kiss the lowest : the manifestation of God in the world in order that the meanest of mankind may be brought to a knowledge of Him. This freedom therefore is the glory of this Library. "All things for all men" is a holy Communism, a wise Socialism, which leaving property altogether respected, thinks it better to place a great property like this in the hands, as it were, of passionless masters, and so place it at the service of the whole people of the land.

Then we have to consider that this is a Reference Library. The books in this room are not to go out of it. They remain here to be consulted, but not to be taken away. Many of them are too ponderous to be removed. Many of them are too precious to be trusted even from this room to a private house. Here they are to be fixtures. The reader is to come to them—and very properly too, for where books are so great, as many of these are in every sense, it is more decent that the reader wait upon the book than that the book wait upon the reader. You should come to these mighty masters, and not ask them to come to you. One of the principles that guides the selection of a Library like this is cost and dearness. If I had my will there should not be a single cheap book in this room. If you want cheap books, buy them. You can have "Waverley" for sixpence, and the choice of two editions. The object of a Library like this is to buy dear books—to buy books that the lover of books cannot afford to buy ; to put at the service of the poorest, books that the richest can scarce afford. Even the united incomes of some score of you would not purchase the books that are in this room now. They have cost £5000 already, and that is but the beginning of endless fives long drawn out. The object is to bring together in this room a supply of what the private man cannot compass, and what the wisest man only wants to put to occasional use. One of the great offices of a Reference Library like this is to keep at the service of everybody what everybody

cannot keep at home for his own service. It is not convenient to every man to have a very large telescope; I may wish to study the skeleton of a whale, but my house is not large enough to hold one; I may be curious in microscopes, but I may have no money to buy one of my own. But provide an institution like this, and here is the telescope, here is the microscope, and here the skeleton of the whale. Here are the great picture, the mighty book, the ponderous atlas, the great histories of the world. They are here, always ready for the use of every man without his being put to the cost of purchase or the discomfort of giving them house room. Here are books that we only want to consult occasionally, and which are very costly. These are the books proper for a Library like this—mighty cyclopædias, prodigious charts, books that only Governments can publish. It is almost the only place where I would avoid cheapness as a plague, and run away from mean printing and petty pages with disgust. This is a room for the luxuries of literature, for the mighty folio and the glorious quarto. This is a room where you must have a strong table to bear up the precious volume, where when you open a book you will take a long breath before you begin to read the great pages; and therefore not a library of cheapness but a library of dearness, where the gems are too precious for the private man's purchase, and too glorious for the private man's safe keeping.

Thus we have looked at the main points, at this being a Library, a Corporation Library, and a Reference Library; and as I see there are some of you present whose knowledge of books is large, minute, and loving, what can I do better than just gladden your ears by mentioning a few of the books that are already in this room? First then there are 15,000 volumes, and £5000 is their price—a mere pennyworth of bread as compared with what is hereafter to be bought, and what is afterwards to be brought here. And yet in selecting this library, great generosity, large knowledge of books, profound good sense have been shown. There is no great department of human thought that is not well represented here. Beginning with the Divines—the place of honour being given always to the clergy—let us refresh their souls by telling them that there is no apparatus for sermon-preparing, no refreshment for their spirits that they will not find here. There are many Bibles—Walton's Polyglot, Hebrew and many other versions,

the English Hexapla, and Commentaries of all sorts, from the profundities of Scott upward through the whole course. Here they may find Dictionaries of the Bible which will give all that the parochial clergyman need know. Here also are the Fathers—glorious editions of Augustine, Basil, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Jerome, Justin and Origen; the Bampton Lectures in all their varied worth or worthlessness; the publications of the Parker Society; the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology; here—and I am happy to say it with emphasis—will be found a fine collection of Foreign Theology, in the which the English mind may recruit itself and bring over, as we bring foreign wheat, many good things to be turned here into admirable flour. Here are theologians too, Churchmen and Dissenters—Barrow, Baxter, Bunyan, Chalmers, Robert Hall; the “judicious Hooker,” and glorious Jeremy Taylor—they are all here, and very pleasantly they are living together, I assure you. Should Church History be your desire, you will find here Foxe, Strype, Milman, Burnet, Collier, Mosheim, and Neander. If passing through this most sacred domain of literature you come to Moral Philosophy you find Ritter, Stewart, Hamilton, and Reid. If Geography be your passion you have the best Gazetteers that are to be had; the best works on British Topography; glorious old Camden; County Historians—not enough, but what there are, good—Histories of Warwickshire, minute in their parochialness, large in their amplitude; at the head of Voyages and Travels, a very gem and jewel of a book, the *Editio Princeps* of Hakluyt, a book many of you have never seen and of which I may say you will have to take a long journey before you can see another copy; Marco Polo, Pinkerton, Osborne, Churchill, and Kerr. There are travels in America, Australia, and China, and there is that wonderful book, one of the glories of Napoleon, the book on Egypt, published under his auspices and prepared by the great *savans* of France. There are the marvellous “Antiquities of Mexico” and a wonderful book *Les Peuples de la Russie*, in all their varied costumes; and the magnificent work prepared by the Russian Government on the Antiquities of that mighty Empire—such an one as no collection perhaps within fifty miles of this town can match in beauty, or equal in importance.

If we enter on the domain of History we find 2000 volumes;

and when you have exhausted that list we will promise to give you 2000 more. Of Biography there are 1000 volumes. In Natural History there are all the precious technicalities of the Agricultural, Geological, Linnean, Palæontological, Palæontographical and Anthropological Societies, with the history of Saurians in all their varieties and peculiarities. There are the great books upon the Antediluvian world down to the last catalogues of beetles and butterflies—there you will find the whole wondrous world of God, as far as it is known, admirably set forth.

If you leave God's world and enter into man's world of Art which is man's copy of his Maker's works, if, I repeat, you enter into man's world, the world of art, we have the publications of the Arundel Society in all their glorious completeness; the great and precious books the *Edifizie di Roma Antica*; Cicognara's Venice; the great Archæological Work of Montfaucon—the details of the Capitol and the Vatican. Here we find a great collection of books upon Printing and can make the acquaintance of Caxton, or with glorious Dibdin can gossip about books, their dates and writers—from the art volumes of Agincourt and Winkelmann down to the records of the Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862. Whether in Architecture you wish to study English Cathedrals or the glorious productions of the ancient world there is almost every book that you could desire. In Engineering we are rich, in Mining deep, in Metallurgy valuable, in Mechanics both nimble and strong. From Agricola and his books on Metallurgy down to the last number of the *Engineer* there is all that you can desire, and a great deal more than you will be able to read.

Passing into that other glorious domain of man's life, Law—and there is nothing on earth more solemn than the domain of human law, for it is man's imitation not of God's works, but of his character; it is an attempt, however poor, to make human justice like unto Divine—here are the Statutes at large. There is pasturage for you, there are possibilities to be solved! No matter how lean you are, turn into that great grassfield of man's law and there is nothing you may not learn. Here are Blackstone's Commentaries in all their editions; the State Trials in all their fascinating variety; Journals of the Lords and Commons—



life is short and these journals be long; Cobbett's Register and Hansard's Parliamentary Debates. We have a fine collection of Dictionaries and Encyclopædias; in Poetry we are wondrous; in the Drama we are glorious, and I will not profess to enter into the details of the Miscellaneous list;—wonderfully vague in itself, a library which astonishes even its possessors, on looking at the books. It is like the last cartload that goes from a house when you are leaving, you wonder what it is all about, it defies classification, and even the auctioneer is obliged to say "miscellaneous lot." Here are Gentlemen's Magazines, Ladies' Magazines, Archæologia, Philosophical Transactions, Periodicals and Pamphlets. Then there is a speciality here which we intend to make complete. We want to get copies of every thing published in Birmingham, every book about Birmingham, or that has anything to do with Birmingham however remotely. Here we have one of the glories of this town, Baskerville's splendid books. They are the works of a true artist, for artist he was. He waited upon scholars, and of all the ministrations of this world the waiting upon scholarly men is one of the noblest and the greatest.

Time would fail me to go through this wondrous bead roll. Let these few words suffice. A long discourse is a sore trouble under the sun. It is worse than a big book; you can shut up the book, but it is difficult to shut up the man. With these few words let us just simply congratulate one another upon the work we have done, or rather the work we have begun so well.

Now there remains nothing for me to do but to congratulate you, Mr Mayor, that your sun of office being about to set it will go down in such golden glory. I have also to thank those gentlemen through whose great exertions this admirable collection of books has been brought together. They are men who would not wish perhaps to be named just now, but those of us who know them, know well what a labour of love it has been to them, and how faithfully it has been discharged.

Now Mr Mayor we probably could not part without some little looking forward to the future. For man's part in immortality is so great that he always looks beyond that day when "the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved;" beyond the day when these earthen vessels so gloriously shaped by the Almighty Potter shall have fallen back again into shapeless clay; and he

longs, with a pardonable desire, that his name may be remembered, when the place that knew him, knows him no more. That glorious weakness I hope we all of us share—that we would fain haunt some place in this world even when the body is gone; that we desire that our names shall be gratefully spoken of when we have long passed away to join the glorious dead. If this be your passion, there are few things that I would more willingly share with you than the desire to be present in spirit in days to come, when some student, in a fine rapture of gratitude, as he sits in this room, may for a moment call to mind the names of the men, who by speech and by labour, by the necessary agitation or the continuous work, took part in founding this Library. There are few places I would rather haunt after my death than this room, and there are few things I would have my children remember more than this, that this man spoke the discourse at the opening of this glorious Library, the first-fruits of a clear understanding that a great town exists to discharge towards the people of that town the duties that a great nation exists to discharge towards the people of that nation—that a town exists here by the Grace of God, that a great town is a solemn organism through which should flow, and in which should be shaped, all the highest, loftiest and truest ends of man's intellectual and moral nature. I wish then for you, Mr Mayor, and for myself, that, in years to come, when we are in some respects forgotten, still now and then, in this room, the curious questions may be asked: Who was Mayor on that famous day? who said grace before that famous banquet? who returned thanks for that gracious meal? who gathered these books together? who was the first man that held that new office of Librarian? I trust his name will be printed whenever the name of this Corporation appears. What his title is to be I don't know—whether it is to be Town Librarian or Corporation Librarian—but I envy him whatever it may be, and I am glad the Corporation has given itself an officer who represents intellect—that it looks upward deliberately and says: We are a Corporation who have undertaken the highest duty that is possible to us: we have made provision for our people—for *all* our people—and we have made a provision of God's greatest and best gifts unto Man.

Mr Dawson's closing references justify our giving here the Mayor's address, in which honourable mention is made of the chief promoters of the Free Library movement in Birmingham.

The Mayor said :—Before calling upon Mr Dawson for his inaugural address, he desired to congratulate the people of Birmingham on the events of that day, and to remind them of a few of the difficulties which were created in days gone by, only to be overcome by the energy and perseverance of their fellow-townsmen. In thinking of the past, he naturally reverted to the time when it was first proposed in the Town Council that Birmingham should have Free Libraries for the use of the people, and on referring to the 6th February 1852 he found that Mr J. R. Boyce, then one of the Councillors for Deritend and Bordesley Ward, first introduced the subject of Free Libraries by moving “That the Council at its next meeting do take into consideration the subject of the Public Libraries Act, 13 and 14 Vic., cap. 65, of 1850, with the intention of deciding upon the desirability of the Council requesting the Mayor to take the necessary steps in accordance with the said Act to ascertain whether the provisions thereof shall be adopted in the Borough.” This very moderate resolution appeared, so far as he had been able to ascertain, not to have met with the approval of the Council; but, on the 19th March 1852 (the same year) it was resolved :—“That this Council requests the Mayor to take the necessary measures in accordance with the provisions of the Public Libraries Act of 1850, in order to ascertain if it is the wish of the burgesses that the provisions of the said Act shall be carried into effect in this borough”—but on appeal to the burgesses the Act was rejected. Had he been in the Council in those days he had no doubt he should have voted for Mr Boyce's resolution, and have regretted the burgesses having arrived at the decision they recorded; but at this distance of time he wished to believe the 1850 Act was rejected, not because the people did not require the libraries, but because the Act did not go far enough. It was well known the Public Libraries Act, 1850, authorised the levying of a library rate of one halfpenny in the pound only, out of which to build or rent premises and provide fuel, lighting, fixtures, and furniture, and the salaries of officers, but omitted books. He supposed the promoters of this Act thought, in the towns where it was adopted, a

sufficient number of generous and philanthropic persons would be found who would furnish the libraries with books gratuitously; but Birmingham men felt they ought not to depend altogether on such a source for a supply. The Act of 1855 repealed the former Act, authorised a rate of one penny in the pound, and provided for the purchase of books, newspapers, maps, and specimens of science and art, in addition to the erection of buildings, &c., as included in the former Act; and on the 21st of February 1860, at a public meeting of the burgesses, in the Town Hall, presided over by the then Mayor (Mr Thomas Lloyd), a majority of upwards of two-thirds of the persons then present voted for its adoption in this borough. On the 13th March 1860 the Council appointed eight of its own body, and eight gentlemen, burgesses, but not members of the Town Council, to be the first Free Libraries Committee, and those gentlemen proposed, in their report presented to the Council May 15th, 1860, that there should be four District Lending Libraries, with news rooms, and one Central Reference Library, with Museum and Gallery of Art so situated as to be convenient for the whole of the inhabitants of the town. In pursuance of this object, the Northern District Free Library, Constitution Hill, was opened in April 1861, during the mayoralty of Mr Arthur Ryland; the Western and Central Lending Library, Ratcliff Place, in 1865, during the mayoralty of Mr Henry Wiggin; the Southern District Library, in Heath Mill Lane, was opened that day, and the stone was then laid for the Eastern District Library, Gosta Green. As regarded the opening of the Central Reference Library that day, in that splendid room, the whole town had cause to be joyful, and might well congratulate itself upon the success which had attended the efforts of the committee selected by their representatives in the Town Council to make so useful an institution so complete and so inviting. All honour, then, to those who supported, suggested, and assisted in carrying out these grand objects. The name of Alderman Osborne, who, in 1859, moved in the Town Council the resolutions which led to the town's meeting in 1860 adopting the Act, and who had since, whether as chairman or committee man, indefatigably worked in forwarding the object, should be specially mentioned. Mr Jacob Phillips and Mr Sam: Timmins, as members of the committee, should also be specially mentioned

as having rendered good service; but were he (the Mayor) to mention each and all of the gentlemen who had served on that committee, they would agree with him in saying they were well deserving of their special thanks for the great services they had rendered to the town. The Birmingham Reference Free Library appeared to be the first of its kind that had been opened where the erection of the building and the supply of books had been paid for solely out of the rates, and in this respect they might consider that they had set an example worthy of being followed elsewhere. The Adderley Library, on the borders of the borough, was more appreciated every day, and as that part of the town became more densely populated, the wisdom of the Town Council in accepting the generous gift of Mr Adderley\* would become more apparent. In the five Free Libraries now open to the public there were 39,000 volumes for the use of strangers, as well as citizens, properly recommended. The average number of persons who had qualified as borrowers was 8,320 weekly; the issue of books averaged 4,925 weekly, and the number of persons who visited the various news rooms was estimated to be very few short of 6,000 every week, so that a vast amount of knowledge was being accumulated, which could not fail to be of benefit to the whole town hereafter.

\* Now Lord Norton.

## THE STAUNTON WARWICKSHIRE COLLECTION.

[This was an exceedingly rich and valuable collection of books, manuscripts, prints, coins, seals, &c., relating to the County of Warwick, gathered together by Mr Staunton of Longbridge. It was rich in black letter lore, as well as in original editions of the older English poets, and included perhaps the largest number of tracts, &c., relating to the Civil War ever brought together. In 1875, at the suggestion of Mr Sam. Timmins, the collection was purchased for the town, and formally handed over to the keeping of the Free Libraries' Committee of the Corporation.]

AT the request of the Birmingham man, to whom, of all living men in it, Birmingham is most indebted in matters of literature, antiquity, and topographical lore, I have agreed to offer from the subscribers to the town this collection of Mr Staunton's. The collection consists of everything that is precious to the antiquary, and, therefore, I think everything that is precious to a wise man; for no man is wise if he is entirely free from antiquarian love, and antiquarian lore. Those of us who are considered most radical, and most devoted to to-day and to-morrow, are usually the most devoted to yesterday. We, more than any other men, are anxious that the memorials of the past should be preserved, where many of the memorials will *only* be preserved—on paper—when their utility or beauty has passed away. In a town like Birmingham, given up very much to what are called "Liberal" opinions, it is desirable that the past should be very carefully preserved, in order that the foolish mistake of false Liberalism may be corrected—the mistake of wishing to move independently of the traditions of the country to which we belong. The only wise progress is to keep in the lines of our fathers—continually to change, but always to make the changes under the impression of the times that have gone by.

I need hardly tell you that the collection is one of matters re-

lating to one of the most beautiful of English counties—a county most dowered by God with beauty, and one most glorified by genius and greatness since it was created ; a county illustrious in the old Middle Ages because of its sweet saint Godiva, whose story is one worthy of the Gospels ; a county made famous by being the birth-county of the greatest man the world has had, setting aside only those around whose head there is a halo of sanctity which puts them out of the pale of comparison with other men. And, remember, the greatest of monarchs was connected with Warwickshire. I do not mean Edward VI., of pious memory, who did so much for us, and whose labours we so much wish to preserve for the good of our town ; I mean that most illustrious of English monarchs, that greatest, bravest, pluckiest, quaintest, and queerest king we have ever had—King Elizabeth. At Kenilworth she was in her glory ; it was there that she blossomed out in all the splendour of which as a woman she was so passionately fond ; and there the English gentry paid her that worship which was quite as much from the heart as it was from the knee and the lip. If there had been no other visit paid to Warwickshire but the visit of Queen Bess, it would have made it illustrious, and amongst the greatest of kings I always place that most glorious of women. I need not tell you that, ever since, Warwickshire has produced great men ; it is an illustrious county, and, to some of those present, it is doubly dear, because it is their birth-county, while to me it is only a county of adoption. I think you will agree with me that there is perhaps no passion of more use, if we look at history carefully, than the passion of local patriotism, for the love of their own parish is one of the roots by which men are kept and nourished by what went before them, and it is one of the roots of national greatness. Cosmopolitanism is admirable at a certain stage, but it must be preceded by even parochial patriotism ; and those men usually love their country best who love with a passion the parish in which they were born. The wise man may know how to tear himself away from his parish, but a wise man finds that his heart always remains full of pleasant, touching memories of the place where he was born.

Now, Mr Staunton's motto is an excellent one. It is, "*Nihil verovicense a me alienum puto ;*" which, put into the much nobler language, means, "There is nothing concerning Warwickshire

which is alien or foreign to me." He is right. Antiquarian pursuits have sometimes been made laughter of, and no doubt all enthusiasts have their comical side. The antiquarian sometimes makes his mistakes. I remember once being taken to see a Roman encampment, and it turned out to be a disused sheepfold. That is amusing, and may be laughed at; but any man who has a vulgar prejudice against antiquarian pursuits only shows his inability to understand of what materials history is composed. If a thing is old enough, no matter how small, it becomes precious. The petty things of to-day will become charming things to-morrow. Your portrait, not at present sought for by collectors, nor emptying the pockets of the rich to purchase—give it three hundred years, and it will rise in value, while perhaps after *five* hundred it may be a bone of contention among the enthusiastic Stauntons of the day. There is nothing concerning yesterday too small for a wise man's thought, too small for a wise man's love; and any pettiness that there may seem about the things of to-day, time will remove.

In looking through Mr Staunton's collection, I find the battle of Edgehill without the sword, the pageant of Kenilworth without my great toe being trodden upon, or my being buffeted as a nobody into the background. I hear old gossip without its sting and spite, see old splendour without the tawdry which usually accompanies it; here is the theatre without the footlights, and here the performers without the rouge; for it is the glory of antiquity to remove the vulgarness of the hour, and to embalm even things seemingly worthless and make them precious. For all the flies that are tormenting us this autumn one would not give a penny piece; but for a fly that plagued Cleopatra, when she was arraying herself in splendour for Mark Antony—the weight of that fly in gold would be too little. The love of gossip to-day is vulgarity; the love of old gossip is nobleness. Antiquity removes the dust, the heat, the sweat, the battle-smoke, the littleness and the meanness of everything, and leaves them with their nobler side and their permanent meaning clear and plain; and the study of these things is always good. This Staunton collection on a wet day is to the wise man what the mountain tops are on a summer's day—a place to get rid of people, and their buzz, and their sting, and their noise, and their splashes. A man retires out of the streets, out of politics, out of to-day, into a



collection like this, and the world is quiet here. Here I meet death without corruption ; here I meet antiquity without mould ; here I hear the strifes of my forefathers, and the din and the dust are gone ; here I walk with the dead, missing only that which can die of them, and conversing with that which is immortal, like Him who gave it.

The collection is vast, minute ; there is nothing too small for it—from the tokens of a deceased Birmingham tradesman, up to the sign-manual of kings, everything is embraced in it. We see the labours of the old work and the labours of the old artist. Honour is done to Shakespeare ; between two hundred and three hundred portraits of the mighty master are in the collection. There are caricatures : there is a late Member for Birmingham in all his glory, in all the fulness and redundancies which belonged to him. There are caricatures of Dr Priestley attended by the being whose existence the doctor denied. There are portraits of that wonderful Warwickshire man, Dr Parr—there is his pipe, there lies his tobacco—in twenty different ways. Old seals, old coins, and, better than all, old books.

There are books here that no money can purchase, for some of them are unique. I am not myself a lover of uniqueness, for I always mourn when I see the word “unique” written over anything, and wish there were twenty of them ; but, while a thing *is* unique, I think Birmingham is the place for it, and I covet it. I covet it not for myself, for I have long got rid of the passion for collecting in privacy ; and the only object I can see for which a man should collect anything of this kind is that he may give it to the public. Some of those present, I believe, are making collections, and I know their ultimate destiny. Like the Staunton collection, they should be swept into our great library. The day will come when a man will be ashamed to shut up a picture by Raffaele or a statue by any great master, in a private house. These gifts of genius should be like the gift of God’s sunshine, open to all, for all, to be reached by all, and ultimately to be understood and enjoyed by all. Whilst I respect the collector, I respect him more when I believe his motive to be the ultimate public good, when he stores his chiffonier with precious things, that one day he may bring them forth in such manner that the multitude may be gladdened instead of the few only pleased.

We are discharging to-day a duty of local patriotism. A number of gentlemen, hearing that the Staunton collection could be sold, have raised part of the money—not the whole, because they know that many others will be covetous of the honour, and they have left a few open lots which I hope will be filled up as rapidly as possible. I know of few nobler things than for a part of the citizens to purchase things that are precious and to give them to the whole body of citizens. The more this is done the more a municipal body recognises its ends and its greatness, for to live for the many is the true law of life. You will be glad to know that we are performing one of the noblest of duties—taking a collection of priceless value, representing whole centuries of Warwickshire life, collected with immense care, with boundless enthusiasm and admirable success, and presenting it for the good of the town for ever. We have done much in this direction. Already our Shakespeare library is becoming unique. I should be glad to see another as good, but until there is, I desire it for Birmingham. The Cervantes library is one that the world cannot match, and I am not sure that there is in England a collection concerning a county equal to the one which is now presented to the town.

I will not trouble you at further length. What I have said I have said chiefly with a view to the future. If any of my hearers should see anything by which a collection like this can be enriched—if it is only a token, an old caricature, an old portrait—let them remember that things, when they form part of a collection approaching completeness, borrow greatness from the greatness of the collection. Things which, by themselves, are scarce worth taking up, when arranged in a series become exceedingly valuable. There is an old proverb that the man who does not pick up a pin does not love his wife. I will not on the present occasion go into the philosophy of that, but merely observe that the antiquarian who sees even a portrait, or passes any scrap connected with the history of his town or county, and does not pick it up, is not yet penetrated with a thorough understanding of how the greatness of a collection lends value to the thing itself. One illustration may be familiar to you. Who would think of making a collection of strange tobacco pipes! but when Mr Bragg has made a collection of all the tobacco pipes known in the history of the world, and of all things connected with tobacco, each pipe is precious as part of the

whole. Whatever views we may take of tobacco—and some of us, I know, feel very severely on the subject—we must admit that matters connected with a sin of such gigantic proportions, a vice of such enormous extent, a source of revenue upon which every Government in the world is founded, deserve to be collected. There is no throne in Europe which would stand if men ceased to smoke tobacco; all politics rest upon it. In the light of such considerations, even tobacco pipes become valuable. If, when you look over your treasures, you find any little thing—even the scrap of an old newspaper about a Warwickshire man, just add it to the Staunton collection, and the greatness of the collection will lend dignity and worth, and perhaps even lustre, to your little contribution.

On behalf of the subscribers, I present the Staunton Collection, to be added to the other treasures under the management of the Corporation; and in giving it to the Corporation, of course we give it to the town under the best known conditions for its being kept together for its large and intelligent use, and as a guard against what often prevents the private collector from giving things—the danger of the collections being broken up. As long as old England lasts Corporations will last, and, therefore, as long as old England lasts, the Staunton Collection will be under safe keeping. I have very great pleasure in presenting the collection.

[“Space would fail us to tell of the many rarities of this priceless collection,—of the large paper copies of our great county history; of the famous manuscript Cartularies of Knowle and Thelsford, of the treasures of early typography . . . of the innumerable collection of Warwickshire pamphlets; or of the almost unique series of Warwickshire prints, and the altogether unique MS. Collections of William Hamper, Thomas Sharp of Coventry, and other antiquaries. . . . We have not the heart to go on with the catalogue, for we have to record that nearly all these priceless treasures perished in the lamentable fire of January 1879.—*Old and New Birmingham*, by Robert K. Dent, 1880.”]

## OLD BOOKS.

YOU must consider yourselves as about to enter upon a course of what may be called "useless knowledge." I shall first glorify the subject, to interest you in it, and then proceed to point out the uses, beauties, and inutilities that attend the study of old books. I confess I have a kind of liking for old books that can hardly be turned to any useful purpose; I like their weaknesses. In this practical and utilitarian age, old books are far too much neglected, and thrown aside with a sneer, forgetting that in them there is the true strength and glory of the land.

This generation is in great danger of reading too much and thinking too little. I condemn the practice of reading a great number of new books. If the records of the library of this or of any other Institution were examined, it would be found that where one man takes off the shelf an old book, a thousand take off a new one. It is to me a subject of regret that so few read old books at all. I like to meet a man who has not read a new book. I glorify old English books,—particularly books that were written before the admirable Georges came,—and will try to show how, by the fact of their being old, and also by virtue of their contents, they are as well worth reading as any new books whatever. When I look down the list of new books with which this nation is flooded every year, I find how oblivion takes care of its own, how death looks after dulness. But the majority of old books have been tested and tried; they are the books that have held on; they were sent out into the world as bantlings, and they have managed to live; they are sound in constitution, wind, and limb. My own opinion now is that old books are the best. By their freedom from vulgarity, party spirit, and all the affectations of our own time, they are excellent, and have an immense advantage over new ones.

It is difficult to say when a book ceases to be new; some have considered as old books all previous to Goethe, but it is almost impossible to draw the line. Good books, like gentlemen, have

no age or time. Shakespeare was a man of all time, one of the immortals of the earth, one of the Catholics of the world, whom no country can claim, of whose biography we know little, and that little is not needed; he was a dateless man, an immortal man, always young and always old, and belonging to every generation.

I shall say nothing of classical books; nothing of that dateless book, the book of books, the Bible; but limit my remarks to old English books. They may be considered either as to the material of the volume, the volumes themselves, or what is in them. I have spent many a half-hour in railway-carriages and elsewhere, in endeavouring to fathom the mystery of a love of old china, but have failed; it is something *sui generis*, so peculiar, causeless, and endless, one of the quiddities of the human mind, which defeats anything like analysis or apprehension. Something analogous is a certain sort of bibliomania; regarding books, not as to the matter that is in them, but as to how many are in the market; not as things to be read and studied, but to be possessed and hugged by their fortunate owners, who are powerful in title-pages, and colophons, and dates, to whom the odour and incense of an old library are cheering—its frowsiness delightful, its mustiness charming, and from whom the fewness of the edition, the yellowness of the paper, and the unsavoury look of the volume, the Aldine, Elzevir, or Baskerville edition, draws forth intense praise. Absurd as this may seem, I can somewhat sympathise with it; it is one of the fringes and skirts of literature, admirable and lovely, but weak. One can hardly read the “Pilgrim’s Progress” in an edition with the modern refinements of drawing and niceties of engraving, but must turn to some old tome, with the hero in his old England dress. The “*Faerie Queene*” looks by no means well upon very white nineteenth century paper; and in Chaucer modernised no man can believe.

My opinion is that old English literature is better than that of any other country, because I believe there is nothing that has been done by foreigners which has not been better done by Englishmen. I will back Milton against Homer any day, and as to Shakespeare, class all other dramatists together that have lived since the world began, and Shakespeare is equal to the whole. I will back “*Tristram Shandy*” against all the humour that was ever written in the world, and my only doubt is whether we can

top "Don Quixote." Out of this nation have gone nations. We have not established little colonies, like Algeria, which cannot exist by themselves; but we have bred the United States and Australia, and shall breed two or three more nations; and what we are as a people so was our Shakespeare, the greatest of men and the father of men, for out of him grew German literature.

Books are now too much considered as mere merchandise, and men forget that of all modes of modern culture, books are the noblest and the best. A love of the antique haunts all but vulgar minds; and in reading old books one can best forget the vanities and follies of to-day, and in their pages we can trace the germs of what we have since become. No man can thoroughly understand to-day, without a reference to, and study of, the past, in which our history is noted and whence our nobleness has come. Books serve as marks of progress; they are guides across the shoreless sea and the great desert path of the past; and in them we may trace the channels through which great and solemn thoughts have rolled. The only way thoroughly to understand history, is to read the books that were written at the time to which it relates.

No historical book is of any value unless it gives an account of the domestic and inner life of the people. What is the good of knowing anything about the Roman Emperors or the Pharaohs? When I read Mr Hume I admire him, but I don't admire his history very much. I could not understand him if I did not read the old books of the time. I don't want to know about kings and battles; I want to know what the people ate, what they thought, how they lived, what were the cubic contents of their bedrooms, whether they swore or not, and so on. So I read Howell's Letters, published about the middle of the seventeenth century. Howell is one of the most admirable gossips I know. Whoever would thoroughly enter into the spirit of old history must read not only the historical books, but also the songs and poems of old times. If people never read old books along with history they are at the mercy of their historian. If I did not read old books I must believe Macaulay, and he is an awful partisan. I do not like Mr Hume to choose for me; I like to verify for myself, and to criticise for myself. If you would read Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," you would know more about the life, feeling,

and manners of the time than if you were to read a ton of Mr Hume or acres of Macaulay.

I open old books, and I find their authors were very close observers of human nature. They lived at home and saw little, but what they did see they looked at very closely. There is no more wisdom in the world now than there was eighteen hundred years ago. The wisest book I know is the Book of Job, which is the oldest book. The wisest men are old men. When I am in a difficulty I go to an old man, to know what I am to do; but when I want to know anything about ozone I go to a young man. About astronomy, old books are ludicrous, but as to the heart, they are sound. Children that are brought up much at home go out into the world more independent, more self-sustaining, than those sent to public schools,—a little angular and odd, but that is a cheap price to pay for stuff, substance, and mettle. Shakespeare once travelled all the way from Stratford-upon-Avon to London, and we know he came back. That man sounded every depth of the human heart; he stayed at home, and he knew the whole world. Some of those old authors I do envy, because they stopped at home so. Though the range of their knowledge was small, the depth of their knowledge was great. They knew nothing of gorillas, apes, baboons, and Kaffirs; they stopped at home and had few studies; and the consequence was that they studied human nature deeply. Knowledge is scamped now. Some of our modern novelists that are so much talked about do not understand human nature; they draw you a beautiful picture of the externals of human nature, but they do not go so deep. Our fathers had a little garden, but they dug deep and well,—a little range, but they fired true. The fewness of their studies led them to a larger acquaintance with what they did study. Old books are usually wise books, although sometimes eminently unknowing. Because we are carried along at sixty miles an hour, can send our messages with lightning speed, and read our books by gas, we consider ourselves wiser than our fathers, with their slow journeys and their dim lights; and because Hale burned witches prayerfully and Bacon charmed his warts with moonshine, we hold ourselves wiser than the upright judge and that greatly wise man, perhaps the wisest of the wise.

I like old books because they are old; I like them for their

associations, with their antique binding, and their notes in some queer, tall, Italian hand. But of modern books we know too much; we know all about the author, and have the volume wet from the press. It is a sad thing to know too much about authors, whose writings and life do not always accord. The English are great in the anonymous, and it would be well to keep so, for authors will not always gain by being better known. But beautiful is the work of death and time, for down in the grave are put a man's weaknesses and faults, not to rise again, and the remembrance of his best and noblest qualities alone remains. Distance takes away the vulgarity of the hour, and "lends enchantment to the view," as in the pictures of Rembrandt even beggar boys are idealised and refined, and as the "models" on the Trinità dei Monti steps in Rome, coarse and repulsive as they may seem, become glorious in the pictures, and are ennobled by the painter's art. So is it with old books; they who wrote and who read them have long since dropped into the grave, and the trivial incidents of their lives are forgotten.

Then the old writers had more naturalness than the writers of the present age. Our modern books are eminently respectable, but eminently hypocritical. One cannot read Smollett now because he is "so coarse," and one has a "Family Shakespeare," and Shakespeare is emasculated and done into proper order. You don't mean to say that Shakespeare would hurt you! I have generally found people of very nice sentiment people of very nasty thought. Where scent is found you always suspect something. Remember what the Apostle said, "To the pure all things are pure." Old books are gloriously frank; they have none of the conventionalities and concealments of to-day; their tears and laughter are side by side; there are strength and humour, childlike ardour, bold exclamations, a large rejoicing hearty humanity, wit and jokes, all in a glorious and natural fashion and invested with an enamouring charm. New books ought to be and must be read; but no man can get done for him all that books can do, except he be a faithful waiter on the great dead, as well as a student and reader of the great brave books of our own time. I love the old authors of England because they are so sweetly natural; I love them, too, because they are so full of weakness. I object that science is now intruded into wrong



places. The superstitions of old books please me, because they are indexes of the progress of the nation. When I want to understand this complex English life of ours I go to old books.

Then old books do me good, they calm me so. Whoever has got one or two shelves of old books has one of the most precious anodynes. You cannot get very hot, but old books are an anodyne, a sleeping draught, herb-tea, a febrifuge. Let me, then, prescribe old books to you as a sedative, to which you may resort whenever you have been at a public meeting and have got hot. Old books are of great use to modern men immersed in modern matters, who with wise and reverent study may find in them a kind of literary hermitage in this modern working world.

But as old wine requires a peculiar taste to judge of its years, fruitage, and vintage, so old books require a certain taste and preparation of the reader before they can be fully understood, duly appreciated, and thoroughly enjoyed. Old books must be listened to like children's prattle, not in the modern critical spirit, but with every allowance for the age in which they were produced. Old books are useful as they believe so thoroughly; they give us a view of the inner circle of old times, they show the thoughts which stirred our fathers, and which animate the movements of to-day. The writers of old books were acute observers, they were not like modern men, distracted by the multiplicity of objects, causes, aims, and interests; they did not bloom too early, to be afterwards nipped by frost, and sink into ruin and decay. The utilitarian philosophy did not trouble them much, and in consequence I find that the old authors were very high-minded people. If you would read the Elizabethan authors, you would find they were a high-minded race. The Puritans, while they enlarged the domain of ecclesiastical liberty, narrowed the domains of social liberty; but the old authors of England were lofty, hearty, high-minded men, who made erudition and silly superstition go hand in hand. There is something pleasant in this mingling of superstition and learning, of sense and nonsense.

These old writers were puritanically brought up, and were the better and the wiser for it; some of the noblest men were educated in a secluded hermitage, over which a wholesome grimness presided; whose indulgences were comparatively few, whose pleasures lay at

home, and whose wise education thus reserved their force and strength till they were required in after life. But now we have broad sashes and early pumps, dancing schools and children's parties, taking the sap out of the next generation ; our youth are *blasé* at fourteen, have seen everything at eighteen, danced all the dances and found them "slow," have seen all the world, and are now despairing diletanti, worn out, wondering at nothing, reverencing nothing, and believing in nothing greater than themselves. But the men of old time had deeper insight with a less extended sphere ; they stayed and looked at home ; and in acuteness of observation and knowledge of the human heart, they are equalled by few of the present day.

One charm of old books is the large amount of prophecy fulfilled and unfulfilled. Some of their extravagant predictions have become the great facts of to-day ; some are still unfulfilled, and now appear absurd, but in the march of science may hereafter be attained. I will read some curious passages from Bishop Wilkins's "Discourse on the Moon, and the means of getting there," which will illustrate this.

[The tantalizing reporters have not given us the passages, but we may guess them to have been from the concluding part of Bishop Wilkins's book.

"PROPOSITION XIV. *That 'tis Possible for some of our Posterity to find out a Conveyance to this other World, and if there be Inhabitants there, to have Commerce with them.*

.....

"'Tis a Pretty Notion to this Purpose, mentioned by *Albertus de Saxonia*, and out of him by *Francis Mendoca* ; That the Air is in some part of it Navigable. And that upon this Statick Principle ; any Brass or Iron Vessel (Suppose a Kettle) whose substance is much Heavier than that of the Water, yet being filled with the Lighter Air, it will swim upon it, and not Sink. So Suppose a Cup, or Wooden Vessel, upon the outward Borders of this Elementary Air, the Cavity of it being filled with Fire, or rather Æthereal Air, it must necessarily upon the same Ground Remain Swimming there, and of it self can no more Fall, than an Empty Ship can Sink."

(This passage fairly prophesies the invention of balloons. But the anticipations which follow have not been realized.)

“It it be here enquired ; what means there may be Conjectured, for our ascending beyond the sphere of the Earth’s Magnetical Vigor.

“ I answer, 1. ’Tis not perhaps impossible, that a Man may be able to Fly, by the Application of Wings to his own Body ; As Angels are Pictured, as *Mercury* and *Daedalus* are feigned, and as hath been attempted by divers, particularly by a Turk in *Constantinople*, as *Busbequius* Relates.

“ 2. If there be such a great *Ruck* in *Madagascar* as *Marcus Polus* the Venetian mentions, the Feathers in whose Wings are Twelve Foot Long, which can soop up a Horse and his Rider, or an Elephant, as our Kites do a Mouse ; why then ’tis but Teaching one of these to carry a Man, and he may Ride up thither, as *Ganymed* does upon an Eagle.

“ 3. Or if neither of these Ways will serve : Yet do I seriously, and upon good grounds, affirm it possible to make a Flying Chariot, In which a Man may sit, and give such a Motion unto it, as shall convey him through the Air,” &c., &c.

(The Bishop deals with the objection that the air, in the upper regions, would be too thin to breathe ; and also with the difficulty of carrying food for the voyage, and indulges his humour as well as his fancy. As to food, he conceives that in the higher regions, where gravitation exercises but little force upon the body, motion would be so easy that the body would not be spent by labour, and the traveller would not much need the reparation of diet) :—

“ But may perhaps Live altogether without it, as those Creatures have done ; who by Reason of their sleeping for many Days together, have not spent any Spirits, and so not wanted any Food : which is commonly related of Serpents, Crocodiles, Bears, Cooekoes, Swallows, and such like. To this Purpose *Mendoza* reckons up divers strang Relations. As that of *Epimendes* who is Storied to have Slept 75 Years. And another of a Rustick, in *Germany* who being Accedentially covered with a Hay-Rick, Slept there for all Autumn, and the Winter following, without any Nourishment.

“ Or, if this will not Serve, yet why may not a Papist fast so long, as well as *Ignatius* or *Xarenius* ? Or if there be such a

strange Efficacy in the Bread of the Eucharist, as their Miraculous Relations do attribute to it: why then, that may serve well enough, for their *Viaticum*."] ]

Then there is another peculiarity about the old writers. Those old fellows were so quaint. This word "quaint," however, has lost its original meaning, and come to mean an excess of attempt and refinement, too much elaboration and unlikelihood, and a bringing into neighbourhood of two things which no one ever expects to see together. It used to mean something different from that. If any of you are tired of the Sunday reading of to-day, read old Latimer, in whose writings there is such solid piety, such deep devotion, such manful common sense; or South, who really joked in the pulpit; or Jeremy Taylor, by whose ornate beauty you may be instructed as well as taught; for these old divines are some of the heartiest, wittiest, quaintest, devoutest, and bravest old souls of English history. Thomas Fuller was the wittiest of Englishmen, and therefore the wittiest of men. His humour is exquisite. The ivy of his wit almost kills what is underneath, but his solid wisdom deserves all praise. I strongly recommend you to read "Fuller's Worthies," the "Holy and Profane State" (I know no book equal to this for its wisdom and sense), Warwick's "Spare Minutes," the poems of the great church poet, George Herbert, and Howell's Letters.

Then there is the class of superstitious old books, in which the extinct beliefs of alchemy, astrology, witchcraft, and various other matters connected with the occult sciences, are described. Although alchemy was subsequently made a disgraceful trade, the older alchemists were pious and reverent men. Great modern chemists, as Davy and Faraday, have believed in the possibility of the old alchemy, and many contend that chemistry will end in alchemy, and demonstrate what our fathers discovered by intuition.

The principle of these old beliefs has played a very important part in this world's history; and without it it is utterly impossible to understand how the world has been emancipated from the old Pagan philosophy, and come to the peculiar philosophy of to-day. The great peculiarity of Paganism was, that it saw in everything a personal agency and cause; of forceful people it knew much, but nothing of forces, nothing of laws, and attributed every result

to the caprice of a demon, the whim of a fairy, or the mandate of a Jove. Then came Christianity, preaching the one God, and dethroning the false gods, but did not for many centuries, and perhaps has not yet, dethroned the principle out of which that old false-god-making came. The gods of Paganism have now all sunk, and become only secondary causes, but the principle and spirit of the belief long remains; and the loves, likings, and follies of the angels have been understood and described by many old divines as perfectly as the legends of Olympus by the men of older times. Legends of devils, captained by arch-devils, of fairies left and deities forsaken, of magicians, witches and wizards, and all that class, remain to testify the commonness of the principle which ascribes every result to some personal agency, and not to some general law. The superstitious books of old days form the key to the transition from the classic to the romantic period, and in their pages the gradual transition may be easily traced. Sir Thomas Browne, who did more than any other to rid England of witchcraft, &c., could scarcely shake off his own belief; and Sir Kenelm Digby wrote strange superstitious attempts to explain the old beliefs, and struggled hard to account for their assumed facts on the principles of something like modern science.

Protestantism seems to have brought in a new crop of follies. It is curious that before the Reformation witches were but little known, and that it was only in those countries where the Reformation came, or where Puritanism ruled, that witches flourished, as under James I., and in the non-conforming American States. Martin Luther himself was not free from the old superstitious belief, and many passages might be quoted from his "Table Talk" to show how nobleness, truth, and wisdom may co-exist with beliefs at which a child would laugh now, and how the old superstitions are linked with great goodness and strength, warning us of the fallacy of to-day, that because we know more than our fathers therefore we are wiser, for in strong, great, hearty humanity none of us are fit to hold the skirt of Martin Luther's robe, yet none of us would like to have in our diaries passages such as these:—

"*Aug. 25th, 1538.*—The conversation fell upon witches, who spoil milk, eggs, and butter in farmyards. Dr Luther said: 'I should have

no compassion on these witches, I would burn all of them. We read in the old law that the priests threw the first stone at such malefactors. 'Tis said this stolen butter turns rancid, and falls to the ground when any one goes to eat it. He who attempts to counteract and chastise these witches, is himself corporeally plagued and tormented by their master, the devil. Sundry schoolmasters and ministers have often experienced this. Our ordinary sins offend and anger God. What, then, must be his wrath against witchcraft which we may justly designate high treason against divine majesty, a revolt against the infinite power of God? The jurisconsults who have so learnedly and pertinently treated of rebellion affirm that the subject who rebels against his sovereign is worthy of death. Does not witchcraft then merit death, which is a revolt of the creature against the Creator, a denial to God of the authority it accords to the demon?"

"Dr Luther discoursed at length concerning witchcraft and charms. He said that his mother had had to undergo infinite annoyance from one of her neighbours who was a witch, and whom she was fain to conciliate with all sorts of attentions; for this witch could throw a charm upon children, which made them cry themselves to death. A pastor having punished her for some knavery, she cast a spell upon him by means of some earth upon which he had walked and which she bewitched. The poor man hereupon fell sick of a malady which no remedy could remove, and shortly after died."

"It was asked: Can good Christians and God-fearing people also undergo witchcraft? Luther replied: Yes; for our bodies are always exposed to the attacks of Satan. The maladies I suffer are not natural, but devils' spells."

"Dr Luther said he had heard from the Elector of Saxony, John Frederic, that a powerful family in Germany was descended from the devil, the founder having been born of a succubus."

"The greatest punishment God can inflict on the wicked is when the Church, to chastise them, delivers them over to Satan, who, with God's permission, kills them or makes them undergo great calamities. Many devils are in woods, in waters, in wildernesses, and in dark pooly places, ready to hurt and prejudice people; some are also in the thick black clouds, which cause hail, lightnings, thunderings, and poison the air, the pastures and grounds. When these things happen, then the philosophers and physicians say it is natural, ascribing it to the planets, and showing I know not what reasons for such misfortunes and plagues as ensue."

"The emperor Frederic, father of Maximilian, invited a necromancer to dine with him, and by his knowledge of magic, turned his guest's hands into griffins' claws. He then wanted him to eat, but the man, ashamed, hid his claws under the table.

‘ He took his revenge however, for the jest played upon him. He caused it to seem that a loud altercation was going on in the courtyard, and when the emperor put his head out of window to see what was the matter, he, by his art, clapped on him a pair of huge stag’s horns, so that the emperor could not get his head into the room again until he had cured the necromancer of his disfigurement. I am delighted, said Luther, when one devil plagues another. They are not all, however, of equal power.’

These are superstitions which Martin Luther shared with others of that age and time ; but he was a great and wise man notwithstanding, and full of a hearty humanity.\*

Were there time, I would read you some curious and admirable extracts from a work on Angels, by Reynolds.

The miracle plays of the Middle Ages were not irreverent mockeries, although they may seem so to us, but were in accordance with the spirit of a more childlike age ; and respecting the coarseness too often found in old books, a similar remark must be made. They are often vulgar, very often lewd, but let them not be too hastily condemned ; let us admire their heartiness, quaintness, wit, and wisdom, set their virtues over against their faults, and while correcting their vices let us love them still.

Another valuable property of old books is their account of the customs now gone out of the world. One of these was a very curious and apparently laughable kind of Court of Law and Love, holden in the provinces of France, in which all questions of etiquette, courtship, love, and marriage were duly set forth, replied to, pleaded upon, and settled. These courts were held by women, and every province in France had its courts, before which such cases were brought. There is one very curious case, where the pleadings of the plaintiff and defendant are given, with interesting glimpses of the manners and customs of the time, setting forth how he the said plaintiff did agree to walk once or twice a week at midnight before the door of said defendant, and to throw a certain nosegay of violets at defendant’s window, and how he the said plaintiff did, on divers nights, attend at the place as agreed, but said defendant neglected to attend ; how he said plaintiff did, for divers spaces of time, walk up and down in order

\* The passages from Luther’s *Table Talk* were all missed by the reporters ; but the selection would be sure to include some of those above given.

to catch a glimpse of said defendant, and had since suffered from cold, rheumatism, and frost, which made the flesh of him to shiver and the teeth of him to chatter then and there ; how, by reason of the darkness, the said plaintiff had stepped into and amongst certain pits of mud, whereby he was much discomposed, &c., &c., and wherefore he prayed for damages and costs. Then comes the rejoinder of the defendant, set forth in due legal form, and containing various references to the employments of the women of that age. The details of many other interesting and instructive cases are preserved in the Bodleian and British Museum Libraries. I contend that, although much of the chivalry of that period may now appear absurd, it has done good service in its time, when the mailed arm and brute force alone prevailed, by preparing for the more moral and spiritual forms of which we now boast.

Another most useful class of old books will be found in old letters, which are not dignified and formal, but display "the form and pressure of the time." Much that was beneath the dignity of history, was preserved in the gossip of old letters ; and details worthless at the time, have now become useful and valuable, like insects in amber, to which the amber around has given value and scarceness. From old Pepys' Diaries, what an insight we have into his times, and the corners and ways of the human heart ; how his Sunday experiences provoke our inextinguishable laughter, when he went to church and "there saw a fair lady, and went for to take her by the hand, which she did perceive, and did prick him with a great pin, which made him resort to his prayers." A man might think himself an ass, but Dogberry-like to go and write it down, is marvellous indeed. In Pepys' Diaries, in the Paston Letters, and in Howell's Letters, many curious pictures of the old times are preserved, and we should be thankful for much of the gossip which has thus been handed down.

The old travellers, as Maundeville, Purchas, and others, have also produced some excellent and instructive books on the manners and customs of other nations, as well as our own, which I have not time to read, but would strongly recommend. The few extracts I have given will explain why I have such strong affection for these old books of "useless" learning, and these queer, out-of-the way, old-fashioned volumes. Old books fulfil a two-fold task ; on the one hand they exalt the past, and they



humble the present ; for doubtless some man two centuries hence will hold us up as laughable examples of the superstitions of our time. On the other hand, old books keep us full of hope ; they prove that humanity is making way ; they are like milestones on the road, showing that much has been done, but more remains to do. The course of humanity is onward and upward : it has dropped much, and will drop much more ; it has dropped Jupiter and Apollo, Odin and Thor, witchcraft, astrology, and alchemy ; it can do more than it has done yet, more to-morrow than yesterday ; it has not done all, and old books are a testimony and a proof of what we may yet hope, believe, and work for, since we are not in the dotage of humanity, nor in the old age of the world.

## OLD TIMES AND OLD WAYS.

### I.

THE uses of a wise study of past times have always been admitted by wise men as being the best food for genius and the greatest nurse of the imagination. The Greeks made the Muses the daughters of Memory, for it is the nature of the imagination to be retrospective rather than prospective. For these reasons I desire to call your thoughts—not to old times in general, but to the old times of the Teutonic race—of the men between whom and ourselves there is a certain blood relationship; for even in literature there is a relationship, by which the books conceived in our spirit, written by one of our particular tongue, and by one of the same race as ourselves, do come home more to us than those written by another race, and under the presidency of another spirit. Much has been done in our country to make the Classics vital, but they never will be made so vital as our own great drama, or our own great poems.

It may have struck you that the theories given by English books in modern times touching the Middle Ages are pitifully inadequate, when we consider the effects which those ages have on us. It is more than probable that we have at some time of our lives had the notion of handing over these ages to unmitigated contempt, because they were "Dark," forgetting, as Coleridge says, that we are in the habit of calling those ages dark when we should say that they were the ages when *we* were in the dark. England was in the dark, when perhaps it was one of the lightest times with Italy. The "dark ages" is far too general a term, and, because compared with some other ages we think them dark, we hand them over to supreme contempt. But when we study the picturesque, we revive ancient art; when we study ornamentation, it is by going back: almost all the beauty of modern art is a retrospection and a memory. It becomes us, then, to inquire how it is that our theory of the middle ages is so inadequate, and

to explain the effect which their works, poetry, and men have on us. By so doing, we shall answer that wish which there always is to do honour to those from whom we are immediately descended; for to hear a man blaspheme his ancestors, and find fault with his progenitors, is to see him despise the fount of all his nobleness, and cut away the only foundation on which, perhaps, he can rear any desire to legitimate credit or renown.

We have suffered the form too much to obscure the spirit. We must understand the spirit, to get at it through the forms. When men find the forms of another age differ from their own, they are too much in the habit of supposing the measure of difference is the measure of inferiority. The form was the natural spontaneous growth from the spirit.

Again, forgetting that these ages were a growth from something worse to something better, we separate them sharply in chronology, and look on them as if they made pretensions to be the absolute truth, a perfect system. Probably we think that Christianity was received pure into the world, and that, therefore, in any respect in which the middle ages were not up to pure Christianity, they were a declension. But who can prove that Christianity ever was received pure by any large number of men? You will not find it in the New Testament: the apostles are there seen fighting against errors of every kind, and there will be found the germs of almost all the corruptions and declensions of Christianity.

Then we make the common mistake of comparing them with to-day, forgetting that all times and all men, when we seek to judge them, must be tried before their peers, by the principles they acknowledged to be true, by the aims which they set before them, by their own ideal. We know how possible it will be in two or three centuries to draw an ugly picture of the nineteenth century, if done in the spirit in which we paint the middle ages, and supposing that a new and great reformation should come over the world. Suppose our history then written by some man of another school of faith, from the police sheet or the pages of *Punch*; how he will tell that in the nineteenth century the people were pious and kept an army of clergy, and printed bibles by the ton, and sent missionaries to China and the South Pole, were learned in African mythology, great in Caffre manners, profound in Buddhism,—and yet people grew up in the centre of their

great towns in heathen unbelief of the faith of the country, neither baptized nor believing in baptism. They had bishops whom few people knew, and clergymen for whom the mass of the people did not care ; they were a people, pious, but not caring for their own folk. They had not slaves ; everybody was free, and no one wore the chain, but there were folks who made shirts at three-farthings a piece ; there were no taskmasters, but there were "sweaters." They will tell ugly tales about commercial tyranny, and ask whether the changed form of slavery was an alteration of the spirit : they will say that we went to church and learned to repeat that a man "could not serve God and mammon," and then they will tell ugly tales of our mammon worship. But this will not be just, for the same reason that the abuse of the middle ages is not just ; a nation can only be wisely judged by the ideal it sets before it, and not by the deflections which its lowest children or least faithful men make from it.

I propose to look at some of the spiritual principles which, being aimed at by the men of the middle ages, may interpret their deeds and works ; for the ideal of a nation is the best guide to the understanding of its deeds, books, or creed. The middle ages elevated and made cardinal a set of virtues which are not our cardinal virtues ; in those days the chief virtues were devotion and endurance, and humility, and self-denial, and sanctity, and faith. Our virtues now are courage and daring, and enterprise, and resolution, and self-trust, and self-protest, and a broad honest understanding and individualism. When the true man comes, no doubt he will unite all these, as the one true Church will embrace both Catholicism and Protestantism ; but still, to understand men as they are, partial and one-sided as they are, you must not measure them by *our* cardinal virtues, but take what *they* think the full ideal of the true humanity as a determining principle.

This ideal of devotion, endurance, and so on determined the peculiar character of the love, the art, the chivalry, and all the manifestations of the spirit in the period called the middle ages. Take it in Art, for the spirit of a nation will sooner or later show itself in every part of its life. They built substantially, for to-morrow as well as to-day, for they believed that they had the true Church, whose worshippers should not go out from it. They built for all future generations, even to the end—whence there is

an air of steadfastness in all they did. They loved solitude, therefore they had lancet windows; we love publicity, and therefore have large windows, with plate glass. Because they loved solitude, they built cloisters,—for to walk there, was to learn a sweet lesson of meditation; they believed in meditation (we do not); whence their architecture was born in meditation, and tended to produce it. Poverty in the middle ages was no disgrace, and therefore there was none of that varnish which men now-a-days like; the deal was not painted to resemble oak, but remained deal, and paint was little believed in except to aid decoration. The stucco of this age of veneer had not then come into date; the rich knew they were rich, and the poor that they were poor, and there was no affectation of seeming otherwise. Their devotion broke out into architecture, the wondrousness of the works they built was because they built them to God.

The object for which a man works, if it be great, always greatens the character of the work itself. Not more certainly did the face of Moses shine with that divine glory on which he looked, upon the mount, than do music, poetry, and architecture catch the glory of Him in whose praise they are lifted up. The works of the ancient painters were executed not only to go into the church, but to serve the church. St Peter's was Michel Angelo's offering to God, and its wondrous dome owes its perfection to the intense devotion of him who did not dare to lift up anything but his best to Him for whom he worked. Hence, old art produces in us the spirit out of which it was born, for this is, perhaps, the best mode of knowing the spirit in which a work of art originated,—what does it produce in us? No man ever feels himself dwarfed by modern erections; we walk up and down a new building criticising and finding fault, but we go up and down an old building with bowed head and hushed steps, and an almost awe-stricken soul.

Cicero says that Epicureanism is fatal to eloquence; it is fatal to many other things besides; self-indulgence does more to rob a man—his works, his deeds, his appearances—of glory than does anything else. Of all the blasphemies that this blaspheming age ever uttered, the worst is that which teaches that selfishness is the grand moving principle of humanity; history gives the assertion the lie in every one of her sublime chapters. Wherever there is a bright page in the great book of history it is the picture

of an unselfish, heroic, and self-denying man. A true heart always loves to see a man sacrificing himself for something out of himself. In the midst of the daily routine of modern times it always comes pleasantly to us to read in history of one of the sublime deeds of self-devotion ; and acts of patriotism, or loyalty, or loverism, or chivalry, are always fair to us. There is a picturesqueness in every form in which man sacrifices himself ; hence the middle ages are picturesque, from their unselfishness, and from the continual prostration of men to the service of some thing greater, loftier, nobler than themselves.

The religion of the middle ages was all-pervading ; it was not merely one article of an Encyclopædia. It is true that they were not always moral, but then religion broke out into symbolism, and exercised authority in even the lowest things ; their faith was hearty and manly, and went into all things, and was not timid and sneaking, like so much of the faith of modern times. Their streets were named from something notable in history, or saintly in story ; on the walls of their houses were scrolls inscribed with pious texts ; on the chairs in their halls you might read "*Deus est salus meus,*" in order that some wayfarer might thence receive spiritual strength and consolation ; and across their hospitals it was written, *Christo in pauperibus*,—"To the poor seen in Christ," or "To Christ in the poor." Their Botany was the same ; the names of plants with them were always significant ; thus the iris was the flower of St Louis ; the snowdrop, Our Lady of February ; \* the campanula, the Canterbury bell, in honour of St Thomas a'Beckett ; and the clematis, the Virgin's Bower, because blooming so near the festival of the Annunciation. These names indicate the pervadingness of their faith ; they let their religion shine upon little things, till they were glorified with its own lustre. In the books of the middle ages, piety went everywhere ; religion ruled everything. Even the children used to dress as bishops ; and boy-bishops, with curious mockings of masses, were permitted. Exeter Hall deems these characteristic of the awful extent of irreligion at that period ; I draw exactly the opposite conclusion ; for we play with what we love ; and even the Protestant parson's child plays

\* Or the Fair Maid of February, because it usually was in bloom on February 2nd, Candlemas Day, the day on which the Virgin was said to have taken the Holy Child to the Jewish Temple.

at preaching sermons. The people were so at one with their Church, had such a natural sympathy and heartfelt piety towards it, that the Church sanctioned their making, as it were, a play-thing of its forms. I do not find more sense of reverence for church matters now-a-days.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of difference between to-day and yesterday is the timidity of this age. We are always running about asking leave and license. We would like to do things, but do not do them, not knowing whether it will be right or proper. We affect to underrate and disregard beauty; and who, that happens to be beautiful, thanks God for making them so? But St Augustine declared beauty of body to be the gift of God, and that not to reconcile it with his service was to apostatize from Christianity and rank amongst Manicheans. It was their love of beauty and untimid recognition of whatever was good and fair, that lent such studious gracefulness to all they did; they had no faith that whitewashed barns were favourable to piety; that psalms nasally sung, or a queer shaped coat, promoted religion. They loved beauty, whether of body, or in Nature or in art; and when we wish to do aught gracefully and comely we go back to the middle ages and borrow their forms, because in them the spirit was then a reality. Henry II. stripped Thomas a'Beckett of his coat, to give it to a poor man; Count Charlerois, who was skilled in music and in all chivalrous and manly exercises, danced with all, high and low, rich and poor, was a great giver of alms, and devout before God. This I love and admire in the middle ages, that what they did was without shame, openly and manfully, unlike the shamefacedness of to-day, that continual dread of somebody looking at you, and finding that cricket-playing and prayers are not consistent.

A question has been revived as to what part Christianity had in emancipating women. It was not done for women's sake, but from higher and yet nobler motives; for they saw men, in God, to be men,—not brothers, fathers, and citizens, but men; and in women they saw sisters of the Virgin, ministrants to Christ. Read Chaucer's "Praise of Women;" look, too, at their popular ballads, which were the unconscious symbols of the spirit of the time. Of Robin Hood it was sung that "for the love of Our Lady, all men worshipped he." Read that extract from a deed in Rymer's

*Fœdera*,\* which deprives the Americans of their right to boast the first declaration of freedom and equality :—“ As from the first God made all men free, we believe it will be an act of piety, and meritorious before God, to deliver such persons as are subject to us from velleinage,—know ye, then, that we have set free those persons and their children to all posterity.” Certain it is that the Church of the middle ages emancipated its slaves.

Another peculiarity of that period was the condescension of the great to inferiors ; which was then, however, favoured by the marked lines of demarcation between ranks and classes, and would not now be practicable because of these lines evanishing in faintness. Then their charity and almsgiving were impulsive ; they had not studied Adam Smith ; their great people were in the habit of administering charity with their own hands ; of which I may adduce as instances St Louis of France, Sultan Saladin, and Charlemagne, and the old Duke of Calabria ; at whose doors the poor were never repulsed with “ Master’s at dinner, and can’t attend to you.” I might also advert to the famous Order of Misericordia, at Florence, whose duties were to tend the sick and bury the dead in times of plague and pestilence, and the natural fastidiousness of these high-born persons was subdued by their lofty principle of doing all “ *pour l’amour de Dieu*.” The maxim that “ all men are equal ” cannot be felt in its power, until we see a something higher than ourselves, or others, in which both are lost,—“ One is your master : all ye are brethren.”

The striking characteristic virtue of obedience in the middle ages we can never hope to revive ; for then the great doctrine of the individuality of the soul was not understood. The true idea is that man should not be so obedient to man, because all are related to a common master, a power to which we are equally near, and by which we are equally commanded. It may be well to inquire, however, whether that Roman Church, whose recent acts look to many like insolence and arrogance, does not owe some of its success and stability to the fact that it has never ignored obedience. But we modern Protestants carry our own views to Church, and bring them away again ; if the parson rebukes you

\* Thos. Rymer became historiographer royal in 1692. His “ *Fœdera* ” is a collection of public acts, treaties, conventions, and state letters, in 20 vols. folio.



for your sins, you get a receipt for your pew-rent and go over the way, where they will be glad enough to have you. Just as a rebellious Sunday scholar turned out of a Church school, finds ready admittance into a school of Voluntaries ; it is one more for the LEEDS MERCURY'S *statistics*, one more against the Lancashire school system. Many of us would give much to be obedient. Who has not heard this, "I would give much to be a Roman Catholic, if I could believe their faith?" This is because obedience is the deepest want of some souls. This implicit obedience, then, is one of the secrets of the vitality of the Roman Catholic Church. How to combine stern individualism with dutiful obedience, is one of the problems of this generation most difficult and yet most needful to be solved.

Asceticism and mortifying the flesh—self-denial—was another characteristic of the middle ages. They saw clearly that a self-indulgent could not be a strong man. Humility, self-denial, asceticism, and obedience were their cardinal virtues ; these give us the clue by which to study their life ; and instead of blaming them for not being "Manchester men," we should rather honour them for the obedience they gave to what they held to be the highest laws of their life.

One or two manifestations of their spirit may be named. One was their talent for organisation, which might proceed from and be a sign of weakness, or of new vitality and strength. In the middle ages everything was organised ; even the beggars were organised in a Guild of their own—a corporation, with laws and a patron saint. The modern liberty, on the other hand, is too apt to become license, it is not the liberty of every man to do as he ought, but as he likes—to go to the devil his own way. If he does not choose to have his child educated, and that child grows up a knave, we have to buy the whip and pay for the Prison for him ; if he grows up a fool, we must build an Asylum for him. But the right to take that child and educate him, is forsooth against the blessed "Voluntary Principle." If this is liberty, it wants checking, for to do this great duty of modern society implies some resignation of individual rights. I am willing to lose my liberty, if it were indeed a losing of my right, to subject individual whim and factiousness to the law of the wise independence of a Free State, which ought to be binding upon its children. Those

middle ages saw that the life of a nation was higher and more independent than the life of an individual. This English nation pushing individualism into madness, may truly come under Carlyle's reproach, that, "what with your political economy and sectarianism, you have ceased to be a nation ; you are a bundle of individuals, living in the same land, fed out of the same kitchen, speaking partly the same speech ; but a nation in the old sense of the word, in the sense in which King Alfred saw it and tried to incarnate it, you are no longer." Hence the old Saxon division of all men into tens or tithings, pledges or free-borrows, in which if there were one evil-doer, the other nine were fined for his misdeeds ; and thus all made their brother's keepers. Even now there is a trace of this ; for if rioters break our windows, it is not the breakers, but the "hundred" that pays for them.

## II.

My views of the Middle Ages do not accord with the teachings of the popular histories, for if these are to be taken as true, for the first time a bad tree has brought forth good fruit. Unto those ages we have to apply for all that is most beautiful in form, and from its spiritual fountain modern times draw their ideas of excellence in art and nobleness of life. Like all other subjects, to be understood it must be studied in love, for the true spirit of anything is made plain to him only who has already entered into it. The middle age virtues are not ours ; they were lowly, humble, self-denying, and faithful, holding as primary the virtues we place as secondary, and viewing as secondary what we place as primary.

The present generation is haunted by fear, but it is not the old godly fear ; it is a shabby fear which will not let us play out of doors lest the clergyman should be looking over the hedge, nor in doors lest some one should be present to report our doings. We walk fearfully in all our actions, lest our conduct should transgress a rule. We want to wear our beard, but dare not do it for our life ; we are afraid to sit on the grass, lest some one should pass and see us ; we are afraid to laugh, lest some Chesterfieldian should find fault with our gentility. On the contrary, the middle ages were full of heartiness ; so hearty that much flowing

from it appears to us as coarseness, and possessed a simple, unconscious spirit. They did all things openly in the old times; held prayers and sports in the broad day, before all eyes; and the consequence was, there was very little done of which they were ashamed.

Charity was a grand feature of the old times; the poor were fed, and the indigent relieved, without fear of those evil consequences which lead us in these days to be chary of indiscriminate almsgiving; and this charity had its source in a deep sense of religious duty. King Robert fed five hundred men a day, and washed the feet of beggars. It was with him no sham; it was a duty done for the love of God. The same spirit which actuated the Brotherhood at Florence in those days, to leave their homes at the sound of a bell, and bury corpses which none other would touch, induced Richard the Lion-heart and the great men of his army to dismount from their horses when advancing towards Palestine, and placing on them the poor and sick, to follow, themselves, on foot.

Then there was their asceticism; with them it was no monkery; it was a discipline undertaken for the good of souls. A company of knights go to battle on a Friday, fasting, and one of them asking for something to satisfy his thirst, is told by his chief to drink his own blood.

They had a personal faith, attachment, and devotion to their Heavenly Master, in those days; and did not bury themselves, as we do, in dogmas. All their actions were more or less attributed to God or Christ. To Christ they dedicated their hospitals and other charities; and this personal love of God led them to embark in those startling enterprises, the Crusades. We should be tender in dealing with the spirit of the Crusades, for there are few living but would pull nettles out of the earth which covers the dead whom they loved, and drive dogs from their graves. Yet we smile at the Crusades, sneer at the men of old, who abandoned home and comfort, and betook themselves to a distant land, to rid the grave of Christ of the infidels who defiled it.

Another great feature, which I have mentioned before, was the talent of the middle ages for organisation. In the world the *double* principle operates universally, life is always duplex. They had a talent for, and great faith in organisation, while we pride

ourselves in our individuality ; they wore their hobby out, and we are riding ours to the death. This talent for organisation is evidenced by King Alfred's laws ; by his conception of what went to make up a nation. Alfred never thought that a number of people lying together—a bundle of accidents—would compose a nation ; he wished to bind together every Englishman in one great family ; the members of which should be conscious of, and concerned in, each other's welfare. England is not now a nation, it is a collection of accidental Englishmen ; church unity and political unity are not with us ; we hold no communion with yonder man, who is not of our conventicle. It is ridiculous in these days to be talking of reviving the form of these institutions ; but the spirit can be revived ; and it is desirable to catch the spirit which sought to give to each man in a nation his proper place, and which left no man for whom the nation was not concerned. Revive this spirit, and we should no longer have what are called the "dangerous classes," no longer have the pariahs, about whose birth and burial none care to trouble themselves.

The organising spirit of the middle ages produced the Trade Guilds, which were both religious and commercial institutions. The guilds were established by the leave of the monarch, and the laws governing them were examined by officers appointed for that purpose. The guilds were often wrong in their objects, as was the weavers' guild, when it said that not less than four days must be spent in the production of a certain length of cloth. Yet these guilds were not without some excellent effects ; in them the young learnt obedience, and they prevented the trade from being injured by the sale of bad articles. Tradesmen of these days suffer from, and complain of, the inferior goods which ruin the market ; the guilds effectually prevented all this. The master of each guild examined all the articles made, and no bad ones went into the market, to deceive the buyer and injure the trade. We still have some remains of this system, in our assay-offices, proof-houses, and masters' marks ; but we have nothing left of that community of feeling which marked the old guilds ; masters and men are no longer one in interest and in religion. If we were to meet a master now, leading his workmen, with a little banner, to church on a Sunday morning, it would be esteemed highly ridiculous, and a fit subject for the laughter of the town,—yet it

was a common sight once ; masters and men worshipped one God in one place, at one time ; the workman lodged with his master, and was buried out of a common fund. The guilds possessed another healthful power, they prevented a man from attempting to do what he was not able for. If a man turned out a bad workman he was excluded from the guild, and was not permitted to produce an inferior article ; but, with us, if one man paints a dog well, in rush a hundred to paint poodles wretchedly, and we say, " Well, if they like to paint badly, and starve, let them do it." Instead of holding to the doctrine of every man having a place and each helping the other, we cry, " Each for himself ; push on in the race, and the devil take the hindmost." Men combine now for injurious purposes, against the interests of masters, and the masters combine, in return, against the men, and hence they fall into opposition with each other, and will neither worship nor do other things together.

In commercial matters, there are some of the old forms and much of the old spirit beginning to come back again, just as the old principle of responsibility is forcing itself upon us, as in the matter of juvenile criminals, whom we are thinking of punishing through their parents. The new striving after this old spirit is known among us as the Organisation of Labour, which, instead of being frightened at, we should welcome,—which would bring back again prayers in a factory, and which simply says that the meanest little errand boy has an interest in the total profits of his establishment, and should have his share of them.

The German historian, Niebuhr, called the middle ages " Ages of forgotten or neglected merit." The men of those ages were in many senses children,—not childish, but child-like,—with a large belief. Some look with contempt on the superstitions believed in the middle ages. Do we look with contempt on the child, with his large credence ? Their tales may not be true, but there may be truth in them ; they may not be facts, but may cover over deep spiritual truths. But if not, it is not reproach : for to be wise does not necessarily imply to be knowing. If we want knowledge, we go to the last editions, but if wisdom, then mainly to old books. Watch your child ; his credence is insatiable ; no giant too large, no dwarf too small ; the marvellous tale of yesterday must be told over again to-day. You are but a dull pedant

if you look on the child with contempt, and a pitiful pedant if you puzzle it with your logic. The child does but fulfil the nature God has given it,—that by its ample imagination and ready belief, it may relate itself to the surrounding world; and those children come to be the finest-spirited men who are ready to believe the most, and to whom unpeddling wisdom gives most to believe. Attempts to make saints at three years, chemists at six, and sages at seven, usually turn out eminent failures. I don't say that we are to believe the child's tales, but we should not despise the child for believing them. So with the middle ages. I cannot despise them; I cannot believe with them; I cannot take into my intellect the legends of the middle ages; I cannot cast out of my heart the brave, manly children who believed them. Many of these tales may at the time have been symbolical; and Lord Bacon's "Wisdom of the Ancients" shows what a wise thoughtfulness can do in making old legends, perished as facts, live again as poetic symbols, by which we may express truths of old times, lost to to-day.

No age can be interpreted well, if we put down their customs as accidental and arbitrary. There is a wise antiquarianism, which, not satisfied with finding the old custom, traces it to its originating principle; which, not content with telling us that the wedding ring is worn on the fourth finger, tells us why it is so worn. But what perhaps differs to-day from the middle ages more than anything else, is the relative estimate in which we hold the doctrine of individualism. To us, the institutions of the middle ages must look far off, and foreign; their doctrine of the unity of nations, and the responsibility of every part of a nation for every other part; the obedience to the Church and to authority; and the unity of the Church, and the degree to which the individual was called upon to sacrifice himself to something higher—this is perhaps farthest off and most foreign to things of to-day. Hence the wish of a great writer that we might come nearer to despotism. Carlyle shrieks out in his *Latter-day Pamphlets*, a truth nothing different from what he always uttered; there is not a new page in them; he wants a wholesome return to old times, being disgusted with our individualism run mad; and what he says of our having authority, plus a street constable, is worth study. Whilst you are quarrelling with him, you are

very much attempting to go back to old times. Many things you are planning now are not correct, if individualism is an all-sufficient law—as rating for public schools, for according to individualism every British man has the right to refuse to have his child educated.

Not only in reviving mediæval ornament, but even in polity, philosophy, and our ways of life, there is the same evidence and sign amongst us, that we are disposed to give these old times at least another hearing, and in recognising the undoubted and glorious truth of the incommunicableness, the unity and worth of the single soul, we must not forget the truth which those times, perhaps, carried to excess. Men in those ages went for unity in the family, the church and the nation ; they forgot or ignored individualism ; they exaggerated the Divine right of government, and of obedience ; they could not understand protest, individualism, or self-erection. I am not going to blaspheme individualism, because I count that to be the greatest achievement of modern times. I hold the incommunicable oneness and sacredness of man ; that around every man there is a certain ring and region, like the sacred region which in Greece surrounded the city of Apollo, into which neither king nor priest should set his foot ; which I am prepared to defend as our forefathers did, if any should attempt to invade it. There is around me a certain spiritual atmosphere, which I defy any to make inroad into without stern resistance. The pope is not yet born, the priest not yet bred, the king is not yet anointed, the kaiser is yet to be called, who shall, without stern and manly resistance, venture to blaspheme the great doctrine that we all have an individualism sacred and incommunicable, not to be touched, that preserves us from too much familiarity with our neighbour ; sacred and reserved ground, the holy glebe of the soul. The evolution of this doctrine into polity will, perhaps, hereafter be put down as our most glorious work. In modern times we magnify the liberty of the person and the individual ; in the middle ages this was minimised in subordination to the organic unity of the family, the State, and the Church. Individualism has taught us to set up private judgment ; that each of us is the last court of appeal to himself ; that above senators, and chancellors, and courts of appeal, lay and spiritual, there is a court still higher. Most of the

doctrines in theology now agitating us are struggles between the old doctrine of the unity of the Church with the subordination of the individual, and that of the extreme individualism of the day, which, like great reforms, and great discoveries, has been reserved for modern times.

In the family we should make a sorry mistake, if we thought the child received nothing more than was taught to him, or than he received consciously. You wonder how the child caught that trick, forgetting that you are setting it yourself every day. The child will drink in more from your life than from your chatter. Babbling goes small way against being. We get, this way, much more than modern philosophy allows; much that was never laid down to us, but was picked up and caught; for child and man, chameleon-like, catch the colour of what they feed on. We see the same influence in nations. An Englishman's character is never enjoined upon him; no Englishman is ever successful in becoming a German or a Frenchman, he cannot lose his John Bullism, however he may acquire foreign speech and manners. We drink in such influences by our soul-organs; not in this brain, this logic faculty, dwell those transcendent faculties that sink into our being. Hence we take pride in what our forefathers did, espouse their quarrels, seek to avenge their wrongs. We cannot repudiate nationalities; we cannot separate ourselves from what our fathers have done, or left undone. We desire to fight their quarrels, preserve their fame, pay their debts; for we and our fathers are one. Thus a nation has, as it were, a life and being, in, but higher than, the individuals; it is a truer symbol, that,—Britannia, seated with her spear and helmet, on the penny-piece,—than to hold that a nation should be but a mere bundle of individuals. Hence the regard for ancestry. Anyone discovering he has a great pedigree, will walk the taller for it—and no shame to him. I should like to find out that I had great ancestors. I shall not weep for the want of them; if my great-grandmother were found to be a washerwoman, what of that? but I don't say that I should not be better pleased if I could prove that she was the Lady Abbess of a convent in the middle ages.

Those ages subjected the individual to the corporation, and sunk (perhaps too forgettingly) the rights of the man in the glory and dignity of that of which they counted him but a fragment.



The man was trampled by the club ; the individual artisan was surrendered to the Guild. Guilds, begun in the aim that none but skilled workmen should be allowed to make, ended in keeping all out that were not in. Beginning as Christian brotherhoods, they ended in becoming pitiful monopolies, as in their ghosts still to be seen in London, where the "citizens and spectacle makers" still gather together to eat turtle and drink healths ;—the dim relics of institutions, the real character of which is almost lost to most of us. In the time of Alfred, as I mentioned, men were divided into tens or titheings, and these combined into hundreds, and those into shires—every man belonging to some particular ten, who were bound for him, the rich being answerable for the poor, on the principle that the dirt of the kitchen is the shame of the parlour, that the filth of the lowest street is the reproach of the municipal borough. So the boards against vagrants at the ends of our villages may be a relic of the old Saxon law, by which "a vagrom man"\* was a man playing the truant from his titheing, sneaking from his hundred, having broken its laws, and was therefore to be taken up and sent back whence he came. So in the present *landwehr* in Prussia, every man knows to which battalion he belongs, and his precise station in it ; every horse may know the particular gun he will have to draw. Alfred's ways show how intensely the middle ages must have respected the idea of the oneness of a nation.

The institutions of the middle ages mainly owed their greatness to being faint transcripts of the laws of Nature. If we, lapped in luxury and warm-bathed every day, neglect to have our towns drained and our streets swept, when fevers and pestilence come, Nature's great laws will avenge our violation of them. Vain to say, "Nature, thou knowest I have used soap enough ; why should I suffer ?" Nature may reply that you ought to have got your neighbour to use soap too. If, whilst squabbling and disputing about anise and cummin, you suffer the children of the poor to grow up in ignorance, and the next strike that comes they turn out and hinder your commerce, stop your trade, can you stand up and say, "Lo, I have done my duty. Thy servant went to

\* "This is your charge : you shall comprehend all vagrom men ; you are to bid any man stand, in the Prince's name."—*Dogberry* to the constable of the watch.

church twice on Sunday, joined in liturgy, read the Bible, and did all that was correct and proper. Why should thy servant suffer loss?" Yes; but forget not that there are two servants; that Cain has to do with Abel, and shall be answerable for his brother. So says the natural law, and so, in the old times, said the national law too.

Guilds were sometimes founded as matters of devotion; sometimes of trade. Certain men, smitten with the glories and sanctity of a particular saint, seem to have bound themselves under his name, to pray certain prayers, give certain alms, and do certain duties; and I respect these devotional guilds, which have their imitations in this day, in Franklin Institutes, and John Dalton Societies. As to the names of churches and chapels, I would as soon call one by the name of Saint Barnabas, or All Saints, as by that of Wykliffe, Wesley, Bunyan, or of this street or that road. I wish not to revive the praying guild,—it was a fraternity, a union, well suited for the doing of certain good deeds in the middle ages, and they still exist in Roman Catholic lands,—but I respect it.

Referring again to the Society of the Misericordia in Florence, what should we think, if four hundred of the respectablest of this town were to turn out to see what poor folks have done, to tend them when sick and dying, or to lay them out when dead, and bury them? Yet these and other benevolent institutions of the middle ages were but embodiments of the words, "If any man will be greatest among you, let him become the servant of all."

Almost all the trades of the middle ages were also corporations, united by certain rules, which they drew up themselves, and submitted to the approval of the king. A curious code of laws of a weavers' guild existed in the middle ages; which amongst other things enacted that if any weaver *cloined* (removed) his neighbour's goods, his loom should be forfeited to his guild; that no weaver should work between Christmas and Candlemas, nor make a piece of cloth in less than four days. Yet our Trades' Unions have very similar laws at this day. An apprentice was received, not into the shop only, but also into the house of his master, to receive protection and give obedience; hence the apprenticeship of the middle ages was respectable; the boy was taken into the house, home, trade, and fraternity. He was not

then a poor hireling whose work was taken for his keep, and whom we pretend to teach "mysteries" when there are none; and say that it will take seven years to teach what may be learned in seven hours.

Religious feeling entered into these guilds; a master going to church at the head of his men would be one of the strangest phenomena that this town could show; yet, if prayers are good, why should not the master and his workmen pray together? Some of the ends contemplated by these guilds seem very desirable; one was, that no bad work should be given out. With all our beautiful organisation, we cannot guard against that now. From the petition of a guild of Saint Luke, for the sanction of the king to their laws, we may see what the objects of these guilds were; no craftsman should use wrong colours, or bad stuff (what a thing professed to be, that it was to be), no man was to entice away another man's servant, workman, or apprentice; a thing which we cannot prevent now. The guild became security for a man, the sodality was answerable for each individual that composed it: he was to become "buxom" to the guild, and pay two shillings to the sustenance of the poor. There was beauty and humanity in that; it was a better plan than getting up clubs in factories; when a man was broken down he was kept by his craft.

We are apt to suppose that the middle ages had no liberty or freedom, because the king seems to have had great power; but within these guilds and corporations a very large liberty reigned. Niebuhr says, that "we look on the constitutions of the middle ages as arbitrary, because there was no responsible body nominated from the nation; but while we hear of no few acts of violence, every corporation and individual had the management of their own affairs without the interference of the prince, and the laws were transmitted from age to age as an invaluable inheritance." We look for freedom from an assembly to be elected this way or that, and feel no concern at seeing that in every step taken by the legislature, some nook or other in which the power of free agency had been left us, is subjected to Parliament and salaried time-serving placemen. We must not suppose that the parliamentary system brings all liberty, or that these old institutions sacrificed it.

The wheel seems to have turned round; the cry of Europe now

is that the over-wrought individualism of modern times wants checking. The difficulty is to reconcile individual liberty and wise association. It were well to read these pages of middle age history over once more, and ask ourselves whether, in the glorious protest that we have made for individualism, we have not forgotten the other side of the doctrine, and whether it is not likely that we shall return very much to these old institutions. All we do now-a-days is associatively. In our Poor-laws, in holding the property of the country answerable for the poor, we have a remnant of old times.

All things are written for a particular light, painted for a particular aspect, and done in a certain spirit ; and we should remain nothing but contemptuous pedants if we sought to interpret them by our light instead of their own—to measure the deeds of old times by our foot-rule, instead of by their own measure, and by the spirit in which they were intended and done. The faults of these men were faults of fact, not of spirit ; and we should guard against calling them foolish who were but ignorant. They were deceived as to facts, but that did not rob them of their wisdom. There was an essential difference between their wisdom and our knowledge ; we gather our useful knowledge from Classics or from Pinnock ; while they found the former and a guide to life in the Book of Job, written centuries back on the Idumean plains. The olden times were not without their faults, which grew, as excrescences, out of their virtues ; thus, out of their obedience, sprung a deplorable dependency. They lacked also the comforts and conveniences of life ; the candles guttered in palaces, and King Alfred had to invent a lantern to keep the wind from his tapers ; and Queen Elizabeth walked on rushes, which were not changed very frequently. There were no Brussels carpets in those days, very little plate, coarse commons, and that sometimes short ; yet they grew men—such men as Alfred, Bede, Richard of the Lion Heart, &c. It is childish to talk of reviving the forms of those times, otherwise than through a resuscitation of their spirit. The true form is always generated by the spirit, and to produce this we must commence work internally, and not externally.

## SIR THOMAS MORE.

BORN 1480, DIED 1535.

THE differences which separate history and biography can be laid down without much difficulty. In biography, the events which occur are made subordinate to the bringing out of the hero into bold relief, and making his history the prominent matter: in history the man is made subordinate to the events in which he was engaged. As biography is our object this evening, I must therefore speak to you of the excellences, the amiabilities, the domestic life, the humour and the mirth of Sir Thomas More, and leave the background of history to be filled in by you.

The period in which Sir Thomas More lived was one of those eminently striking times which must make an impression upon the dullest of persons. It was a time when the morning light was breaking. It was truly the morning light, but somewhat lurid and red, and, like all red morning suns, it brought, in its evening, very stormy and troublous times. It was in the time of Henry the Eighth: and compared with that time the vaunted Augustan age, or the days of Louis XIV., fade into comparative dimness.

With More as a public man we have little to do, and I shall only mention those historical facts which are necessary to bring out the man in high relief. The things he did, and the days in which he did them, will be passed over rapidly, and then will follow some of the choicest stories which are told of him, and it sometimes happens that a story of a man will tend better to betray and lay open his whole soul, than any other thing.

More was born in Milk Street, London, in the year 1480, three years before the death of King Edward the Fourth, his father being Sir John More, an upright, honourable, and noble judge, whom his son, even when Chancellor, revered most highly and honoured with the homage which a good son should always pay to a noble father. His father was, what shall I say? highly respectable? no, that is hardly the word, for to be respectable in these

days is, as a rule, to keep a gig. But Sir John More belonged to the gentry of England, and had a right to quarter armorial bearings, which in those times was a very different thing from what it is now. His son was educated at the school of St Anthony, and when his school days were over, he went into service. It was thought no disgrace then for the sons of the high-born to enter the service of those higher born than themselves, and, whilst performing the menial office of waiting at table, to learn the great lessons which were to be derived from listening to the conversation of those upon whom they waited.

Sir Thomas More first went into the household of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, where at certain seasons of the year plays were performed—for men in those days did not cherish the same objection which is entertained to plays in the present day, an objection spawned in Scotland, and which has been fostered and has grown in England—and it is related that sometimes, at those plays in the palace of the Archbishop, More's extempore speeches gave more delight than the efforts of many of the performers, so much so that Cardinal Morton is said to have prophesied on one occasion that More, if he lived, would become a remarkable man. Whether this prophecy was ever made is not of much moment. It was certainly fulfilled, and with that we will be content.

More then became acquainted with Colet, the Dean of St Paul's, who founded the magnificent school, and got Erasmus to write his school-books; after which he went to Oxford, and studied at Canterbury College, which has since been superseded by the magnificent Christ Church of Cardinal Wolsey.

When More went to the University, it was in a most stirring time, when certain portions of the community, calling themselves Trojans, opposed the revival of Greek and Hebrew learning as dangerous, because in their opinion it would do away with the Vulgate; and when another body, calling themselves the Greeks, took an entirely opposite view. More took part with the Greeks; he studied under one of the greatest masters, and became acquainted with one of the most famous men who ever lived in England—I mean Erasmus—and the result of their acquaintance was a very close and sincere friendship. Erasmus was, to a certain extent, More's biographer, and to have in that position so great a man

must be honour sufficient for the most ambitious. Erasmus was a man whom all delighted to honour, for whom kings fought, and who loved his books more than being a monk, or even the proffered honour of being created a Cardinal. The first remark made by More on his introduction to Erasmus has become proverbial. It is translated, "You are Erasmus or the Devil." There was between the two men that fine flavour of dissimilarity necessary to make a life-long friendship.

While at the University, More wrote English verse, but on this it will not be necessary to remark, further than to say that Ben Jonson called the poems models of English poetry.

After leaving the University, More studied law in Lincoln's Inn, the New Inn, and Furnival's Inn. He also preached several sermons. He lived near to the Carthusian Monastery, which has since, as the Charter House School, become one of our most famous centres of education. His innate gentleness of character, and perhaps his close contiguity to the residence of the monks, caused him at one time to think seriously of joining their order; but, happily, in my opinion, he abandoned that scheme.

After giving up the house and monkery, he went into Essex, where he made the acquaintance of Master Cole, who had three comely daughters—three fresh, country girls, full of rural simplicity, and knowing nothing of towns. What a change from Carthusian monks! After a short courtship, More married the eldest,—though he confessed to a secret preference for the second, as being "fairest and best favoured"—because he thought it would be a pity that the elder should see her younger sister preferred before her. Marriages then were not as now—entirely matters of love—but were sometimes quiet matters of arrangement between the bridegroom and the bride's father; but, in the present case, although More took the eldest, the father of the twain expressed his readiness to give any of the three. Their married life was a short one, his wife dying; but it had as its result one of the noblest women the world has ever seen—Margaret Roper, Sir Thomas's eldest daughter.

During this time his reputation at the bar was advancing rapidly: he was a first-rate lawyer, and one of the best public speakers England has ever had, and in consequence he was very much sought after.

He was now elected as a member of Parliament, and in this position his first action was to oppose a large subsidy asked for by Henry the Seventh, to provide for his daughter. In consequence of this he fell under the displeasure of the King, who never forgave a real or supposed injury. So keen was Henry's anger, that, had not the King died, More would have had to leave the country in order to escape its effects.

On the accession of Henry the Eighth to the throne, the public life, strictly so called, of Sir Thomas More commenced. He was taken into great favour by the King, and advanced to many and important posts with great rapidity. But here again came a fall. After having been favourite for a long time, and, in consequence of the downfall of Cardinal Wolsey, made Chancellor, he was disgraced, because, with a high sense of honour and right, he refused to assist the King in his projected marriage with Anne Boleyn. Previous to this he had incurred the high displeasure of Cardinal Wolsey, because, as Speaker of the House of Commons, he had said something distasteful to that prelate, who, as a visitor to the House, had wished to enter into discussion with the members.

More had married a second time, on this occasion choosing as his wife Alice Middleton, a widow, seven years older than himself. This was what may be called a marriage *prepense*. He did not *fall* in love, indeed he did not pretend to do so, but walked into it deliberately and avowedly. It was a sort of useful marriage. His wife was not beautiful nor very young; but she was well up in housekeeping matters: and had a tongue. Of her use of it and her rebuke, one little illustration may be given. The day after More had resigned the Seal, which his own family were as yet in ignorance of, he went as usual to Chelsea Church with his wife and daughters. It was customary for one of his attendants to go to the Chancellor's lady after Mass was over, to tell her the Chancellor was gone out of church. On this occasion he went himself to the pew-door, and making her a low bow, said, "Madam, my lord is gone." She, knowing his pleasantry, and supposing this to be a joke, took little notice of it. However, as they were walking<sup>n</sup> home he assured her very seriously that what he had said was true, he having resigned his office of Lord Chancellor to the King the day before. When she found that he



was in earnest she was much chagrined, and replied in her accustomed manner, "Tilly vally, what will you do, Mr More? will you sit and make gossings in the ashes? What! is it not better to rule than to be ruled?" To divert this ill-humour, More began to find fault with her dress. She chided her daughters for not noticing what was wrong; but they affirmed that there was no fault in the dress. More said to them, with great mirth, "Don't you perceive that your mother's nose is somewhat awry?" and upon this the lady went from him in a passion.

Notwithstanding these episodes More treated his wife very kindly, and amongst other things taught her the lute, the viol, and the flute.

Afterwards Sir Thomas More refused to recognise King Henry as head of the Church, and, as a consequence, was attainted of treason, and locked up in the Tower for a long period. Still maintaining his previously expressed opinion that no layman could be properly regarded as head of the Church, he was tried, condemned, and beheaded, all for persisting in what he honestly and sincerely believed to be the truth.

Throughout the whole of his sorrows and trials, he was sustained by the heroic conduct of his noble daughter Margaret. After his death she obtained possession of his head, but not until it had been exposed to public gaze on London Bridge; and, after keeping it all her life, had it laid upon her bosom when dead, and buried with her—so true she remained to her father, in life and death.

#### CHOICE STORIES ABOUT SIR T. MORE.

As he was walking one day with his son-in-law, by the water-side at Chelsea, and discoursing in a friendly way on the state of public affairs, he said to the young man, "Now on condition that three things were well established in Christendom, I would to our Lord, son Roper, that I were put here into a sack and presently thrown into the Thames!" Mr Roper expressing surprise at this statement and desiring to hear more, Sir Thomas went on, "Wouldst thou know," said he, "what the three things be? In faith, then, they are these. The first is, that where the greatest part of Christian princes are now at mortal war, they were at universal

peace. The second, that where the Church of Christ is at this time afflicted with many errors and heresies, it were settled in a perfect uniformity of religion. The third is, that whereas the King's marriage is now brought in question, it were, to the glory of God, and the quietness of all parties, well concluded."

The story told of the first meeting of More and Erasmus is as follows:—When Erasmus came over from the continent, the person who conducted him to London contrived that he and Sir Thomas should meet without either of them knowing it, at the Lord Mayor's table—which in those days was open to every man of learning, of whatever nation. A dispute arising at dinner, Erasmus, for the sake of argument, and perhaps to show his learning, endeavoured to defend the wrong side of the question. But he was opposed so sharply by his friend that he perceived he was now to argue with an abler man than he had ever met before; and he said in Latin, with some vehemence, "You are either More or nobody." Sir Thomas replied, in the same language, with great vivacity, "You are either Erasmus or the Devil" (because his argument had a tincture of irreligion). It is probable that each was aided in his guess, by the knowledge they had gained of one another's opinions, by their previous correspondence.

More had his hours of relaxation, when he would unbend from study; and his evenings, in his family, were occupied with music and other serene amusements. But it was his practice to have a person read whilst he was at table, so as to prevent all improper conversation before the servants. At the end of the reading he would ask those who sat at dinner how they understood some particular passages of the book, and from thence would take occasion either to improve or divert the company. His instructions at those times were chiefly levelled against the pride of dress, against following corrupt examples in fashion at the time, against ambition and discontent, and against idleness and a love of the world.

More was a very different Chancellor from Wolsey. Wolsey was proud, contemptuous of common mortals, and it was difficult even to gain admission into his presence without bribing those about him. But Sir Thomas More held himself accessible to the poorest. For this purpose he went generally of an afternoon to

sit in his open hall, so that any person who had a suit to prefer, might come straight and make his complaint. His son-in-law, Mr Dauncy, found fault with him once, half jestingly, for this condescension, telling him that when Wolsey was Lord Chancellor not only many of his Privy Chamber, but his porters also, got a good deal of money. "And since I am married to one of your daughters," he said, "and have always attended upon you at your house, I think I might expect to get something too. You are so ready to hear every man, poor as well as rich . . . otherwise some for friendship, some for kindred, and some for profit would gladly use my interest to bring them to you. I know I should do them wrong if I should take anything of them, because they might as readily prefer their suit to you themselves; and this, though I think it very commendable in you, yet to me, who am your son, I find is not profitable." "You say well, son," replied the Chancellor, "I am glad you are of a conscience so scrupulous; but there are many other ways that I may do good to yourself, and pleasure your friends." After naming some of these, he added—"Howbeit this one thing, son, I assure thee on my faith, that if the parties will call for justice at my hands, then though it were my father, whom I love so dearly, stood on one side, and the devil, whom I hate extremely, stood on the other, his cause being good the devil should have right."

More could not assent to Henry VIII.'s divorce and second marriage, and this so incensed the King that he pushed on with a Bill of Attainder against him in Parliament. More was charged with being in conspiracy with the Maid of Kent; and with having incited His Majesty to write the book against Luther, in which he had defended the Pope's authority in a way which he now desired to repudiate. More was called before a Committee of the Lords, and when they had finished with their persuasions and threats, in the King's name, he told them that "these terrors were arguments for children, and not for him," and so clearly and amply vindicated himself that the Lords had nothing to reply.

Mr Roper observing Sir Thomas to be extremely cheerful, on his return from this conference, asked him if his name was struck out of the Bill of Attainder that he should be in such good spirits? The knight replied that "he had forgotten that: but if he would know the reason of his mirth, it was that he had given

the Devil so foul a fall, and had gone so far with those Lords, that without great shame indeed he could never go back from what he had said."

The next anecdote concerns Mrs More, who visited her husband in the Tower, after he had been some months imprisoned. She remonstrated with much petulance, "that he, who had been always reputed a wise man, should now so play the fool as to be content to be shut up in a close filthy prison with rats and mice, when he might enjoy his liberty and the King's favour if he would but do as all the bishops and other learned men had done; and as he had a good house to live in, his library, his gallery, his garden, his orchard, and all other necessaries handsome about him, where he might enjoy himself with his wife and children, she could not conceive what he meant by tarrying so quietly in this imprisonment." He heard her very patiently; and having asked her in his facetious manner, "Whether that house was not as nigh to heaven as his own?" a suggestion which she resented, he assured her very seriously that "he saw no great cause for so much joy in his own house and the things about it; which would so soon forget its master that if he were underground but seven years and came to it again, he should find those in it who would bid him begone, and tell him it was none of his. Besides, his stay in it was so uncertain that as he would be a bad merchant who would put himself in danger to lose eternity for a thousand years, so how much more if he was not sure to enjoy it one day to an end!"

After a long imprisonment More was carried from the Tower to Westminster Hall, where a form of trial was gone through, and a sentence pronounced, the shocking terms of which may serve to remind us of the barbarity of "the good old times." The prisoner was to be "carried back to the Tower of London by the help of the sheriff, and from thence drawn on a hurdle through the city to Tyburn, there to be hanged till he be half dead; after that, cut down, yet alive, his privy parts cut off, his belly ripped, his bowels burnt, his four quarters set up over four gates of the city, and his head upon London Bridge."

The Court then told him that if he had anything further to allege in his justification they were willing to hear it, and this affecting scene of cruelty, which had filled the eyes of many with tears, and

their hearts with horror, was closed with an answer from the prisoner, worthy of the holiest martyrs whose blood has ever been the seed of the Church :—

“ I have nothing to say, my Lords, but that like as the blessed apostle St Paul was present and consented to the death of Stephen, and kept their clothes who stoned him to death, and yet be they now both twain holy saints in heaven, and shall continue there friends for ever ; so I verily trust, and shall therefore right heartily pray, that though your Lordships have now been judges on earth to my condemnation, we may yet hereafter all meet together in heaven to our everlasting salvation : and so I pray God preserve you all, and especially my sovereign Lord the King, and send him faithful counsellors.”

## SAMUEL PEPYS AND HIS DIARY.

BORN 1632, DIED 1703.

THE remarkable book to which I shall call your attention or recollection is the Diary of Samuel Pepys, Esq., F.R.S., edited by Lord Braybrooke, in two volumes, printed in 1825 and republished by that excellent friend of literature, Mr Bohn.

Samuel Pepys was born in 1632, and his father, whose name was John, was a tailor. Having married a girl of fifteen, he was indebted for the means to support both himself and wife to a rich relative, who put him in a Government berth. At the age of twenty-seven, Pepys commenced to write a Diary in shorthand, which he continued to do for ten years. This Diary, one hundred and fifty years afterwards, fell into the hands of the Rev. John Smith, who deciphered it. Pepys might be described as a mummy, who represented in his time all the foibles, vanities, and passions of an English gentleman, and as perhaps the most wonderful papyrus of this kind that ever was unrolled. The book he wrote I count as a priceless production. The entries, having been written in shorthand, and not intended for inspection, give a very replete insight into the habits of private life in the seventeenth century. Pepys' Diary is a valuable addition to the histories of the time when it was written, inasmuch as it gives a pretty accurate idea of the people of that period in *déshabillé*, while most histories present them in full dress. It also gives a correct view of human nature, and anyone who will read Pepys carefully, and consider how well his own nature is photographed there, will rise from the study a wiser, though a sadder man. The gratification we feel in reading or hearing the gossip or slander of the world in the present day arises out of a narrow mind and a hollow heart; but I hold scandal not to be unlawful if it is only old enough. I would not give sixpence for the scandal of Birmingham for the past month, but a little bit about Julius Cæsar is worthy of attention. These books of Pepys supply the place of history. They may be called "weeds," but give me the weeds, and I will tell

you the nature of the soil from which they spring. When we look at Pepys' weeds, we know what was the state of things when Charles II. presided over the country as a "good shepherd." These books of Pepys show the connection between public and private vices in that day. If you would find whether, during the reign of Charles II.—that base kingship, that debauched era, a period without a saving point—the people partook of the character of the monarch, whether, in fact, the king and the people were pretty much alike, you will find it all in the pages of Pepys. He is a man who does not present a mere exterior to his reader—he does not merely open the watch—he asks you to see it cleaned; in other words, he does not invite you to see Pepys outside, but to step in and view him there.

I shall ask you to look at Pepys from these points of view. First of all, in full dress, in his wig and all other proprieties, in which he is a very imposing person; secondly, in undress, which implies some dress, but not quite so much as full dress; and, lastly, as he was without any dress at all. Pepys was the greatest he-gossip that ever lived. He was a man full of what people call "contradictions." There perhaps never was a more industrious man; a greater gadabout never existed. He could go and see a Harrison comfortably hung, drawn, and quartered, and could spend the afternoon in calmly arranging his bookshelves. He criticised books and boots, dresses and their wearers, he was a mixture of the sagacious and honest man; yet for downright oldwomanishness match him if you can. There are no small things to Pepys. He talks of kings and queens, highwaymen or other men, battle or war, markets and beasts, all alike—they are all equal to Pepys' eyes; there is a beautiful impartiality about him in all he describes. He looked at everything in the world without perspective; everything was of equal value, everything was equally describable. He was fond of his wife, but his description of her is on a par with that of kings' mistresses and pretty actresses. He was a man of good blood, and yet he was a candle-shaving skin-flint. His book is like a marine store shop—there is something of everything in it. In this variety consists the chief value of his Diary. If you want to know which was the best sermon or the best play in his day, you will find it there. He lived by the hour and the minute, and he chronicled

all he saw and did in the time. His absence of perspective and principle constitutes his chief recommendation as an historian. He has created a precious museum of English life at a most trying and eventful period in our national history.

He was a "peace-at-any-price" man. He was obsequious to his superiors, yet kind to all. He kept his politics to himself for the sake of peace. He was sordid in the extreme, and the vainest man possible. His selfishness, too, was so great that it almost approached the sublime. His annotations on the subject of dress, his love for the ladies, and his conjugal experience, are full of the most provocative humour.

His Diary is valuable as showing what may be inside a very respectable man indeed. He was one of the biggest wags of his day, had books dedicated to him, presided over learned societies, dined for the good of charities, was one whom we should have been proud to live in the same street with; and yet he was full of the most unmitigated selfishness, the most pettifogging ambition, the grossest vanity, the most colossal self-esteem. He is valuable to us because possessed of a curiosity indiscriminate, insatiable, restless, infinite, that found nothing too great and nothing too small. He was a man in whose mind there were no relative ideas of distance and size, and to whom the price of salmon and asparagus were as worthy of a note in his book as the appearance of the King, or the size of the King's mistress. He was a most sordid man, but profuse when his own pleasure was concerned. He was a most amazing lover of women, the most gallant man possible, except the woman had the misfortune to be related to him. But the most wonderful thing in him was his selfishness. Self-worship was theoretically and practically the thirty-nine articles of the Pepysian creed. His regular church-going and reading of prayers is spoken of by the pastoral Lord Braybrooke as a "touching" part of Pepys' character. But we read in his Diary of how he went to one church because there was "great store of young ladies, very pretty," and of how he would not read prayers at home one night, not because the prayers of a tipsy man might not be acceptable to God, but lest "my servants might see in what a mighty pickle I was."

The man's thorough honesty in setting down everything should be recognised and praised, but much diary-keeping has its dangers.



The spiritual and moral book-keeping that some people practise may be carried so far as to become a spiritual valetudinarianism, and the diary into which we put all our misdeeds will, by-and-bye, become our father-confessor, enabling us to begin each day's sins with a clean slate. Too much diary work leads to morbidness, over-selfishness, undue watching of the inside works of life. With Pepys it seems as if the disease of clerkship had got into everything; he was miserable if he had not made his evening entry. But the wonder of the book is that any man should dare to look at himself so honestly, so faithfully, as Pepys did. Mr Pepys was naked, and was not ashamed. Mr Pepys was full of moral wrinkles, and he measured their length and set them down every one. He painted himself as Oliver Cromwell wanted to be painted—"warts and all." Dr Mills, in the obituary eulogium which he passed upon Pepys, said that he died "in the odour of sanctity." No man ever passed out of the world with a greater contempt for it, though he had mixed up with it most actively and prominently for the greater part of his life, or with a greater faith in what was to come.

"But," says some one, "doesn't such a book as his lower one's views of human nature?" It may yours; mine cannot be lowered. I could construct a Pepys out of the first dozen men I met; my street would furnish a Pepys. "But don't you think such books give one a tendency to despise humanity?" No; they don't make me despise humanity, because I know what humanity is. I know that men and women are neither so awfully black nor so utterly depraved as my friend Boanerges, when preaching, painted them, nor such fountains of uncorrupted goodness as my other friend, Sugar-lips, says they are. "But won't your knowledge of men and women make you despise them?" What has despisement and contempt to do with thorough knowledge? Contempt is bred in the heart, not in the head, and the more thoroughly a man knows what men and women are, the more heartily will he work for them. He who knows most the crookedness of humanity, loves it most. Christ's full knowledge of the world and its wickednesses, men and their meannesses, women and their vanities, never made him despise or condemn them. Reading Pepys, therefore, need not make us despise men and women. There are two loves in this world.

One is the love of the man, given to what is lovely ; the other the love of God, given to what is sad, sinful, and unlovely. The more we have occasion not to love man, the more we ought to love him. What you see of Pepys in men and women may diminish your love for them, but it will increase your power to love them with the divine love.

Another use of Pepys is that he is a capital candle. There are corners in one's heart, as there are in the cellar, which the ordinary daylight doesn't reach. Usually the middle of a room is clean enough, but the curving sweep of the housemaid's broom doesn't often reach the corners. You and I are well-swept characters, but how about the corners? Are there no little nooks sacred to spiders and dirt? We can't very well see the crooks of our own heart ; man's powers of self-introspection are not sufficient. Whenever, therefore, I want an inspection of the ugly places, I open Pepys. It is not a book merely to laugh at. It is full of endless mirth and fun, but it is also full of endless sadness and constant utilities. A wise reading of Pepys ought to make a man more charitable to his brother, and more severe to himself. He who can see nothing but fun in Pepys is a fool. All would be the better for chewing the bitter herbs the book contains.

## HORACE WALPOLE.

BORN 1717, DIED 1797.

WE have passed in review on various occasions a large number of men, of the most diverse kind—saints and sinners, heroes and kings, poets and dandies—and now I have to bring before you one of the most eccentric, original, fastidious, and curious of men. I am going to set before you a man who, whatever his faults, was the supremest letter-writer this country has ever had, and who showed that the English language is as capable as even the French of all the varied terms and changes of expression that good letters should contain. This man was unique. There was nobody like him. He has been pronounced to have been the most artificial, fastidious, and capricious of men. He was unlike anyone else in the uniformity with which he made great things appear little, and little things always appear great. To kings, palaces, politics, and prime ministers he turned the little end of the telescope, and made them look small indeed; but to china, teacups, shells, curiosities, lapdogs, and coloured glass he turned that end of the telescope that made them rise into enormous importance. He spent his life in collecting them, and he got together the greatest collection of bric-a-brac and rubbish that ever man had. Politics sank into contempt with him in the sight of party squabbles. To be a gentleman was of more importance to him than to be a man of wit, and as to being an author, though he was an admirable one, he hoped it never would be remembered. We cannot despise this strange, quaint man, because he was one of our foremost writers. He was the author of a romance that was the parent of a whole school. He introduced a new epoch into architecture, and achieved a greatness that probably he would have disdained.

He was born in 1717, and lived to 1797; and though it looks so far off, yet it is remarkably near. He is said to have fallen in love when he was seventy or eighty, with a lady who lived to the

other day. I remember the catalogue of his goods, comprising Queen Elizabeth's gloves, and many other marvellous things which this industrious curiosity-monger got together. So it seems but the other day that he went from amongst us. He was the third son of the great Whig minister, Sir Robert Walpole. Horace was sent to Eton after ten years of private instruction, and afterwards he was entered at Lincoln's Inn, though he never went there, because he did not care for the profession. He was weak in body, delicate, feeble, and fastidious. One of the oddest things we hear of him is that, when he got to be ten years old, he had a prodigious desire to see the King. He saw the King, privately, at ten o'clock at night, and kissed his hand, and afterwards he laughed at the whole business. This, probably, is the reason of his always in later life ridiculing kings and laughing at big people.

Leaving Eton, he went to King's College, Cambridge, and in 1739 he started with the poet Gray on his travels. Having spent some time in France, he went on to Italy, and at Florence he formed the acquaintance of Sir Horace Mann, to whom he wrote the majority of his witty letters. Having quarrelled with Gray, he went to Rome, and there the curiosity mania seized him—a disease which broke out fiercely, and remained with him for life. When this gentlemanly dawdler returned home, he went into Parliament as a representative of a small borough in Cornwall, which is not a borough now. In Parliament he made one speech against his father's enemies. It was not very good, though it was considered to be so good at the time. Pitt praised it, rather because it was a son's defence of his father than on account of any great excellence it possessed.

At length his father died, and Walpole started life with £5000 a year—money paid for doing nothing, and with someone to help him. He stopped in Parliament twenty-eight years, seldom speaking there, but passing his life away in writing letters, writing and printing books, and building Strawberry Hill. Another incident in his life was his nephew dying, which left him Earl of Orford. He was perfectly bored when they made him an earl, probably feeling that he was snuffed out. He did not like the title, and sometimes signed himself "Uncle of the late Earl of Orford." One other incident was his making the acquaintance of a witty,

clever, and wise blind Frenchwoman, Madame du Deffaud, and it was said that he had actually fallen in love with her. He, however, was always nervously anxious to deny anything of the kind. When he was between seventy and eighty, as a sort of revenge, there came a very curious incident. Two young ladies named Berry, very charming, handsome, and witty, were introduced to him accidentally: he was charmed, and for the first time in his life almost was on the verge of having a twinge. He put the young ladies into a house near him, and of course the neighbours did their duty. They had a lively sense of what their duty was. The young ladies, in consequence, were almost for going abroad; but Walpole begged them to stay, and they did so.

And now about his letters. For forty years he wrote letters to Sir Horace Mann, and received them. Though some of these letters look as though they were spontaneous, we know that very many were made up carefully. He collected anecdotes, and made jests, and kept them in stock, and the admirable skill with which he joined them together was marvellous. His letters were gossip of the most charming kind. They contained plenty of proper names in them. He liked to talk about people, and that is the very soul of being a good gossip. He did not talk about principles unless they had clothes on them. There are things put into his letters that are wonderful. He believed in no one much, but showed profound cynicism. He was the showman of fashionable life, and it is pretty to watch him hold the puppets up; and sometimes what a mischievous shake he would give them, in order that some of the bran might fall out! He never was so happy as when he turned the figures round and showed the works. I will read you several specimens of Walpole's style of letter-writing.

Here's a bit on the prostitution of patriots.

ARLINGTON STREET, Dec. 24, 1744.

"You will wonder what has become of me; nothing has. I know it is above three weeks since I wrote to you; but I will tell you the reason. I have kept a parliamentary silence, which I must explain to you. Ever since Lord Granville went out, all has been suspense. The leaders of the Opposition immediately imposed silence upon their party: everything passed without the least debate—in short, *all were making their bargains*. One has heard of the corruption of courtiers; but believe me, the impudent prostitution of patriots, going to market

with their honesty, beats it to nothing. Do but think of two hundred men *of the most consummate virtue*, setting themselves to sale for three weeks ! I have been reprimanded by the wise for saying that they all stood like servants at a country statute fair to be hired. All this while nothing was certain : one day the coalition was settled ; the next, the treaty broke off. I hated to write to you what I might contradict next post."

*Jan. 14, 1745.*

". . . I will tell you a very good thing : Lord Baltimore will not come into the Admiralty, because in the new commission they give Lord Vere Beauclerc the precedence to him, and he has dispersed printed papers with precedents in his favour. A gentleman, I don't know who, the other night at Tom's coffee-house, said, ' It put him in mind of Penkethman's petition in "The Spectator," where he complains that formerly he used to act second chair in Diocletian, but now was reduced to dance fifth flower-pot.'

"The Duke of Montagu has found out an old penny history book, called *the Old Woman's Will of Ratcliffe Highway*, which he has bound up with his mother-in-law's Old Marlborough, only tearing away the title-page of the latter."

*March 4th.*

"My Lord Coke is going to be married to a Miss Shawe, of forty thousand pounds. . . . The Duke of Cumberland, you hear, is named generalissimo, with Count Koningseg, Lord Dunmore, and Ligonier under him. Poor boy ! he is most Brunswickly happy with his drums and trumpets. Do but think that this sugar-plum was to tempt him to swallow that bolus the Princess of Denmark ! What will they do if they have children ? The late Queen never forgave the Duke of Richmond, for telling her that his children would take place before the Duke's grandchildren."

*June 25th.*

"The town is not quite empty yet. My Lady Fitzwalter, Lady Betty Germain, Lady Granville, and Dowager Strafford have their At-homes, and amass company. Lady Brown has done with her Sundays, for she is changing her house into Upper Brooke Street. In the meantime, she goes to Knightsbridge, and Sir Robert to the woman he keeps at Scarborough. Winnington goes on with the Frasi ; so my Lady Townshend is obliged only to lie of people. You have heard of the disgrace of the Archibald [Lady Archibald Hamilton], and that in future scandal she must only be ranked with the Lady Elizabeth Lucy and Madam Lucy Walters, instead of being historically noble among the Clevelands, Portsmouths, and Yarmouths.

It is said Miss Granville has the reversion of her coronet ; others say, she won't accept the patent."

Here, in a letter to George Montague, under date Aug. 20, 1758, is a little account of his own eccentric conduct :—

"I have picked a little painted glass too, and have got a promise of some old statues, lately dug up, which formerly adorned the cathedral of Lichfield. You see I continue to labour in my vocation, of which I can give you a comical instance :—I remembered a rose in painted glass in a little village going to Ragley, which I remarked passing by five years ago ; told Mr Conway on which hand it would be, and found it in the very spot. I saw a very good and perfect tomb at Alcester of Sir Fulke Greville's father and mother, and a wretched old house with a very handsome gateway of stone at Colton, belonging to Sir Robert Throckmorton. There is nothing else tolerable but twenty-two coats of the matches of the family in painted glass. You cannot imagine how astonished a Mr Seward, a learned clergyman was, who came to Ragley while I was there. Strolling about the house, he saw me first sitting on the pavement of the lumber-room with Louis, all over cobwebs and dirt and mortar ; then found me in his own room on a ladder writing on a picture ; and half an hour afterwards lying on the grass in the court with the dogs and the children, in my slippers and without my hat. He had had some doubt whether I was the painter or the factotum of the family ; but you would have died at his surprise when he saw me walk into dinner dressed and sit by Lady Hertford. Lord Lyttleton was there, and the conversation turned on literature ; finding me not quite ignorant added to the parson's wonder ; but he could not contain himself any longer, when after dinner he saw me go to romps and jumping with the two boys ; he broke out to my Lady Hertford, and begged to know who and what sort of man I really was, for he had never met with anything of the kind."

I will only add one or two passages in which the name of Whitfield the great preacher occurs.

Walpole had written letters to Sir Horace Mann in which he had described Lord Ferrers as "a wild beast, a mad assassin, a low wretch, about whom he had no curiosity." This wild beast killed his servant, and was hanged for it, and Walpole writes a long account of him. Among other things,—

"Dr Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, offered his service to him : he thanked the Bishop, but said, as his own brother was a clergyman, he chose to have him. Yet he had another relation who has been much more busy about his repentance. I don't know whether you have ever

heard that one of the singular characters here is a Countess of Huntingdon, aunt of Lord Ferrers. She is the Saint Theresa of the Methodists. Judge how violent bigotry must be in such mad blood. The Earl, by no means disposed to be a convert, let her visit him, and often sent for her, as it was more company; but he grew sick of her, and complained that she was enough to provoke anybody. She made her suffragan, Whitfield, pray for and preach about him, and that impertinent fellow told his enthusiasts in his sermon, that my Lord's heart was stone."

At a later date (July 5, 1761) he writes to the Earl of Strafford:—

"The apostle Whitfield is come to some shame: he went to Lady Huntingdon lately and asked for forty pounds for some distressed saint or other. She said she had not so much money in the house, but would give it him the first time she had. He was very pressing, but in vain. At last he said, 'There's your watch and trinkets, you don't want such vanities; I will have that.' She would have put him off; but he persisting, she said, 'Well, if you must have it you must.' About a fortnight afterwards, going to his house, and being carried into his wife's chamber, among the paraphernalia of the latter the Countess found her own offering. This has made a terrible schism: she tells the story herself—I had not it from Saint Frances [Lady Frances Shirley], but I hope it is true."

This is spiteful of Walpole; and our hope must go the other way from his.

Walpole never told anything without being lively, and he never spoke of anybody without being a little spiteful. For the life of him he could not help it. There were only about five people he ever praised.

There was only one Englishman who ever wrote better letters than Horace Walpole, and that was William Cowper, the poet. These were the two supreme letter-writers; and what a contrast there is between them! Were the two to be placed side by side, I am not sure that you would not abandon the aristocratic show, and gather round the sweet, homely, charitable show of William Cowper.

I must leave Walpole's greatest works till next week. They are chiefly the "Castle of Otranto," and the most amazing work of all—that marvellous house beginning as a cottage and then becoming a castle, and then an abbey, in which he gathered to-



gether his wonderful collection, which I will describe, not in my own words, but in those magnificent words of George Robins, auctioneer. That man would describe a pigstye until the wretched advertiser would believe he was hearing of a palace. He would describe an estate until the owner didn't know it. Auctioneers have fallen from their high places since his days. I will draw your attention next week to Walpole's works—his "History of Royal and Noble Authors," his "Account of the Reign of George II.," and his "Castle of Otranto." A more eccentric being than Walpole never lived, but he is not deserving of the very severe things said of him; and when Macaulay and others make him out to be a heartless cynic, a soulless man, and an unprincipled coxcomb, they are going far beyond the truth.

## II.

From what I have already advanced you will have seen that Walpole was one of the most eccentric, capricious, whimsical, and fastidious men whom you could find in the whole museum of history. You will remember his passion at ten years of age to see the King, and his going by night—a sort of little, shabby Nicodemus—to kiss the hand of King George. Probably that early kiss did the mischief, for he certainly afterwards turned his back with contempt on kings and princes. Though he was an aristocrat by birth and also by taste, he was a Republican by affectation, and, as far as speculation went, a Liberal of the extremest sort. His republicanism, however, was unconvertible paper money; he never took it into the market to have it cashed, and, had he done so, nobody would have given him twopence for his trouble.

Walpole was a humourist, and that of a particular kind. A humourist may be one of two things. He may look at everything from his own point of view, and that point, when applied to everything, gives an amazing diversity in the result; or a man may be a humourist in the deep sense—one who knows that in this world all things are strangely mixed, the mighty and the mean, the sacred and the unholy, the clean and the unclean, the body and the soul. The humourist delights to mark these eternal antitheses. If he is a man of good temper, and a loving

man, then his delight is to take little people, mean things, low places, and show the grace and beauty that there are in them. If the humourist is a spiteful man, then the process is reversed; he likes to take men down, to point out the little in the big, the mean in the great, the pettifogging in the mighty. We call such a man cynical.

Unfortunately, Walpole was somewhat of a cynic, and, except in the case of some half-dozen people who constituted his universe, he never let a thing drop until he had found something mean in it. Nevertheless, he was not so bad as has been generally made out. For instance, one of the charges made against him is that he wore one mask over another, whereas he never wore a mask at all. He never affected any great principles, and never professed to be anything but a gentleman usher; for he said that if he had lived in the days of Elizabeth, he should have been a gentleman usher. He knew what he aimed at, and had no mask to take off. He was a man who would have been great at a bazaar. You know the male creature who is great at a bazaar—who runs round pleading about a cushion, growing maudlin over a baby's frock, making himself agreeable, and doting over the feminine rubbish, of which a large part of the "goods" is composed. Walpole treated life as a bazaar; opened his little shop in *Vanity Fair*, and covered its shelves with all the bric-a-brac toys and rubbish he could possibly gather together.

With all his littleness and defects of temper, let justice be done to him. He might have been a greater man than he was if he had wanted; but he resembled those affected dandies who sometimes find that they can do a thing, but they will not because they think it is not gentlemanly. Sometimes his judgments were so sound, and his ways of thinking so radically right, that he anticipated decisions that greater men were slow to come to. For instance, he had a fervent hatred of the slave trade, and hated war as few men of his order do; and the man who wrote such things of them as Walpole did was not altogether cold, nor false-hearted, nor a coxcomb, as Macaulay has painted him. We can best understand him by remembering what one has said of him: "He was the most garrulous old man of his days." He never was a young man; he was old from his boyhood, and he got the most charming when he got the most old.

I will now quote a number of passages from Walpole's letters, in illustration both of their sparkling character and the disparagement with which he regarded great men.

## WILLIAM PITT.

"Nothing happens worth telling you : we have had some long days in the house, but unentertaining ; Mr Pitt has got the gout in his oratory, I mean in his head, and does not come out."

## TO THE HON. H. S. CONWAY.

Oct. 12, 1761.

"It is lucky that you did not succeed in the expedition to Rochfort. Perhaps you might have been made a peer ; and as *Chatham* is a naval title it might have fallen to your share. But it was reserved to crown greater glory ; and lest it should not be substantial pay enough, three thousand pounds a-year for three lives go along with it. Not to Mr Pitt—you can't suppose it. Why truly, not the title, but the annuity does, and Lady Hester is the baroness ; that, if he should please, he may earn an earldom himself. Don't believe me, if you have not a mind. I know I did not believe those who told me. But ask the Gazette that swears it—ask the King, who has kissed Lady Hester—ask the City of London, who are ready to tear Mr Pitt to pieces—ask forty people I can name, who are overjoyed at it—and then ask me again who am mortified, and who have been the dupe of his disinterestedness. Oh, my dear Harry ! I beg you on my knees, keep your virtue ; do let me think there is still one man upon earth who despises money. I wrote you an account last week of his resignation. Could you have believed that in four days he would have tumbled from the conquest of Spain to receiving a quarter's pension from Mr West ? To-day he has advertised his seven coach-horses to be sold—Three thousand a year for three lives, and fifty thousand pounds of his own, will not keep a coach and six. I protest I believe he is mad. . . . Delavel has said an admirable thing ; he blames Pitt—not as you and I do ; but calls him fool ; and says, if he had gone into the City, told them he had a poor wife and children unprovided for, and had opened a subscription, he would have got five hundred thousand pounds instead of three thousand pounds a-year. In the meantime the good man has saddled us with a war which we can neither carry on nor carry off. 'Tis pitiful ! 'tis wondrous pitiful ! Is the communication stopped that we never hear from you ? I own 'tis an Irish question. I am out of humour ; my visions are dispelled, and you are still abroad. As I cannot put Mr Pitt to death, at least I have buried him ; here is his epitaph :

“Admire his eloquence—it mounted higher  
 Than Attic purity or Roman fire ;  
 Adore his services—our lions view  
 Ranging, where Roman eagles never flew ;  
 Copy his soul supreme o'er Lucre's sphere ;  
 —But oh ! beware three thousand pounds a-year !”

No matter upon what subject Walpole writes, he is never dull ; but whether he is giving a catalogue of Royal authors, or writing anecdotes of painters, he links them together with such sense, variety, and sprightliness, that his catalogue becomes charming ; and I think that, had he written a catalogue of bulbs, he would have made that charming too.

There is one passage in his letters which refers to Birmingham. He says, “Birmingham is large and swarms with people in trade, but does not answer my expectations from any beauty in it. New as it is, I perceive how far I am getting away from London, for every ale-house has here written on it ‘Mug-house,’ and from the information of a few Birmingham people the word ‘mug’ is good classical English, and is used except among a few dunces as meaning a vessel, a cup for holding beer.” When I used the word “mug” a week ago, there were some few people so stupendously dull as to suppose it was a slang phrase for a face. It is desirable, therefore, to fortify myself with the authority of Walpole, and we ought to rejoice that the word “mug” is an old Birmingham word, with an antiquarian flavour in it. Here is a charming bit of wit : “My neighbour Townshend has been dying. She was woefully frightened, and took prayers ; but she has recovered now, even of her repentance.”

One of Walpole's best works is his “Memoirs of the Reign of George II.” It was a tangled time in English history, and Walpole lets vast light into it in the lively and charming fashion for which he is remarkable. His “Castle of Otranto” is a work which many of you probably have never read. I read it when I was very young, when I could be frightened by it, and at that time it was not a book to read the last thing at night. Now, I could read it either the last thing at night or the first thing in the morning ; but it is a book which, if you read it when you are young, makes you know where the roots of your hair are, and gives you a cold feeling on the arm. This book, though not read by this

generation, marked an epoch, and was the parent of many others of a similar class. Independently of its interest as a tale, it is a book which required a great deal of learning and a great deal of knowledge, and is a very clever book, for it contains in the main a very accurate picture of the life, manners, and superstitions of the age in which the story was cast. The author published the book anonymously, because he did not know how people would take it, and that which he most feared was being laughed at. When, however, the book became popular, then he stepped out; for, though he despised popularity, he liked to be able to despise it.

In conclusion, I must speak of Walpole's house—Strawberry Hill—and the effect which it exercised in re-awakening the love of Gothic architecture. Before Strawberry Hill was built, the old abbeys and churches were regarded as so many stone quarries, whence ready-hewn stone could be obtained for other buildings; but now we save the old abbeys, and restore old churches. Strawberry Hill has been the means of opening the eyes of the English to see the beauty of Westminster, the charms of Lichfield, the grace of Salisbury, and the robust grandeur of York Minster. Strawberry Hill is now almost in London; but whenever I pass it I look upon it with reverence as being the quaint dream of an odd man, which had the effect of redeeming the English from barbarism, and bringing us back to the ways of our fathers.

## LETTER-WRITING AND FAMOUS LETTER-WRITERS.

THE subject upon which I am to discourse this evening has no claim to be considered a scientific one, and I think that many of you will say, "And a great blessing, too;" but it is something much more important—it is intensely human; for no subject goes deeper down into everyday life. In no way do men express so fully what they are, without reserve and without blushing, as in their letters, and I think an hour may be much worse spent than in looking over the peculiarities and characteristics of downright good letters, and examining the men and women who have made letter-writing a success.

We will take the different kinds of letters in order. Letters begin in very early youth, and the first I will therefore speak of are children's letters. These display a wonderful style of composition. The sentences are always short and unconnected. They are like loose shingle—every sentence being like a rounded pebble, and every one standing by itself. And among the peculiarities of children's letters, I have noticed that the word "give" occurs with astonishing frequency in them; for children are like the horse-leech, continually crying "Give, give."—"Give me a cake," "send me a top," and so on. The first letter from a child just gone to school, and the first love-letter from a woman a man really loves, I rank together as the greatest letters it is possible to receive. I will not trouble you with specimens, because I have no doubt you have all got excellent samples at home.

Next to children's letters are letters written to children, and it takes a very great man or a very loving woman indeed to write a good one. The art of writing letters to children is indeed a very rare and difficult one. It is easy, of course, to give a letter to a child a fictitious interest by making it an invoice of cakes and apples and tops sent; but to make the letter good and interesting in itself is a very different thing, and the men and women who

can do it are few indeed. A grand specimen is the letter of Martin Luther to his son Hans, figuring forth a heaven where little boys who love their mammas and say their prayers are allowed to ride upon celestial donkeys with golden saddles as a reward for their good conduct—a view most people take of heaven, that it is the biggest attainable bonbon for good behaviour. All the turmoil in which Luther was engaged could not keep him from thinking pleasantly of the child, and composing that pleasant letter. Thomas Hood wrote many uncommonly good letters to children. One of the shortest, kindest, and funniest was written to the little girl with whom he romped at a picnic, and had a roll with her down-hill and into a thorn-bush. “May, dear May,” he said, “I promised you a letter, and I was sure to remember it ; for you are as hard to forget as you are soft to roll down-hill with ;” and so he went on, telling the child funny stories about the little boy who had set a trap in the balcony and caught a cold, and of Jenny having set her foot in the garden, but it hadn’t come up yet.

Schoolboy letters are never interesting. As to love-letters, it would be dangerous to expatiate upon them. There is an Act of Parliament against the careless handling of inflammable substances, and were I to take the best specimens of love-letters and illustrate them, as perhaps the reminiscences of a middle-aged man might enable me to do, the Act might be violated, and consequences might follow that I may live long enough bitterly to regret. Most people who want specimens of love-letters know pretty well where to find them.

Then, again, there are letters which are not letters—compositions that simply borrow the form of letters, and to which the name is given by courtesy—political letters—the Letters of Junius, for example. A style of letters that I abominate is the didactic, in which somebody sits down to teach another morals, philosophy, or etiquette in the form of letters. Of this character are Lord Chesterfield’s famous Letters to his Son. Far be it from me to trouble you with them. I am glad to say that they were never taken out at any library that I know of. I am glad that book has exploded, for it is one of the vilest and most contemptible ever written and with which the world was ever plagued, of which it has been well said that the manners are those of a dancing-master and the morals those of a courtesan. It is full of

impudence, immorality, varnish, vanity, affectation, and grimace. Some women have written letters to their daughters; but these are merely bad sermons twisted into the shape of letters. Then there is a whole heap of travels in the form of letters; but they are not really letters—they are simply travels twisted and cut up. I will also set aside Swift's "Drapier letters," with those of Junius and Agricola, and all the other gentlemen who thundered in a London paper for the benefit of the mob.

We come next to historical letters. There are those twenty volumes that have been published of the First Napoleon's letters, which are simply a conjuror's explanation of how he performs his tricks. If anyone wants to study the art of lying, they will find it better explained in these volumes than anywhere else. You will see in them all the dirty work of a conqueror, and how it was performed. These twenty volumes are simply an exhibition of the very nasty occupation of washing one's own linen at home; and the conqueror's worshippers and flatterers have lent the soap. They sink the writer down to the level of a contemptible charlatan and despiser of mankind, the demolition of whose semi-idolatry in Europe would be one of the best pieces of idol-destruction a man can do or assist in.

As regards literary letters, an excellent sample of these is found in Voltaire's letters, as showing how the keen, observant, intellectual, sharp little Frenchman stepped across the Channel and came over to our shores with his eyes wide open. In letters that he wrote about that time he expressed with wonderful vivacity his impressions of Englishmen. He shows how he looked around him in England with a mixture of curiosity, toleration, pity, and contempt, wishing to see how the islander ate, and to learn what the barbarians believed, and how he discovered running wild at Stratford a savage named Shakespeare, who, though not at all presentable at Paris, nevertheless had something in him. The letters are characteristic not only of the man, but of his country.

The great satirical letters come next. One has sometimes a twinge of conscience about the good effects of satire; yet with what can one fight stupid people but with satire? You can do nothing with stupid people but laugh at them. It will not hurt them: you get the pleasure and they get no pain, for they have no organisation. One of the finest collections of satirical letters



is the *Obscurorum vivorum* of Erasmus. It is one of the finest onsets of the scholarly world against duncedom, and makes the dunces perfectly ridiculous.

There is a species of composition called letters that one cannot admit on any terms. For instance, there is the begging-letter. I know a begging-letter almost the moment I open it. I do not need to read it; for there is a sort of odour comes up from it which tells me what it is. In fact, I wonder how anyone can be taken in by such productions. Misery is usually dilated upon roundly, and set forth pathetically and parenthetically in a manner in which no one suffering from real distress would ever think of writing.

If one wants to stop long-winded letters, very short ones should be written in reply. No man, no woman even, can hold out against this. Six words to a page is quite enough; so that if you get six pages, you should just write thirty-six words in reply.

Coming next to letters of credit, I must confess that I am terribly ignorant respecting these, and therefore can say nothing about them. People never plague me with this kind of correspondence. I have seen such letters advertised in the newspapers, but found that there were generally certain little preliminaries before they were granted. My own letters are generally about debits and debts rather than credit. I have, unfortunately, received more letters asking for payment than letters authorising me to receive payment, in any bank, town, place, or company.

Another class of letters are those that are bound up in the "Complete Letter-Writer." This is the refuge for the destitute, the great ready-made clothes-shop for literary aspirants. There are garments of all sizes, but, unfortunately, they never fit. I have never seen persons get ready-made clothes but the clothes always tell the tale. There are all sorts of letters in this Complete Letter Writer—letters telling you how to seek an introduction to a great man; letters of courtship; business letters, and the like; but they have not given the right letters for present day business. Since *Memoranda* leaves have come in, they have saved a great deal of hypocrisy and ink; for they have taken the place of the absurdly stilted compositions formerly written as commercial letters, in which an order for a bag of nails was spoken of as a

“distinguished favour.” I therefore cannot recommend the “Complete Letter Writer,” except for the fun it contains. I often read the “Complete Letter Writer” myself when I am in low spirits, and it refreshes me.

It has been asked if the art of letter-writing can be taught. Some people think it can; and if anybody has any doubts about it, he should get hold of a promising pupil and try to teach him. But you may take my word for it, that if it is not in him, the teacher may as well sit down and try to teach a class to write a second part of “Paradise Lost.” If you see anyone biting the tip of his pen, and in the agonies of composition, you may depend that nothing good will come of it.

A letter has peculiarities distinguished from other forms of composition. A collection of good letters is the most accurate transcript of life that one can have. Provided it is a letter sent from one true friend to another, nothing can be out of place in a letter. Letters contain the most real picture of this wonderful life of ours, so full of littlenesses and greatnesses; so shabby, so glorious; so mean, and so mighty. The letter is made gracious by the littlest things, and is dignified by the grandest. Baby’s new tooth figures with as much propriety as the death of George IV. It would be lawful to tell how your corns are, in a letter to anybody who took an interest in your welfare. One of the charms of letter-writing is the enormous gain it gives to egotism, and indeed it is a great point in a good letter that we should write about ourselves. The best thing in writing a letter is to write it in sincerity all the way through. It was the want of sincerity in Pope that caused William Cowper to call him a “disgusting” letter-writer. Pope’s letters are very elaborate, but they often cover a great deal of insincerity. It is from this cause, also, that there is a great snare in letter-writing. Someone has said that if Job had been alive now, instead of wishing his enemy would write a book, he would wish that he would write a number of letters. Good letters should exhibit the writer in undress, dress, and full-dress; playful about trifles, careful about serious matters—they give scope for every mood.

Among a few rich specimens of short letters may be instanced that from Mrs Foote to her son Sam. In fact it is not a letter, it is a “memorandum,” perfectly charming for its brevity. It runs

thus: "Dear Sam, I am in prison for debt. Come and assist your loving mother." But Sam's reply is equally good. It is, "Dear Mother, so am I, which prevents his duty being paid to his loving mother by her affectionate son, Sam Foote." But attached to Sam's letter (most wonderful!) there is a postscript. It is usually the ladies who add postscripts to their letters; but in this instance the rule is reversed. The postscript is, "I have sent my attorney to assist you. In the meantime let us hope for better days." These are admirable specimens of short letters. Another very good one is that from Queen Elizabeth to a refractory bishop. She said: "By God, I made you, and by God, if you don't obey, I'll unfrock you." This may be called vigorous, but it is a fine specimen of the memorandum style. One more specimen of the short letter I will give; it is by a living statesman, Lord John Russell, and his greatest work in letter-writing was the least he ever wrote. It is addressed to the Dean of Hereford. That devout, pious, and passionate Churchman had written in fury to express his intention to do what the Courts had forbidden, in the interests of the Church. Having read the fiery letter of the indignant Churchman, his lordship replied: "I have the honour to receive your letter of the 22nd, in which you intimate your intention to violate the law.—I have the honour to be your obedient servant, John Russell." That letter alone deserves a statue. It is like firing a cannon-ball into a mud-bank. Mrs Foote's is good, but the subject is not elevated.

Under the head of "monumental letters," we may group Lady Montague's characteristic epistle in which she bequeathed a guinea to her son, and wrapt it up in sting, satire and bitterness; William Temple's letter to Lady Essex; Arbuthnot's letter to Pope; Pope's farewell to Atterbury; Bolingbroke's letter to the son of Sir W. Wyndham; the letter of Daniel Defoe to his son's wife, in which that eminent writer gave a touching account of his suffering and distress, and told the story of what broke his heart at last; and Johnson's letter to the Earl of Chesterfield.

Referring to forged letters, it is amazing what an amount of genius has been spent in writing in other people's names, and has yet been content to remain unknown. The pleasure of palming off on the world letters supposed to have been written by other men seems to have been enough for them. They made neither

money nor reputation. Letters of this kind are perhaps the most harmless of forgeries. But literary forgeries are always found out.

Of all forged letters, the most memorable for the results they called forth, for the brilliant learning, the elaborate scholarship, the triumph of criticism they evoked from an English critic high above every other known at the time—the great Bentley—are those ascribed to Phalaris. Of course the world was charmed to receive a volume of letters written five hundred years before Cicero, the first great letter-writer of old. These letters were taken up by Sir William Temple—Swift's patron rather than Swift's friend—in that famous battle that raged as to the comparative merits of the ancients and the moderns. Temple took the side of the ancients. He held that the ancient letter-writing, the ancient poetry, the ancient everything, was immeasurably above what the miserable moderns could produce. Most of you no doubt think he was mistaken. The battle of the books raged fiercely, and Temple chose to select these Letters of Phalaris as one of the triumphant examples of the superiority of the old classical writers over anything that the moderns could produce, and he said it might be affirmed of the ancients that the oldest books were still in their kind the best, and that the two most ancient were Æsop's Fables and Phalaris's Epistles. Speaking of these forged letters—of course he thought they bore indubitable marks of authenticity—he said they contained more raciness, spirit, and genius than any others he had seen, ancient or modern. He praised them above everything else, but his praise was not in reality worth much. As a politician, he was the most respectable and the least vigorous of his age; as a writer he was the freest from faults and the most destitute of grace or energy. He was one of the lords of mediocrity—a king of the multitude. He never soared into greatness, never deviated into utter littleness. These "Letters of Phalaris" were dear to mediocrity, full of trivialities, devoid of force and eccentricity, containing no graceful vulgarities; and Temple estimating them by their internal merits, pronounced them to be genuine, and risked his fame upon them. Temple having praised them, of course everybody must read them at once, and so the "Letters of Phalaris" became monstrously popular. A new edition was brought out—edited by

an honourable Boyle—the Honourable Charles Boyle, a relative of the Boyle whose lackadaisical “Meditations” were parodied with such incomparable irony by Swift in his “Meditations on a Broomstick.” The Honourable Charles Boyle edited a new edition of the “Letters of Phalaris,” convinced all the while of their genuineness; but, unfortunately for him, the manuscript was in the King’s Library, and the King’s Library was presided over by a man of the rarest learning and the keenest critical powers—the great Bentley. Bentley was a splendid scholar, and—a savage one. For mediocrities he had a talent—he liked to shake and worry them as a terrier does a rat. He was one of the greatest Greeks this country has ever produced; his learning was minute and admirable; he could tell the date of almost every Greek word—could tell when it was born and when it grew old and grey. When the Honourable Charles Boyle—this relative of the Broomstick Boyle—published his edition of Phalaris, it was enough for him that Sir William Temple had said there were no such Letters in the world; but Bentley took the Epistles in hand and proved conclusively that they were forged, and in doing this he just showed what real criticism means. Criticism in the hands of a scholar like Bentley is the subtlest, sharpest, surest weapon that the human intellect has ever forged. He demonstrated that these letters were written about five hundred years after Cicero instead of five hundred years before. A thousand years does not, perhaps, go for much; but it is pretty to watch how such an out-of-the-way question can be settled. Bentley was “down upon” the chronological ancestors. A forgery is the most difficult thing in the world to do successfully—it takes an amazing genius not to make a blunder. Some of you have been at a masquerade. What difficulty to get one’s self into costume! Suppose one is to be dressed as Richard Cœur de Lion, one’s wife will say, “My dear, if you go with your neck bare, you will catch cold”; so a nineteenth-century neckcloth is put round the heroic neck of Richard Cœur de Lion, and he advances to the discomfiture of Saladin with a cheap tie! And it is just as difficult to forge a book as it is to get yourself up as Richard Cœur de Lion. You are sure to let in the nineteenth century somewhere, if you write in the nineteenth century. So, whoever wrote these letters of Phalaris, put on a necktie, and Bentley, with a nose for a blunder,

detected it. Bentley proved conclusively that the letters were forgeries, and in the course of the dispute proved himself master of a learning to which nothing parallel has been known in England.

Other forged letters I will leave alone. Chatterton's, Ireland's, Macpherson's various matters touching Shakespeare and the poems of Ossian—they have always been detected, and always will be.

Returning to the subject of genuine letters, I now come to a man whose letters deserve mention from their number and painstaking, and from their occupying a distinct place in literature—Cicero. He was the man with whom letter-writing as a distinct branch of literature began. He divides letters into three classes; first, those that convey intelligence; second, those that are jocose; third, those that are serious and solemn. He excelled in them all, though least of all in the second. His humour was of a mild kind: he put too much water in his wine. But his solemn and serious letters are, indeed, admirable. His definition of good letter-writing is this:—"Good letter-writing is little less than conversation on paper carried on between persons personally separated, with this difference, that it brings the minds of the persons into reciprocal action with more room for reflection, and with fewer interruptions than can be the case where there is a personal intercourse." Cicero's letters are far better than Pliny's. Pliny is artificial and priggish. It is as though he curled his hair, and you could detect traces of the curl-papers: curl-papers are scattered all over his letters. There are curls *and* curls, and you can always tell which come out of paper, and which out of the life and the blood. Pliny's are of the former, Cicero's of the latter.

I will not enter into the subject of French letter writers, or refer to the charming letters of Madame de Sévigné. If a Frenchwoman is brilliant, it is difficult to persuade yourself to leave her company and come back to English people. However, some of the productions of the French letter-writers are charming, because the French nation and the French language are admirably fitted to excel in this species of composition.

Coming back to English letters, I will read you the letter which Jonathan Swift wrote to the Lord Treasurer, the Earl of Oxford, on the death of his daughter. It is not long, but the English of

it is so perfect, the sentiment so admirable, the whole sound and ring of it so true, that I doubt whether it has an equal. It is one of the most stately and admirably composed letters I have ever read. It runs thus :—

“ My Lord,—Your lordship is the one person in the world to whom everybody ought to be silent upon such an occasion as this, which is only to be supported by the greatest wisdom and strength of mind, wherein, God knows, the wisest and best of us who would presume to offer thoughts are far your inferiors. It is true, indeed, a great misfortune is apt to weaken the mind and disturb the understanding. This, indeed, might be some pretence to us to administer our consolations if we had been wholly strangers to the person gone. But, my lord, whoever had the honour to know her, wants a comforter as much as your lordship, because, though their loss is not so great, yet they have not the same firmness and prudence to support the want of a friend, a patroness, a benefactor, as you have to support that of a daughter. My lord, both religion and reason forbid me to have the least concern for that lady’s death upon her own account ; and he must be an ill Christian or a perfect stranger to her virtues, who would not wish himself, with all submission to God Almighty’s will, in her condition. But your lordship, who hath lost such a daughter, and the world, which hath lost such an example, have, in our several degrees, greater cause to lament than perhaps was ever given by any private person before. For, my lord, I have sat down to think of every amiable quality that could enter into the composition of a lady, and could not single out one which she did not possess in as high a perfection as human nature is capable of. But as to your lordship’s own particular, as it is an unconceivable misfortune to have lost such a daughter, so it is a possession which few can boast of to have *had* such a daughter. I have often said to your lordship that I never knew anyone by many degrees so happy in their domestic life as you ; and I affirm you are so still, though not by so many degrees ; from whence it is very obvious that your lordship should reflect upon what you have left and not upon what you have lost. To say truth, my lord, you began to be too happy for a mortal—much more happy than is usual with the dispensations of Providence long to continue. You had been the great instrument of preserving your country from foreign and domestic ruin ; you had the felicity of establishing your family in the greatest lustre without any obligation to the country, or your prince, or any industry but your own ; you have triumphed over the violence and treachery of your enemies by your courage and abilities, and by the steadiness of your temper over the inconstancy and caprice of your friends. Perhaps your lordship has felt too much complacency

with yourself upon this universal success, and God Almighty, who would not disappoint your endeavours for the public, thought fit to punish you with a domestic loss where he knew your heart was most exposed, and at the same time has fulfilled his own wise purposes by rewarding in a better life that excellent creature he has taken from you. I know not, my lord, why I write this to you, nor hardly what I am writing. I am sure it is not from any compliance with form; it is not from thinking that I can give your lordship any ease. I think it was an impulse upon me that I should say something; and whether I should send you what I have written I am yet in doubt."

Nothing finer ever came from the pen of that greatest master of the English tongue by far that we have ever had. The seeming delicate flattery, the balm poured into the wounds—for the lady deserved all that was said of her, and the praises of the dead are the surest balm to those who are left to mourn. I leave the letter with you as an example of good English.

Coming now to Pope, I must say that I have some little prejudice against Pope, not because he was a humpback, but because he took such pains with his humps. If you have a hump, erect it well, and do not attempt to hide it. He stuffed into his letters almost as much padding as he did into his coat, in order to cut a respectable figure. Of course there are many beauties in his letters. How could it be otherwise? He was an irritable genius acted on by memorable circumstances, associating with mighty men; and living in a wonderful epoch, with a mind acute, sharp, full of fine taste, he could not have written foolish letters if he had tried; but there is a great deal of buckram in them. His letters are clever, often witty, and they cannot help being wise; but they are always laboured, artificial, and buckramed. His elaboration is tedious, not because he nearly always wrote about himself, but because he studied what would be the *effect* of what he wrote. In his letters you see the conscious dandy, the man who knows he is "got up," and the consequence is that his egotism becomes disgusting. Now, Walpole's letters are fully as elaborate as Pope's, but infinitely more interesting. It is not elaborateness, but insincerity, that spoils a letter. Walpole's letters are entirely natural and true, and, therefore, charming. As a gossip, Walpole is superior even to Pepys.

Gray's letters show a whole and a very charming view of the poet's character. Without them we should lose the best side of



his genius and character. His poetry is classical and buckramed—he dared not write English always in his verses. He did write it once—in his *Elegies*—dear to every English heart. But take, for example, his “Ode to Spring.” What do you think he calls a nightingale? An “Attic warbler”! Now, in his letters he is free from this priggishness, this scholastic elaborateness. His letters are free, easy, graceful, playful, odd, eccentric, variable, changeful. Gray was a man to whom letter-writing was a blessing. He was by nature painfully shy, and letter-writing was a pleasant half-way house for him between the publicity of speaking through books and the tedium of saying nothing. His are most charming specimens of letters by a purely literary man; and literary men’s letters are generally entertaining, because in their letters literary men are able to escape from the austerity of composition, the orthodoxy of thought, and to kick up their heels like colts let out to grass.

But, leaving Gray’s letters, and passing over those of Byron, and asking you to give a patient reading to that grand letter of Robert Burns, in which he gives a history of his birth, education, and struggles—a letter written as it were in blood—let us “settle down” on the two great masters of English letter-writing, Horace Walpole and William Cowper, because those two men fulfil more completely the conditions of good letter-writing than any other men whatever; although the contrast between the two men is as great as between a dandy and a quaker. Walpole was a master of scandal, a king of gossips, with just spite enough to make his tattle piquant. Little things delighted him. ‘To a good gossip, as to a great genius, there must be no great and no small. ‘To Shakespeare nothing was too small and nothing was too great. To Pepys and to Walpole it was the same. Walpole was a man of genius and taste, but he spent them upon a very low level. The squabbles of great politicians Walpole enjoyed, and the quarrels of dowagers over their cards were equally welcome to him as materials for gossip. He depreciated everybody. How spiteful the old vagabond was, how piquant his scandal could be! For example, in one of his letters he says—“Addison sent for the young Lord Warwick when he was dying, to show him in what peace a Christian could die. Unluckily, he died of brandy. How shocking!” He never spoke with respect of any man of genius or talent—gossips never do.

But the greatest letter-writer of all was William Cowper. In all that can make a letter excellent, he excelled. The sweetness and felicity of his diction, the goodness of the style, the purity of the English, and the perfect mastery of the language is admirable. He never blunders, never goes astray. To study the letters of Cowper is to stand nigh to the pure well of English undefiled. Cowper always wrote about himself. He delineated the finest features of his mind, and told the smallest and the largest things of his history. What can exceed the fine ridiculousness of his letter to the Rev. John Newton, beginning thus?—

“My very dear friend, I am going to send what, when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say, I suppose, there’s nobody knows, whether what I have got, be verse or not; but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before?”

Again, what greater example of a letter can be given than the one which he wrote from that deserted old town Olney, to the Rev. William Unwin? It begins with little but ends with much—“A letter written from such a place as this is a creation; and creation a work for which mere mortal man is very indifferently qualified. *Ex nihilo nihil fit* is a maxim that applies itself in every case where Deity is not concerned. With this view of the matter, I should charge myself with extreme folly for pretending to work without materials, did I not know that although nothing could be the result, even that nothing will be welcome. If I can tell you no news, I can tell you at least that I esteem you highly; that my friendship with you and yours is the only balm of my life; a comfort sufficient to reconcile me to an existence destitute of every other. This is not the language of to-day only, the effect of a transient cloud suddenly brought over me and suddenly to be removed, but punctually expressive of my habitual frame of mind such as it has been these ten years. In the *Review* of last month I met with an account of a sermon preached by Mr Paley at the consecration of his friend Bishop Law. The critic admires and extols the preacher, and devoutly prays the Lord of the harvest to send forth more such labourers into his vineyard. I rather differ from him in opinion, not being able to conjecture in what respect the vineyard will be benefitted by such a measure. He is certainly ingenious, and has stretched his ingenuity to the uttermost in order to exhibit the Church established, consisting of

bishops, priests, and deacons, in the most favourable point of view. I lay it down for a rule that, when much ingenuity is necessary to gain an argument credit, that argument is unsound at bottom. So is his, and so are all the petty devices by which he seeks to enforce it. He says first, that the appointment of various orders in the Church is attended with this good consequence, that each class of people is supplied with a clergy of their own level and discrimination, with whom they may live and associate on terms of equality. But in order to effect this good purpose, there ought to be at least three parsons in every parish, one for the gentry, one for the traders and mechanics, and one for the lowest of the vulgar.

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Neither is it easy to find many parishes where the laity at large have any society with their minister at all.

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## FRENCH MEMOIRS.

I NEED hardly remind you that a great deal of what is called History is comparatively barren and useless reading. History, as it used to be written, was very often the passing before men of certain figures, labelled with certain names, deeds, and dates ; and it was only when Biography was added to history that history became either very charming or very instructive. As soon as Biography is added to history, the charm begins. But Biography is not enough. If I were to write your life, of course I would do my best for you ; but, as I know remarkably little of those I know most of, even Biography is not enough ; for of all dreams, the most delusive is to suppose you know anyone thoroughly. You may live twenty years in a house with persons, and know nothing of their secret motives. No two people know each other thoroughly ; no two people can.

Therefore, after History has passed by with its solemn figures, and Biography has come in with its more touching and more intimate tales, there is something still lacking, and that can only be supplied by the Confessional. I do not mean the Confessional of the Church. The Confessional with which I have to do tonight is that long series of charming books called letters, diaries, journals, memoirs, secret histories, scandalous histories, gossip, and so forth. The charm of letter-writing is this : when you write a letter, what would be disgraceful at any other time becomes your chief charm as a correspondent. The more egotistical you are when you write to anyone, the more charming you become. Letter-writing, therefore, is a confessional. Even in letter-writing we have sometimes a little thought about effect ; but when people keep diaries (unless they intend them to be seen, as they seldom do, for most people intend to burn them before they die, only death sometimes takes the advantage of them, and then the executors, as the writer is dead, think it will do them no harm to reveal their secrets), they become one of the most charming things

in the world. They go behind biography, and supply motives, show the inward life, teach what was behind men's minds, and show the secret springs that have led to great events in history. History shows us people in full dress, biography shows them in undress, and diaries show them undressed.

I have to deal to-night with Diaries and Memoirs. Rich as England is in Memoirs, it is entirely surpassed by France. The most charming books in a library are French Memoirs. The French have always loved these things. The reason why they have excelled, first, in quantity, is that, until the great Revolution, a book kept upstairs was about the only place where people dared to say what they thought. In the good old days of despotism, the press was fettered, people were gagged, the Bastille and the *Lettre de cachet* were ready, and if people did not know how to hold their tongues, they were taught to do it. The consequence was that, whilst in England increasing liberty led men to say the thing they would, want of liberty in France inclined the princes, and the cardinals, and the Count, and the lady-in-waiting, to go upstairs and put it all down there; for if you dam up human energy in one place, it will break out in another; when people are made to sit still, when they do get leave to dance, they will do it with a vengeance. Take off the pressure of tight lacing, and the efforts of nature to restore itself are sometimes audible.

Is there any use in these books? They are, perhaps, the most useful books. What should we know about the Greeks, if we had only the orations of Demosthenes, and wanted Plutarch? or what should we know about the Romans, if we had nothing but Livy, or even Cæsar, and wanted the sweet Odes of Horace, the stinging Satires of Juvenal and the egotistical Letters of Cicero? Why, what should we know of England, unless we had such books? "Oh," you say, "I know the kings." What is the use of being able to go through the list of kings? The fault of schools is that children are taught in this method. They can say their lesson through from beginning to end; but if you break the thread, the child will have to begin again at the beginning. He who has read the ballads of England, who knows Chaucer by heart, has Shakespeare at his fingers' ends, and has read the Lays of Gray, the charming Journal to Stella by Swift, Boswell's Life of Johnson, or dear old Pepys' Diary, knows what England is and

was, what sort of people we were, what we really believed, what we truly worshipped, and what we truly thought. If I could get the diary of a poor man, I would receive it with respect, for the "Annals of the Poor" check mirth and put down scorn. The economy of a king is a laughing-stock; but the economy of a poor woman is sublimity.

"The glories of our blood and state  
 Are shadows, not substantial things;  
 There is no armour against fate,  
 Death lays his icy hand on kings.  
     Sceptre and crown  
     Must tumble down,  
 And in the dust be level made  
 With the poor crooked scythe and spade."

If any of you learn that lesson well, it is worth while reading these memoirs.

Passing on, however, to speak of the times of Louis XIV., France was the most intellectual, enlightened, and most civilised country in the world; and yet the most enthralled. Louis XIV. got a terrible undressing by contemporary memoirs, wherein he was shown to be one of the most religious of men, and one of the biggest rascals; eminently religious, and yet had broken as many of the Commandments as he could. I set French memoirs above all others. That nation wrote memoirs well, because, though some Frenchmen have risen to the supreme heights of intellect, and some have risen to the supreme heights of morality, yet France is not the supremely intellectual nation, nor the supremely moral nation;—it is the great average nation of man sensual. Therefore, its cooking is great; and the French need not be ashamed of it. Anybody who professes to despise cookery, simply shows that he has more of the savage about him than those who respect it. I find that we all carry a large piece of the savage about with us. An Englishman going into a strange place will look fierce, because he is not at his ease; but a Frenchman is at home everywhere. He sets down his feelings with a candour which most shame-faced English people do not like either to preach or to profess. Hence there is what is called *naïveté* in the French books.

The conversation in France is far less frivolous and far less

uniform than in any other nation. Go to an English party, and, if one is not an idiot before he goes, there is a chance that he will become one before he leaves. In France, the conversation never sinks to English uniformity; it is always more excellent, because the women there are more up to the level of the men. Dismiss from your minds the frivolous chatter of English people, that the French language is thin. Thin for poetry, I grant; but for conversation, for the nice ability to say what they mean, for its ability to state every tint of sentiment and every phase of thought, the language is unsurpassed.

French women are the most charming writers of memoirs; French men come next to them; and the English come a long way after. Madame Du Deffaud's memoirs, particularly with regard to the incident of her spending a whole day with Monsieur Henault, are well worth perusing; as also the memoir of Prince de Montbary, and his scheming to obtain a wife, as showing the condition of French society at the time. These were the things that led up to the Revolution and to the guillotine. But the life and character of Mdlle. Montpensier, from the memoir which she has left, is the best worth studying.

French memoirs, as I have said, were usually written in secret, and reading them is like listening at the confessional. In them there is sometimes an absence of true shame or false shame, and always a candour, pushed sometimes to brutality, which make them far more interesting than those in our nation. Letter-writing was, at times, carried on to a great extent. We hear of the mother of the Regent writing to our Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline, letters by the volume. Five hundred a week sometimes she scribbled. I cannot say much for her; but if I did, it would be more than she said of herself.

Alluding to satire and ridicule, these powers never make anything perish, except out of the consideration of fools. When satire is powerful, it is always well. No ridicule of a great man ever made him small. Things which are not ridiculous it is difficult to ridicule. I like the way in which Horace Walpole slapped everyone and everything. Sometimes he slapped good people, and they were none the worse. Sometimes he slapped bad people, and they fell to pieces.

Take up the volumes of Le Duc de St. Simon. No book

was ever so popular, or ever deserved to be:—highly finished, and touched with a niceness which no engraver could excel during the time of Louis XIV. He had every facility for writing the book. He was a well-informed man, a stickler for etiquette, a very honest man—the most honest man I find in those days about the Court. The book is in twenty-five volumes, and all that is told in them is entered in the method of a book-keeper. The book has had a terrible effect. The writer knew it would not be public in his own day, and probably wrote it better than he would otherwise have done. It was addressed to posterity. Had it been issued during his life-time, he would probably have been cast into the Bastille or somewhere else. The manuscript when brought to light was seized, and locked up by the Government. Some people were allowed to see it though. Voltaire had a peep into it. It is a history of the Bourbons, and came as an indictment against them. Those who still believe in that family had better read “*Le Duc de St. Simon.*” This terrible book did the Bourbons mischief, because it was the book of an honest man. It “took the shine” out of Louis Quatorze fearfully. Various passages in the work deal with the Court of Louis XIV. at considerable length. St. Simon describes the king as a wicked wretch, the slave of a woman, and understanding nothing but the art of pretending to be great. So hard-up was the Government, that taxes were put on marriages and baptisms. Poor people got married without proof, and baptized their own children, in consequence of the taxes. The taxes at length had to be abolished. St. Simon also tells us how Peter the Great went to Luther’s tomb, which shows that he was a man of right instinct, and not a barbarian, as has been represented.

The most extraordinary woman—the strangest woman in history—was Madame de Maintenon, born in 1635. Her father, Constant d’Aubigné, was deep in debt; and her grandfather, Agrippa d’Aubigné, was one of the chiefs of the French Court. From her marriage with Paul Scarron, the burlesque-writer, wit, and fool, Madame de Maintenon played her cards so well that at last the proudest of monarchs in Europe secretly married the widow of the buffoon to whom he had refused alms. She calculated everything, from religion down to her dress. When she found the king could not hold out much longer, she was off. She



climbed from low to high—the most prosperous woman in history ! Was she *happy*? Thank God, no. Her letters show that she was *ennuyé*, and tired with the old wretch her husband. She regretted the days when witty Scarron took her in, and told with a sigh what a punishment it was to amuse a man who was no more amusing. The old king, the puppet of a woman, sold his soul unconsciously and indecently.

In the memoirs of the Duc de St. Simon, the Duke relates how he would have nothing to do with some Government shares ; and the more he was pressed, the more he refused. No one, he said, since the time of Midas, had the power of turning into gold all he touched.

I have little time to dwell upon the memoirs of Cardinal de Retz. I attribute the French Revolution to the people being ground down by taxation. After Louis XIV.'s sham campaign, everyone was bankrupt. There was misery from one end of the country to the other, until at last Marie Antoinette, poor white dove, appeared upon the scene. The Revolution was caused by the beggary of everything, caused by extravagance and the corruption of the old nobility, and the humiliation of everything to Louis XIV., who said, *L'état c'est moi*. When a country was in such a state, like a house full of vermin, it was better to apply the torch.

## JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

BORN 1712, DIED 1778.

### I.

WITH the exception of great cities, which have gathered within their walls and enrolled in their registers many mighty men, there is no place in Europe so remarkable in biographical and historical reminiscences as those which cluster around the beautiful Lake of Geneva or Lake Lemman. Let us take one group. Let us think of that strongest, boldest, and clearest-headed of all Reformers, John Calvin—a man of thought and action, a determined politician, who had to do with England, and who did as much as any man of action could, and far more than most. A fugitive from France, he became dictator and ruler of Geneva. Take that other man, who was a revolution in himself—Voltaire, so little understood by Englishmen, who was such a bugbear that he served the pious clergy to play off at tea-fights, in order to frighten folks, till his clearness of intellect, his largeness of nature, his nobleness and humanity, the fierceness of his fighting against ignorance and priestcraft, were lost sight of, and he was looked upon as a mere scoffer, a sneerer, a shallow, violent, and vindictive man. That Voltaire had faults, I do not deny; but if he had been pushed forward earlier on into history, he would have been a great Reformer. As it was, Voltaire was a power in himself; he was the cynosure of the civilisation of Europe; he was the dictator of the republic of intellect, and at one time he ruled European intellect with a rod of iron.

Take, again, Rousseau. A more utterly different person from Voltaire it is impossible to imagine; but they are bracketed together by the confusion of human stupidity. It is true they lived at the same time; they saw one another, and hated and despised one another accordingly; but to link them together, as

if they had anything in common, is a great mistake. Rousseau was a worse man, and a better man, than Voltaire—utterly unlike him, living in a region into which Voltaire could not penetrate; for if Voltaire had had as much heart as wit, he would not have been Voltaire. His heart, preserved at Ferney, is aptly said to be the worst part of his furniture. The inscription on his tomb runs thus:—*Mon esprit est partout; mon cœur est ici.* In the latter he left behind the smallest part of him—a very little casket would hold that shrivelled business. If men had no emotions, no subtle imagination—if they were all brain, all wit, all *esprit*—Voltaire would have been the completest painter of human nature that ever lived; but, seeing that they have emotions too deep, passions too unreasonable, for logic to deal with, feelings that have no other reason for themselves than their existence, Voltaire had no colours on his palette to paint these things, and was one of the most partial and limited of painters. Where Voltaire failed, Rousseau was great—great in the region of emotion, of subtle and intense imagination, in superstition, in shadowy nonsense, in delicacy of sentiment, cultivated for its own dear sake, and turned round and round in every light. There Rousseau was great indeed.

Two other celebrities—Gibbon and Byron—both resorted to Lake Lemán. But we must keep to the one group.

Rousseau did the country on principle—he went into it as many other people do, and grumbled and blasphemed. He lived in the country until nobody went to see him, and then he became prodigiously disgusted. He was the strangest and quaintest mixture a man could present—hypocritical, superstitious, poor, miserable, prejudiced, sneaking, skulking, mean, despicable; how, then, came his name to be such a name of power that Byron's magnificent lines in "Childe Harold" were not too strange an estimate? He set Europe on fire, and thrones perished in the heat. Whence came it? He had vehement, passionate eloquence; he had the true eloquence—*he meant it.* His eloquence was hot from his heart; even his paradoxes he entirely meant at the time he wrote them. There is nothing that men like so much as to have what they mean well put for them. Hypochondriacal, superstitious, despicable as this man was, nevertheless he was a hater of oppression—a man of burning

words which he really meant. Having slipped the cable of his faith, he tried to steer by his reason, and was so candid, so fully showing his heart with all its meannesses and wickednesses, that the world forgave him half his meanness and almost all his wickedness, and was glad to find one who could set forth in measured bitterness the deep and bitter passions that at that time filled his heart.

Two books might be written on him. Judged from some passages in his writings, Rousseau ought to have been canonised ; judged from his life, he ought to have been kicked. His "Confessions" is one of the greatest, meanest, saddest books that genius ever put forth into the world ; true—painfully, shamefully true. A man who writes autobiography ought either to have out-lived shame, or never to have had anything to be ashamed of. Some men, in the autumn of life, do not feel shame in speaking of what they did at twenty, any more than they do of acknowledging that at five years old they were so many inches high. This book of Rousseau's is charming because of its candour and wonderful expression. However, if Rousseau had an affectation, it was to make himself out worse than he was. Sometimes religious people do this, because they consider it the correct thing ; it is simply the war paint they put on before dancing the dance of the faithful. They have been taught, of course, that the deeper the hole out of which they were dug, the more noble the ladder by which they have climbed. But self-vilification, like that of Rousseau, is more difficult to understand. He put himself in the worst light, which he need not have done, as the light he was in by nature was bad enough. He seemed to have a morbid pleasure in making out how bad he was. Perhaps it was penitence—who can tell ? For he did mend ; and sometimes as men get really penitent of their sins they exaggerate unconsciously. Perhaps, therefore, it was done in a penitent mood, and with a view of showing that he was ashamed of his former career. There is a modesty which makes a man unfaithful to himself, and in his anxiety to show that what he is is the result of grace, he heaps condemnation upon himself for what he was in a state of nature. It is a book of autobiography, charming, garrulous, gasping, honest, simple-hearted, plain, vain, arrogant, modest, jolly, and altogether well-written.

Most of you know something of the life of Rousseau. He was

born at Geneva, and, as you know, was neither Swiss, German, nor French. He wrote French, and spoke French; but was in no sense a typical Frenchman. His father was a watchmaker, and in the year 1712 this poor lad was born. He was doomed to early poverty and long dependence; his bread was given grudgingly; and this will probably account for his queer organisation, his melancholy, his hypochondria, his fearfulness, and his superstition. His mother died, and the little child had nobody to love him. Often, when a mother is gone, the only thing is gone that stood between the child and hardness. His father, the watchmaker, married a second wife. I have nothing to say against the second wife. She was not his "deceased wife's sister;" perhaps, if she had been, Rousseau might have done better. At all events, he was somehow in the way, and poor Jean Jacques must clear out and go anywhere he liked. Then came bad schooling, bad apprenticeship. He became an apprentice to an engraver—a coarse, rude, vulgar, brutal fellow, who scratched on glass, and had nothing of the artist about him. Terror was his only way of governing the lad placed under his charge, and the consequence was fear. He who bullies a child manufactures a coward; he who rules a child by terror does but grow a liar and a sneak. So it was in this case. Lying was the natural hole into which terror hunted him, and led to his being idle and to pilfering.

Then Rousseau ran away, and wandered over the mountains into Savoy—utterly destitute, ragged, friendless. What was to be done? He was a sharp, smart lad, but a regular little liar, and it struck him that he would go to the Roman Catholic Bishop, at Annecy, and tell him that he wanted to get converted to Catholicism. Now, everybody would not have thought of this. There is an irresistible charm about converting anyone. Who could hold out against the chance of converting a Jew? Who could resist the temptation to lead a man to abjure the errors of Protestantism, and be received into the bosom of the Mother Church, after long wandering on the barren mountains of heresy? The Bishop was not proof against this, and recommended Rousseau to a certain Madame de Warens, a Swiss lady, who was also a convert to Catholicism. She was a kindly soul, and helped him to go to Turin, where he was put into the College of the Catechumenary. Here he went through the process of abjuring Protestantism, and

becoming a Roman Catholic. But, when it came to the time to take orders, he refused. He take orders? Not he. Fancy Rousseau in orders! Well, if he would not take orders, he must be dismissed, he must leave the College—which was quite right, because the College was established for the express purpose of giving orders, and if people will go into an order factory, and will not conform to the rules of the place, and take orders, what can they expect?

So here was Rousseau once more on his own resources, beginning life again as a domestic servant. He may have been deft enough in hand, but he had an absence of self-control, which rendered him entirely unfit for service of that kind. He left his situation, re-crossed the Alps, and again thought of Madame de Warens, who had a country house near Chambéry. He went to her, and she took him in again, and he lived with her for ten years—ten years of foolish, profligate, mean, shame-faced, ungrateful licentiousness. It was a life full of stormy scenes, but he finally left in the year 1740. Of course he was greatly injured. No people are so injured as those to whom one has done great kindness, when one stops doing kindness. Then Rousseau became teacher, then musician, then was private secretary to the French Envoy at Venice.

In 1745 he returned to Paris. At Paris he fell in love with a waiting-maid, named Theresa Levasseur, in whom no one else saw anything, and in whom he perhaps saw nothing, except that she would take care of him, and coddle him in his illnesses and hypochondria. They lived and loved together, and didn't get married for a long while. But when Rousseau had screwed his morals up a peg or two, he painfully and pitifully made an offer to his beloved Theresa. He made her an offer of his hand, saying he was satisfied as to her fidelity, and that he wished he could assure her of as much on his part, that he had nothing to offer her but his hand, and that, if she thought it worth accepting, she was welcome to it. She had had it a long time already; but she thought it worth accepting, and accepted it. She was a clown of a woman; but perhaps Rousseau took to her under the supposition that she might comfort him in his melancholy and moroseness.

In Paris, he became acquainted with the celebrated Madame D'Épinay, one of those women who sin and sup, and whose

preferences are always for the wrong man—the gentleman without the ring; one of those brilliant women who have so much influence in Paris, and who generally have a husband and a lover. It is necessary that their choice should fall on the wrong man, in order to be the right man; the degree of their fidelity is measured by the prohibition. Madame D'Epinaÿ took Rousseau into the circles in which she moved—circles of wickedness and wit, splendid for genius, wonderful for polish, shameful for corruption. She admired him, but did not fall in love with him; she found him in hats and coats, and he took them. Fancy being dependent on a woman for hats and coats! You would hardly expect such a thing from your own wife. With ordinary men, there is a sense of degradation in letting one's wife do that. (Of course, I don't mean out of an annual allowance invested in the husband's name at starting.) But it didn't matter to Rousseau. At last Madame D'Epinaÿ suffered herself to be deluded by his ravings about the country, and fitted up a hermitage for him,—a cottage, with birds, plants, and flowers to his heart's content. He went to his hermitage, and was very miserable. He was disgusted because nobody came to see him from Paris. He had thought what a sensation there would be when it was announced that he had gone down to the country and turned hermit, and had birds and flowers about him. Poor, simple man! He didn't know the world as they in the present day do. He didn't live the life of a big town, or he would soon have found that he was mistaken when he thought he should be missed. The lawyer's maxim was true in this instance: "*De non apparentibus, et non existentibus eadem est ratio.*"\* Rousseau thought, as many other people think, that the world would continuously inquire for him. One Frenchman heard of his retirement, and took snuff; another shrugged his shoulders, and a lady said that a great bear was gone. Voltaire heard of it, and sneered. The fact was, Rousseau had left the world in disgust, and was disgusted that the world believed he was in earnest. He went away for retirement, and was angry when he was retired; he pretended to forget the world, and was savage when he found the world had forgotten him.

He was a man who was always borrowing, and he even took to

\* "The reasoning is the same as to things which do not appear, and those which do not exist."—Coke.

begging. But he never paid again. Nobody could do him the injustice to say he did. One can never expect all the virtues under one hat, nor all the graces combined in one person. One man borrows, and another man pays. They don't let the right hand know what the left has been doing. Rousseau sent his children into the poor-house, he betrayed his friends, he pestered all around him with his vanity, and troubled everybody with his suspicious temper. He adopted a most singular form of egotistical vanity—an idea that there was a wonderful man at the head of a powerful organisation, whose whole object was to render life miserable to Jean Jacques Rousseau. He declared that the conquest of Corsica was planned by M. de Choiseul solely to prevent the Corsicans from sending for him (Rousseau) to make laws for them. Some people supposed that the partitioning of Poland was attributable to the grasping hand of a neighbouring despotism; but, according to Rousseau, it was nothing of the kind. He held that it was brought about by two or three conspirators, who thought that there was danger that Jean Jacques Rousseau would be called in to rearrange the Constitution, and settle the laws of the country. In fact, his suspicion went so far that Archbishops, and Popes, and Kings were all combined in one conspiracy against him.

At this time the Academy of Dijon proposed as a thesis the question "Whether the progress of the sciences and the arts has been favourable or unfavourable to the morals of mankind?" This sounds very debating-clubbish, but you must recollect that this was before these institutions were in existence. This tickled Rousseau's fancy. He took the negative, and won the prize. His production was full of paradox and exaggeration. The error of this work was a very common one—being designed to show that the extreme opposite of wrong must be right; and the essay is one of the most eloquent pieces of wrong-headedness to be found in the world. He afterwards wrote an opera which was played before Louis XV., at Fontainebleau. Rousseau was in a box, and was told that the King wished to see him, and upon that he ran away, and never stopped till he got to Paris. He afterwards took to copying music, and his next whim was to write his "*Lettre sur la Musique Française*," which was very offensive to French musicians, who especially could not bear to



be told that they were not the most illustrious in the world. He also wrote a discourse on "The Origin of Inequality amongst Men." This was one of those strange goings down to the depths, in which he delighted. He might as well have written a discourse on the origin of equality amongst men, which would have been quite as curious and not less difficult, inasmuch as it has been said that "one man is as good as another," and some have added as a corollary, "a great deal better."

Then came "La Nouvelle Heloïse," full of delicacy, of sentimentalism, and rapturous rant. Perhaps his love, or fancied love, for Madame D'Houdetôt was only a preparation for the writing of this book. Is there not a sarcasm in history, a satire in fact? No man has laid on the tints of love with such discrimination as Rousseau—*Julie* is gushing, in his New Heloïse; but what did this great professor do, this master of love? He took up with a servant girl, and bye and bye he married her! The "*Emilius*" is one of the world-shaking books, and in it Rousseau pleads for the poor child—that it should not be driven by blows, frightened by threats, nor imposed on by bogeys—with a passionate eloquence that, in my eyes, covers a multitude of sins. Rousseau has done immense service to society by teaching the higher orders how to nurse their own children, by not allowing them to be wrapped in swaddling clothes like mummies and frightening them with bogeys, and by appealing to their feelings and rational faculties rather than subjecting them to blows, when they begin to get older, to stop out late at night, and to talk about latch-keys and pocket money.

Rousseau's speculations gave offence to Roman Catholics and Protestants equally. His writings brought upon him numerous persecutions, and he had to fly from place to place. Being condemned by the Archbishops, and proscribed by the States General of Holland and the Council of Geneva, having had his books burned by the hand of the public executioner, he subsequently came to the old refuge for all the persecuted. We are not speaking of the present day, when there are imitations of old England in her bigger daughters Australia and America. But at that time there was but one city of refuge—one land for the persecuted of all colours and creeds, one refuge for the foot of royal rascals, seedy republicans, and runaway ruffians. They

came, and they were welcomed. The more seedy, needy, shabby, and scrubby the adventurer, the better he was liked. They simply asked him, "Is anybody after you? Are you up to anything very bad?" If the reply was, "We are only sinning politically," the answer was "Pass on." Rousseau, then, came to England, brought by David Hume. After a few days of life in London, Hume made an arrangement for him to reside in a house belonging to a Mr Davenport, at Wootton, near Ashbourne, in the Peak of Derbyshire. But he soon became dissatisfied with his position, very shortly quarrelling, as a matter of course, with his host, his residence, himself, and the world. At this point of his career I must leave him for the present. Next week I will resume the subject, and review the "Contrat Social."

## II.

On the last occasion, we left Rousseau at a house in Wootton, Derbyshire, where, through the kindness of Mr Davenport, he was residing. As may very naturally be expected, he had not been very long there when he quarrelled with his host, and with David Hume, and he returned to France. One of the grounds, or the supposed grounds, of the quarrel was a letter, said to have been written by Frederick of Prussia, reflecting severely on Rousseau's moral infirmities. Rousseau accused Hume of writing the letter. Hume neither wrote nor planned the letter, which was by that mean, deceitful, mischievous Horace Walpole. You know Walpole—a man with about as small a heart as was ever put into any breast; a collector of tea-pots, stuffed birds, brickbats, and rubbish of every kind; a man given to mischief;—and it was in one of his fits of mischief that he wrote the letter. Hume denied the authorship, as well he might, and Rousseau went on with the quarrel, left England for France, and acknowledged that whilst here he had had some touches of insanity. Many times he drew the perilous line so hard to draw, so constant in some men's history, that separates sanity from insanity.

After getting back to France, he wandered about, nowhere long. The place where he was always wrong, the place where he was not was the New Jerusalem. His troubles were frequent,

his sorrows numerous, and at length he settled in the Rue Plâtrière, afterwards altered to the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau. I like not the vulgarity of the English, who name their streets after some Eliza or Mary Ann—some local booby or contemptible nobody. The Parisians show more sense; they make their streets what they ought to be—a history, a biography, epitaphs, eulogy, something to create enthusiasm. But why English streets are named as they are, who knows? What illustrious George or considerable Frederick bestowed his name upon streets no one can tell. In the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, Rousseau was left alone pretty well; but he was cautioned that there was a prosecution pending against him, and he was recommended to be quiet. This had not the desired effect, because there are some men who, if you want them to pursue a certain course, you have to recommend the opposite one. Rousseau's sensitive, wayward, irritable temper was roused by this recommendation; in his misanthropy he imagined it confirmed his favourite thought that the whole world was in conspiracy against him, and he believed the French Ministers were imposing restrictions on his writings.

Now that inevitable fate, age, was coming on, which brought increasing infirmities, and he was engaged in copying music. That is a fearful task at any time, to anybody, for any remuneration—one of the most dreary businesses. I thank God I never engaged in it, and I hope I never shall. It became terribly irksome, and all the poor fellow got was not quite sixty pounds a year. His wife was ill: poor, homely, faithful body, she stuck to him; and he was irritable, broken down, infirm, a copier of music at sixty pounds a year! What wonder that the shafts of death began to close upon him? Still he had that fascination, that strange attractiveness that some men always have under all circumstances. He had but to need it, to find a benefactor. St. Marc de Girardin offered him a retreat in a little detached cottage, on his estate at Ermenouville, near Chantilly. Rousseau went there in May, 1778. For once in his life, he seemed to be contented; for a little time, this restless soul was quiet. He went out botanising; for this Rousseau was no mean botaniser; he loved God's works with a passion; he saw their beauty, and he delighted in it.

But that short, happy hour was soon over. On the 1st of July

he went out, and returned tired, ill. Next morning, after breakfast, he went up to his bedroom to do what is proper for society—to make himself smart: he was going to pay his respects to Madame de Girardin, so he went to put his best on. He was taken ill. His wife sent for Madame de Girardin. Rousseau thanked her for coming, and then begged her to leave him. The sands were running out; he sent for his wife to his room. “Forgive me,” he said, “any pains I have caused you: I die in peace with the world, and I trust in the mercy of God. Open the window, open the window, that I may see the lovely verdure of the fields once more. How pure, how beautiful the sky is! there is not a cloud in it; I hope the Almighty will receive me there.” So, with a beautiful piety, he fell upon his face and died. They buried him on an island in the great park shaded by poplars.

Those whose heads have been stuffed with theological nonsense—those who have been taught that a man’s salvation depends on the creed he professes—may not see the beauty of this. Many of the greatest rogues have made the best angels; some of the best men the world has ever had have gone out in drift and doubt. If there is one superstition more than another which I hold in contempt, it is that cant that the Christian religion can be proved to be true because Rousseau died *so*, or Voltaire *so*. Rousseau, it is clear, according to some, was atheist. Yet he believed in God, in the soul, and in its immortality. “Open the window, let me see the grass; how beautiful the sky!” What more could he do? You may say it is a pity he died so nicely. It is time to have done with that nonsense. It is not how a man dies, but how he lives. He is but a poor understander of the human heart and of the attributes of God who thinks that the last five minutes of a man’s existence can counteract the bearings and tendencies of his years of life. For ever and for ever, spite of their protests, there are dear people in the country who believe that Rousseau and Voltaire were bosom friends. What had these two men in common, except certain principles, certain tendencies, and certain results? They did not love each other; how could they? Contrast the characters of Rousseau and Voltaire, and the manner in which the last days of the two men were spent. The death-bed of Voltaire has been strangely misrepresented, in tracts and at tea-fights. After suffering acutely, he took the hand of his valet

in his, pressed it, and said, "Adieu ; I am dying." These were his last words. The clergy certainly went to see him, and he said, "Just let me die in peace." There are no two stranger stories than those of the two death-beds. My soul is with Rousseau sitting with the woman he loved, looking at the green grass and at the blue sky, trusting to God's mercy ; rather than with the wonderful old gentleman in velvet coat, ermine bound and crowned. Rousseau was a most devoted theist. He never sneered at religion and morality. He found many things in Christianity hard to believe ; but all that Natural Religion could teach, this man taught, and wrestled and contended for. Rousseau's writings and his opinion of Christ may be referred to as evidence of the truth of this, and his letter to Voltaire as a proof of his real piety.

Rousseau offended all parties—Roman Catholics, Protestants, philosophers, and unbelievers. He laughed at superstition, and he laughed at the credulities of the incredulous. He was sneered at and ridiculed in return by both sides. Said he, "I have spent my life amongst infidels without being seduced by them. I esteemed and loved several of them personally, and yet their doctrines were insufferable to me. I told them repeatedly that I could not believe them. I leave to my friends the task of constructing the world by chance. I find in the very architects of this new-fangled world, in spite of themselves and their arguments, a fresh proof of a God the Creator of all."

To some of us, the character of a man is more curious than his history. What was the power of this man—shuffling, shambling, coat-taking from women, mean creature? He had disciples as many as Voltaire, and of a more noble stamp. Rousseau's disciples worked in and for the Revolution, and became martyrs for it ; Voltaire's played round it ; got burned by it, because they were clumsy, bungling beggars ; they wanted to regulate the oven, and got too near the flame, and were killed without being martyrs. What were the secrets of Rousseau's power? Well, with all his faults, he had a passion for humanity, a sympathy with the interests of mankind. He loved men dearly ; or, rather, he loved Man dearly. Then he had what people always want—a peculiarity. He gave people a logical basis for their passions, their sentiments, their wishes, their dreams, and their hysterics. Men saw great

inequalities around them, and somehow they thought it was not right. There is an old saying,

“When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?”

There cropped up this terrible question—Who was then the gentleman? Forward comes a writer who sets it down logically, and shows that equality is correct. Oh, the delight of having your hysterics reduced to mathematics! It is pleasant for a man to come down your street and show that people are not going to be burnt in everlasting fire. He shows it, too, from texts; he argues it, and sets it down logically. Just so Rousseau came, when the spirit of inquiry was rifest and most lively in France. He found the government in the hands of a few, with hardly a grain of capacity amongst them. Rascals and rogues? No. Nobles? No, *they* were on the side of liberty, at first. There were some of the clergy; but they were as piebald, squattered a lot as ever drew the coach ecclesiastical. Corruption was universal; reform was necessary and imperative, and reform came. At such a time, there comes a man with a passionate sympathy for human misery, and with a strange show of logic. He takes hold of the passions, hysterics, dreams, thoughts, and wishes, places them upon a basis, reasons them out, argues them, finds a Bible for radicalism—a law and divine sanction based in the Eternal world. He writes his *Contrat Social*. At the time it was a book of charms. It set the basis of liberty in truth. We are all glad to find that something we think, is thought by someone else. We are stronger in consequence. It is complimentary, too, to ourselves. If I say to you, “Oh, I find that what you were saying to me the other day is Plato’s opinion, too;” upstairs, quietly, we book it to ourselves, “Plato and I, you know!”

Rousseau always argued so quietly; he never let off his fireworks until he had completed his demonstrations. He had, however, a power of eloquence, of convincingness; and he took the thoughtful by his logic, and the passionate by his eloquence. If any of you would like to have five wives, how nice it would be for a Mormon Elder to walk down your way, and prove that polygamy was right! Well, here came a man who rooted their wishes in seeming demonstration. He put men’s sentiments in a logical

form, and he put women's hysterics on a Euclidean basis. His premisses were often bad ; his arguments were always good.

Some men are better than their writing, and some are worse. To judge Rousseau by his writings, how little there is to find fault with, excepting a few passages, which it would have been well if he had blushed until he had burnt them. The moral of his works, however, was higher than his life. How came he to write so gloriously? A man is at his best when he sits down to write ; the influences of the wicked world are gone ; pen in hand he is free. Sterne wrote very beautifully to Maria, but he did not talk so beautifully to his wife. Just in the middle of a beautiful paragraph, just as he is catching a sentence perhaps that will immortalise him, in comes Mrs Sterne, as women will do at the most unseasonable times. She has come to tell him that, owing to a little difficulty, dinner will have to be put off until four o'clock. He had forgotten all about dinner. He descends to the kitchen, and to his natural kitchen life. A man has two characters, one of which belongs to his imagination, the other to his experience. So I can understand why Sterne was of the character of his name to his wife, and not to Maria. He had never seen Maria ; he had seen his wife : he had never had to pay Maria's bills, he had Mrs Sterne's. So, Rousseau I believe to have been very honest ; and that when he worshipped virtue, he meant it. I will quote Byron's description, and he was a man who could appreciate Rousseau's deep, passionate nature :

“ Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,  
The apostle of afflictions, he who threw  
Enchantment over passion, and from woe  
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew  
The breath which made him wretched : yet he knew  
How to make madness beautiful, and cast  
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue  
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they passed  
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears, feelingly and fast.

His love was passion's essence :--as a tree  
On fire by lightning, with ethereal flame  
Kindled he was, and blasted : for to be  
Thus, and enamour'd, were in him the same,  
But his was not the love of living dame

Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,  
 But of ideal beauty, which became  
 In him existence, and o'erflowing teems  
 Along his burning page, distempered though it seems.

His life was one long war with self-sought foes  
 Or friends by him self-banished : for his mind  
 Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose,  
 For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,  
 'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.  
 But he was frenzied,—*wherefore*, who may know ?  
 Since cause might be which skill could never find :  
 But he was frenzied by disease or woe  
 To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

For then he was inspired, and from him came,  
 As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,  
 Those oracles which set the world in flame,  
 Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more :  
 Did he not thus for France ? which lay before  
 Bow'd to the inborn tyranny of years,  
 Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,  
 Till by the voice of him and his compeers,  
 Roused up to too much wrath, which follows o'ergrown fears.'

—*Childe Harold.*



## VOLTAIRE.

BORN 1694, DIED 1778.

### I.

WITHOUT any doubt, and by the allowance of all parties, Voltaire was the most notable man of the age to which he belonged. Whether we gather the titles given him by his friends, or the epithets bestowed on him by his enemies, this will appear; no matter how great the idolatries of the former, or the hatred of the latter, the praise of the one and the abuse of the other tends to the same end—to show that he was a man of notoriety. In regard to the great men of the world, you may divide the world into four classes—those who make an idol of the man, those who make a demon of him, a very small portion who deal justly by him, and a very large number that neither care for nor know him. Again, there have been men whose idolators numbered thousands while they remained here, but left them when they were dead; and men who, being comparatively disregarded during their life-time, gained an ever-widening circle of admirers after death. Milton and Shakespeare were of the latter; Voltaire of the former.

During his lifetime, Voltaire's disciples were very numerous; but I rather think and hope they are rapidly diminishing. At the present time, there are those who hate Voltaire heartily, and for a very good reason, and there are also those who hate him because it is fashionable, and because they are told to do so. Our occupation this evening is to see what he was in his own time, and what his admirers, disciples, subjects, detractors, and calumniators thought of him. The best, because the most expressive title, was perhaps that given him by his contemporary, Grimm. He called him "the Patriarch of the Holy Philosophic Church," and that was the position he occupied during his lifetime. The leading principle of his actions was an ineffable self-esteem. He said,

“I am perfectly tired of hearing about twelve men establishing the Christian Religion, and I am determined to show the world that one man can overthrow it.” A great undertaking this; we have seen how he fulfilled it.

But although he has failed, he is not a man to be snuffed out by the dull sneers of a cheap tract, nor by being called an “infidel” at a little tea-meeting, or dubbed “atheist” by a poor preacher. He was of the eighteenth century the chiefest figure. Therefore, we in this century are not to be led away by Warburton when he calls Voltaire a “scoundrel” and a “liar,” nor by Dr Clarke when he calls him a “driveller”; no, nor by the host who call him a “blasphemer,” a “demon,” and all that is bad. It is our duty to look at the man impartially—to see what there is excellent in him, and to speak strongly of what is detestable and evil in him. Were I deputed to crown him, I would not seek the choicest and freshest flowers wherewith to make the wreath, but I would search in an old French theatre for an ancient chaplet, covered with dust, bedizened with a grease spot or two, and rich in shabby tinsel, and if I found it I would be guilty of supposing that I had found the fittest crown to bedeck Voltaire’s old mocking head.

Voltaire was one of the very few men in whom thought, and thought only, produced the same results as wonderful action has done in others. He was a writing and a thinking man—the pen was his solitary means of aggrandisement, literature his only vocation, and yet this man exercised over Europe an influence larger and deeper than any other man of his age. One evidence of his greatness is the number of portraits that were taken of him; another the number of books written about him and the titles given him. He was not only “the Patriarch of the Holy Philosophic Church,” but “the Apostle of Reason”—as if he had invented reason, discovered sense, and dug up logic—“the father of sound philosophy,” “the universal genius,” and many other titles equally absurd and undeserved. But he was a great man. Only think! he was in either company or correspondence with kings and queens—Queen Caroline of England, Catherine of Russia, Frederick the Great of Prussia, Louis XIV. and Louis XV. of France. How could he be intimate with such people if he were not a great man? To suppose the contrary would be

ridiculous—kings and queens are such great people. But besides this, he was acquainted with those who were greater than them all—the king's mistresses, who were a sort of institution of the country in which he lived—aye, and the most costly and mischievous too. He was, too, a sovereign in himself. He reigned over the French Parnassus, and accepted the title of Emperor without a blush; nay, more, he said it was a title which he yielded to no man on earth. He was also master of that noisy business, public opinion—that portion of it, at least, which is spoken from the house-tops—not that silent, powerful under-current that carries all before it. He was, too, a man of most admirable common sense. He knew what ten per cent. was, and he liked it. He had a downright contempt for poverty, and he determined not to be poor. He said himself, "I had seen so many literary men poor and despised that I determined not to augment their numbers." He was a fine writer—one of the best prose writers, in my opinion, in the French language; but then, as one of his modern critics has most justly said, there is not one original, one great thought in the whole of his works.

Before setting out with a biography of Voltaire, it is necessary, if there is a desire to understand him properly, to remember that in his day it was the fashion not to believe, and that in our day it is the fashion to pretend to believe: only by bearing this constantly in mind can we fully understand the man. I shall only dwell on the most characteristic portions of Voltaire's life and times. He was born in 1694, thirty-six years after the accession of Cromwell, and twenty-six after the blessed restoration of Charles II., and lived right away down to the fifteenth year of the reign of that admirable monarch George III. Having, strangely enough, been educated by the Jesuits, he came to Paris when society was brilliant and bad—it lacked morals and goodness, and could therefore afford to be mighty brilliant. Having received a legacy from Ninon de l'Enclos for his literary talents, and made a vain attempt to study the law, which was far too dull and antiquated for him, he resolved to devote his life to literature. In this pursuit he obtained a character for having a bitter tongue, a sharp wit, and a satirical spirit, in virtue of which some satirical verses on Louis XIV., who had just died, were doubtless wrongly attributed to him, and he was incarcerated in the Bastille. Here he finished a

half-completed tragedy called *Œdipus*, and commenced his *Henriade*, which latter was to outshine all the epics of Greece, Rome, and England, but signally failed in doing so. He was released by the Duke Regent, Orleans, and then, like many of our own countrymen in our own time, getting up in the world, he changed plain Smith for Smyth, or rather altered his name from plain François Marie Arouet to François Marie Arouet de Voltaire.

And now he commenced the great work of his life, which great work is best expressed in his own way. "The priests," he said, "are only what the people think them, and it is the credulity of mankind that is their only science." This was the key-note to all he did. He seemed to say, "this is the estate of the priests; I have found it out, and if I can only despoil them of it I can starve them out;" and this was the whole object of his life.

Voltaire became acquainted with Rousseau, and for a while they were bosom friends. Voltaire, however, practised a satire upon his friend, and they became such bitter enemies that for good hearty abuse of each other they were next only to Calvin and his enemies. Of the two men—Voltaire and Rousseau—it is fashionable to prefer Rousseau; but, inasmuch as the latter, while he abounds in sentiment and passion, sent his children to a foundling hospital, I prefer the former, who, with his clear sense, his bright eye, his sparkling wit, his love of great actions, his kindly benevolence, and his general greatness of heart, was worth fifty Rousseaus. The one was a sentimental, jelly-quaking, mean-minded pretender; the other a clear-headed kindly-hearted man. Passing over the clandestine manner in which Voltaire's works got into print, and the writer's imprisonments in France, we find him visiting England. I will read you some extracts from his letters written thence.

[Of the Quakers, Voltaire says he sees the sect dying out every day in London. "In every country the dominant religion, when it abstains from persecution, swallows up all the others in the end."

His next letter, on the Anglican Church, begins by saying, "England is the country of sects; in my Father's house there are many mansions. An Englishman goes to heaven like a free man, by the road that pleases him." He then gives a satirical sketch of the clergy, such as Fielding might have written without being accused of particular irreverence:—

“The Anglican clergy have retained many Catholic ceremonies, and above all that of receiving tithes, with scrupulous exactness. They have also the pious ambition which makes them desire to be masters; for what vicar does not want to be pope in his own village?” “With respect to morals, the English clergy is better regulated than that of France.” This he ascribes to our Universities, and to the fact that they are not called to the dignities of the church till very late, and at an age when men have no other passions than avarice. “Besides, the priests are nearly all married, and the awkward manners contracted at the University, and the little they enjoy of female society there, are the causes why a bishop is ordinarily obliged to be content with his own wife. The priests go sometimes to the tavern because custom allows it; and if they get tipsy, it is with gravity and without scandal.”

Presbyterianism fares no better:—“It is nothing but pure Calvinism, such as had been established in France, and now exists at Geneva. As the clergy of this sect have only very middling salaries from their Church, and consequently cannot live like Bishops, they have taken the natural course of exclaiming against honours to which they cannot attain. Figure to yourself the proud Diogenes, who trampled on the pride of Plato—the Scotch Presbyterians do not ill resemble that haughty and beggarly reasoner. They treated their king Charles II. with much less respect than Diogenes showed for Alexander; for when they took up arms for him against Cromwell, who had betrayed them, they made that unfortunate king undergo four sermons a day. . . . .

“While the Episcopal and Presbyterian sects are the two dominant ones in Great Britain, all the others are welcome, and live well enough together; while most of their preachers hate each other reciprocally with nearly as much cordiality as that with which a Jansenist damns a Jesuit.”

In the same vein he treats other persuasions and then passes to the Government. He compares the Senates of England and of Rome, and finds no resemblance in them except, “That in London some Members of Parliament are suspected, no doubt wrongfully, of selling their votes on occasion, as was done in Rome.”

“The fruit of civil wars in Rome has been slavery—in England, liberty. The English have shed a great deal of blood, no doubt,

in their struggles for liberty ; but others have shed as much, with the result only of cementing their bonds."

After describing the condition of the country in the time of King John—

"Whilst the barons, the bishops, the popes, thus tore to pieces the land where each wished to rule, the people, the most useful and even the most virtuous part of a community of men, composed of those who study laws and sciences, of merchants, artizans, lastly of labourers, who exercise the first and most despised of callings—the people, I say, were regarded by them as animals below man. It was far from advisable that these should have part in the government—they were villeins ; their labour, their blood, belonged to their masters, who called themselves nobles. The great majority in Europe was what it still is in many countries—serfs of a lord, a species of cattle bought and sold with the land. Ages were necessary to do justice to humanity—to perceive that it was horrible that the great number should sow and the small number reap ; and is it not happy for the French that the authority of these minor brigands has been extinguished in France by the legitimate power of the kings, as it has been in England by that of king and people?"

This last sentence is one of his ironical touches. The state of the French peasantry was shocking, as nobody knew better than Voltaire.

"Everything proves," he says, "that the English are bolder and more philosophic than we. A good deal of time must elapse before a certain degree of reason and of intellectual courage can cross the Straits of Dover."

The remaining letters treat chiefly of our philosophers—Bacon, Locke, Newton and his discoveries—of our Tragedy and Comedy ; of our poets and men of letters ; the Royal Society and the Academies.]\*

I commend him for his honesty in drawing comparisons between England and France during that time, but must lash him severely for the mean lying spirit to which he gave way when he found it necessary to get himself out of an ugly scrape. Following him back to France, a forcible picture might be drawn of his *liaison*

\* The paragraphs within brackets are abridged from Colonel Hamlin's volume on Voltaire, in the Series of Foreign Classics for English Readers.

with the Marchioness du Châtelet. In his declining years, we find him at his house at Ferney. Leaving his strange intercourse with Frederick the Great, and his influence on his times, for the next lecture, I will conclude by describing him as a man of consummate wit, but little genius; bitter in satire, and rich in humour; generous to a fault, and abounding with clear common-sense—a man with many good qualities which were spoiled very much by his lying and mockery; ludicrously great in his idea of pulling down Christianity, and singularly clumsy in the choice of his tools—a man whose whole life was spent in the attempt to level the priests; who, when his thunderbolts failed, tried cannon balls; when these failed, tried his pea-shooter (which was the solace of his later years), and when his bag of peas was exhausted, pelted them with an egg he had addled himself;—a strange, scoffing, sneering, satirising, good-tempered, good-natured, witty, lively, common-sense man; the most prominent man of his age, and the man who benefited it least.

## II.

The point specially reserved on the last occasion was the most extraordinary intercourse between that most extraordinary of animals, Frederick, afterwards the Great, and that most singular of Frenchmen, Monsieur de Voltaire. As nothing could, in point of humour, naïveté, and wit combined, come near Voltaire's own account of it, I shall confine myself chiefly to that. Frederick's father, then, was a nasty, dirty, imperious, arbitrary old bear, who truly revered but one thing in this world, and that was a grenadier six feet one in height. After having plotted the death of his son, and done other things equally disreputable, he, at last, for the good of this world, departed this life and went into the next; and the Crown Prince came to the throne. This young man had a passion for writing verses and dictating matters of politics and history, and very naturally regarding Monsieur de Voltaire as a judge and critic in such matters, cultivated his acquaintance. Voltaire, ever ready for a bit of fun, went, at Frederick's invitation, to Berlin, was provided with apartments in the palace, was decorated with a cross of merit, was allowed a pension of 20,000

livres a year, and earned it, for he had to correct his august master's verses, which were bad as bad could be. But he was not to be done out of his fun ; he began as soon as he got there. Mark the scoffing of the man :—" Frederick treated me," he said, " as if I were divine, and I called him a Solomon—epithets cost us nothing."

Then Voltaire went to Potsdam, as a full-blown diplomatist. Oh, there is no episode in history so whimsical as that. Here was the first literary man of the age, and the most practical man of the age—the one a man of downright hard-hitting in deeds, the other great in writing and wit—the man of thought talking about treaties and stipulations, and sealing-wax, and red tape ; the man of action far up in the clouds, a man of air, talking about poetry. Both looked grave when they met for business, and each was all the time laughing in his sleeve. Both were friends till they got upstairs, and then Frederick in one room thought, " What an ass that fellow is to think he is a diplomatist !" and Voltaire in another room was chuckling and saying, " What an ineffable booby that fellow is to think he can write verses !" Their friendship was not lasting ; it grew in a night, and it died in a day—it was the loveliest of mushrooms that ever sprung up and withered again. Voltaire heard that Frederick had compared him to an orange, and had remarked that after he had sucked the juice he should fling the rind away. " Then I must take care of the rind," said Voltaire, and, sending all his riches out of Frederick's dominions, soon followed them.

Voltaire then went to Colmar, thence to Geneva, and last of all to Ferney. His life had hitherto been that of a literary wanderer, a vagabond ; but he was now getting sick of the Bastille, of three years of exile in England, of Luneville, Berlin, Potsdam, Brussels, and the Hague. He had wandered over Europe, hunted and persecuted, daringly defying the powers that be, but meanly subservient to them. His time had been spent in literary activity, in rancour, in quarrelling, in painting follies, in opposing kings, in crushing priests, and in fighting everybody, except those who were downtrodden and oppressed. For them he had a true soul and a real heart ; a strong hand, a bitter pen, gall in his ink, and a withering satire. His enemies were as thick as gnats, and he had made some few friends. No wonder then that, fatigued at last, he should seek the quiet of rural life at Ferney.

It will be well now, to see what good we can find in the man.



First, there was the poor niece of Corneille, who languished in a condition unworthy of her uncle's name. He sheltered and protected her—was a father to her. He not only gave her an education, but a Christian education. What! Voltaire give Corneille's niece a Christian education? He was not likely to give her any other. Is it not true that many a man who rejects a faith himself fears to teach a child to reject it until it can reason for itself? None but a shallow understander of the heart will feel surprised that Voltaire should give Corneille's niece a Christian education. He doubtless gave her that lest there should be, lest there might be, a something beyond this state, and because he was too generous in heart to let her run the risk he was running.

Then in 1761 there was that last great bloody performance of vile superstition at Toulouse. Calas broken on the wheel, and burned because his son hung himself. Calas was a Protestant; his son was so too, but was induced to become a Catholic by a servant smitten with a zeal to get him into Peter's boat, lest he should sink to the bottom. The priests moved the spring of the frightful deed; the springs themselves were superstition. Voltaire heard of the affair at Ferney, and it brought him once more into action. There was everything he liked in it—superstition to crush, priests to fight, a victim to avenge—and he entered into it heart and soul. With all the bitterness, all the satire, all the invective, all the argument, all the prayer, all the law, all the logic, and all the ridicule of which he was master, did he besiege the Court, and in the end he obtained a revocation of the sentence, and unwrit the bloody history. An indemnity was given to the family, and they left the dirty land of fanaticism, and went to Geneva. As to the other parties, Voltaire hit them so hard, and knocked them so far down, that they have never recovered from the blow.

With all his faults, Voltaire did ever fight for the oppressed, and he has the credit of having, with his own hand, struck the last blow at vile tragical superstition in Europe. Having done so, he again retired until dragged up to Paris at the age of eighty to die there—to await the chariot and horses of fire which were to carry him to the apotheosis of sneering and the heaven of scurrility and lying. His eyes were in pits three inches deep, and his skin looked like parchment stretched over a drum; every one of his features was where it shouldn't be, and nothing was

where it should be ; he was dressed in a red coat lined with ermine, and other apparel as showy, quite ; he rode in a coach a trifle more gaudy than the Lord Mayor's, and in this guise he appeared in Paris. The people besieged him everywhere with cries of "*Vive Voltaire,*" and were enthusiastic, as Frenchmen only can be, in his praise—they remembered Calas. He went in state to the theatre, where he was crowned with a wreath by Madame Vestris, where his bust was exhibited on the stage, and reverently kissed, and where he was completely idolised by an audience comprising all the nobility of Paris. When he got home he wept ; the excitement was too much for a man with the weight of eighty-four years on his back ; he was taken ill on the 30th of March 1778, and on the same day in the following May he expired in the most perfect tranquillity, after having for some days endured the greatest pain.

Two days before his death two priests were brought into his room, and one exhorted him to pray. "Let me die in peace," were his words as he pushed him away. The other priest, who was a man of sense, saw it was of no use to talk to a man in Voltaire's state, quietly said so, and went his way. There was a squabble about his burial, but the clergy settled it amongst themselves, and he was buried somehow, somewhere.

On the whole, Voltaire was a wonderful man. He lived to a wonderful age—long enough in fact to see himself crowned with those laurels which other men receive not until after they are dead—long enough, so to speak, to hear the coroner's verdict on him. He was a man who had his greatnesses, but was not great ; who had his littlenesses, but was not little ; a sort of spotted man—he wasn't of a piece—he could duck, he could dive, he could lie, he could flatter, he could sneer, he could do almost everything, and yet every now and then there came out of him a bit of real human nature, and anon a bit of something else that creates downright contempt for him. He was a man whose weakness was the utter want of any profound emotion of any kind. If mankind had had no emotions that were profound, and no imagination that was deep—had the world been composed of Voltaires, he had been the greatest painter of mankind that ever existed. Cut a man in half, and take away the best moiety, the other half would be Voltaire. He knew nothing of the largeness of love, he did not understand the soul, nor anything of its glory, beauty, and

profundity. He was a vivacious, impatient, restless, fun-loving, ridiculing being—capital company for a street walk ; but in the stillness of the human heart, or in the day of sorrow, his light ringing laugh fell like the scream of a parrot on the ear of a sick man. Still, he was no Mephistopheles. It was not so much badness as shallowness that was his ruling principle. All the most loveable things in Nature he did not love ; he was of that school of shallow people whose creed stamps everything new, *good*, and everything old, *bad*. His boast was ridicule, his talent was ridicule, his art was scoffing ; he was the master of scurrility, and this life-long passion shut his eyes to many a truth, and closed his soul to much that was valuable.

He applied his wonderful talent of ridicule to that where ridicule is entirely out of place at all times. Short of a man's religion, there is perhaps nothing about him that may not at times be made fun of ; but in his religion, superstition, follies, and even depravity, demand the tear rather than the smile. But with Voltaire nothing was sacred. The loathsomeness of the dirty priests had blinded his eyes, and he forgot the nobleness of their creed in the vileness of its professors. Than this ridicule of his there is nothing about the man more necessary to be understood, and in taking his measure it must be borne in mind that the force of ridicule is more dependent upon the shallowness of those to whom it is addressed, than upon the wit and wisdom of the person using it. Hence the wit and arguments which were thought conclusive in his day would be scouted now—Voltaire's followers were ashamed of them—they were so mean, so lying, so contemptible. There is no one aspect in which I despise Voltaire more heartily than in his fight against Christianity—not because he fought Christianity—but because of the little, wretched, despicable way in which he did it. He did not understand Christianity ; his mind was only large enough to understand fanaticism, and he fought that. His character has been well expressed by one who "loved him all too well." Byron in speaking of Voltaire and Rousseau says :—

“ The one was fire and fickleness, a child  
 Most mutable in wishes, but in mind  
 A wit as various—gay, grave, sage or wild—  
 Historian, bard, philosopher combined ;  
 He multiplied himself among mankind,

The Proteus of their talents ; but his own  
 Breathed most in ridicule—which, as the wind,  
 Blew where it listed, laying all things prone,—  
 Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,  
 And hiving wisdom with each studious year,  
 In meditation dwelt, with learning wrought,  
 And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,  
 Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer ;  
 The lord of irony,—that master-spell,  
 Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear  
 And doomed him to the zealot's ready Hell,  
 Which answers to all doubt so eloquently well." \*

Perhaps M. de Tocqueville in describing the French nation generally has hit on quite as happy a summary of the character of Voltaire. It would not be far wrong to apply this to all the Napoleons, the present one as well as the rest. M. de Tocqueville says of the French that they are "apt for all things, but excelling in war ; adoring chance, force, success, splendour, and noise, more than true glory ; more capable of heroism than of virtue: the most brilliant and the most dangerous of the nations of Europe, and the best fitting to become by turns the object of admiration, of hatred, of pity, of terror, but never of indifference." So with Voltaire—he may be admired, he may be hated ; he is brilliant, but dangerous ; he is an object of pity, but not of indifference. His epitaphs, however, are more expressive than all. One is :—"*Cigît l'enfant gâté du monde qu'il gâte.*" Another :—

" Plus bel esprit que grand génie—  
 Sans loi, sans mœurs, et sans vertu—  
 Il est mort comme il a vécu,  
 Couvert de gloire et d'infamie."

A third ended thus :—" He died, consumed by the fire of his own genius. Nothing was wanting to his glory : priests cursed and kings loved him."

Having thus accompanied Voltaire through life, assisted at his death, and looked after his epitaphs, it may be a consolation to some persons to know that his spirit has been "rapped" up, and that it said : "*J'ai renié mes œuvres impies j'ai pleuré et mon Dieu m'a fait miséricorde.*"

\* "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," Canto iii.

## BENVENUTO CELLINI.

BORN 1500, DIED 1570.

AS most of you know, Benvenuto Cellini wrote his own life ; and he wrote it so plainly and told the truth with such candour, that it would not do to publish it at once, so that, although Cellini was born on All Saints' Day, in 1500, it was 1730 before this wonderful book saw the light. This book is about the perfectest piece of autobiography the world has seen. To me there are no books so charming as autobiographies and diaries. Of all studies, the study of human nature is the most interesting, and those books where a man tells things which nobody can know so well as himself—if he does it with anything like candour, veracity, spirit, and picturesqueness—must be most valuable contributions to the most valuable study, the study of human nature in all its manifold varieties.

This autobiography is written with candour, and, allowing for exaggeration, it is written with veracity ; for, as I have had occasion previously to warn men, he is a fool who counts caricature unveracious, for exaggeration and caricature are simply enlargement. Your admirable features, magnified, are still yours, with the scale altered ; no one should complain except there is a violation of the scale. In life, Cellini was unmistakably vain, and his is one of the few cases of a very able man being vain, and a courageous man boastful. But he enlarged according to scale, and, notwithstanding his vanity, he was veracious.

As to the vitality of the narrative in the book, it is wonderful, and its picturesqueness is charming. He never describes people—he puts them here ; he tells his readers what they did and how they did it, and there he leaves it. Notwithstanding this, the times were stirring ; he lived amongst big people in every true sense of the word, and in every untrue sense.

He had an opinion which he expresses at the opening of the book, that no man ought to write his own life until he is forty

years of age ; and he showed his conviction of this by waiting until he was fifty-eight before he wrote his. Why he fixed on forty I cannot tell. One English poet has told us that it is about that time that a man finds out he is a fool, and another describes it as an age

“ When all the fiercer passions cease,  
The glory and disgrace of youth ;  
When the deluded soul in peace  
Can listen to the voice of truth.”

If the object of an autobiography is to show the causes and consequences of a man's life, the subtle events which led on to greatness, disaster, or failure ; if an autobiography is to be anything better than a chronicle ; if the connection between the inward and the outward life are to be shown, and the sources of that inward life traced, probably a man would do that better at forty years of age than before ; for most young people have not much inner life—it is mostly plenty to eat, and as often as they can—and it is by the influence of trouble, disappointment and passion the inner life grows. But who can cast back at forty to the age of twenty, and remember the events of their youth ; and, if they can recollect the events, can they remember what led to them ? So I do not agree with Cellini ; I think a man should begin early and finish late when writing an autobiography. The history of any man's life would be a charming book ; for there is no life, however obscure, which might not be made charming if the connection could be shown between the inward and the outward life : but in the case of this book, we have a master telling the tale of a life, full of striking incident, led amongst striking people.

This man—goldsmith, jeweller, sculptor, musician, poet, brass-caster, soldier, artilleryman, and engineer—had popes for his clients, emperors for his patrons, kings for his employers, cardinals for his customers, and the greater part of his life was spent in ministering to their magnificent wants. Amongst all this did he keep himself from being a flunkey. One of the glories of the man was that he was an artist, and he knew it. In his vocation he knew no greater than himself ; he told popes the truth, and he kept kings in order. He was obsequious up to a certain point ; but if they said anything about art which he knew to be untrue,

he snubbed a pope and snuffed out an emperor. A little servility, a little fawning, until they commenced talking nonsense about art. Most of his patrons favoured imbecility, of which he had a holy horror. He knew he could do things, and that his rivals could not, and he was as loud in proclaiming that he could as that they could not. Of course he brought the hornets about his ears, and a great many of the stings were only of his own seeking. It is charming to notice that he could not see this, which is apparent to everybody else.

This man lived in a time when the irregularities of passion and of character were but very imperfectly checked by law, and when the angularities were not smoothed down by good manners and quiet habits, in a time when, if there was a singularity about a man, he showed it. He lived in a part of the reign of Henry VII., through Henry VIII.'s, into the reign of the glorious Queen Elizabeth. The Popes of the time were Clement VII. and Paul III. Charles V., the man of the Great Empire, was in power, Francis I. was in France, and the Medici in Italy. This was one of those great times when God sees fit to fill the firmament with a constellation. No astronomy has been able to detect the cause or to calculate their coming. Human knowledge has thrown no light upon the genesis of great men. It is rare that there is only one great man at a time, and if there is only one, we may conclude there are none. If Socrates were alive, we might be sure Plato was not far off. If William Shakespeare was alive in England, Bacon was near, and Spenser was close by. Great men come in clusters. So it was when the boy Cellini was born, Luther was about sixteen years old—and he was enough to fill the whole heavens with glory—Raffaello was also sixteen, Michel Angelo was twenty-six, Da Vinci was forty-eight, Titian was only thirteen. There was a group! to say nothing of smaller but still glorious lights. A thing of beauty in those days was a necessity, from the Transfiguration of Raffaello down to the clasp of a woman's girdle, the seal for a Cardinal's letters, or the button of a Pope's cope.

Through all this time Cellini stuck to himself in his narrative. He had nothing to say about the Pope, except so far as he had to do with him. He never meddled with Luther. Who was Luther? He never ordered anything from him. It is interesting to see

how the thread of his life was egotistically adhered to, and righteously egotistically. What was the Reformation? Bother the Reformation; he did not make buttons for it. I admire the fine faithfulness of the man who sat down to write his life, and who had nothing to do with anybody who had nothing to do with him.

Well, this man had such a marvellous genius, he could do almost anything. Could he play? Certainly. Write a poem? Oh, yes. Did they want a little piece of work not much bigger than a nut, but with all the consummate glory of sculpture? He could do it. Did they want purses made? He was their man. Had a casting given way, and were the men in despair because he was sick? Up he got, and down he went; bother death—death must wait; there was a statue to be finished; out he rushed, and he did it. Did anybody want a lesson in brass-casting? Let them go to him. He had the “go” and the genius, and the faculty, and the power, not to run in a particular groove or rut, or to ride a particular horse.

This man—sculptor, jeweller, poet, goldsmith, brass-caster, musician, soldier, artilleryman, engineer, and a great many things besides; caressed and snubbed by popes, kings, cardinals, and grand dukes; never servile, jealous of the dignity of his art, reverent of ability, scornful of pretentious incapacity, capricious, restless, fierce, ungovernable, vindictive, passionate, licentious, irascible—was great in suffering, and able to bear and endure with a nobleness seldom found in men so fierce. He was sensitive in feeling, fervid in imagination, visionary, a law unto himself, inordinately vain, religious after a fashion—a very curious one,—brave and boastful, and also having that peculiarity shared by Tasso and Rousseau—that he was the victim of perpetual conspiracies! Everybody meant those three men mischief! They thought so much about themselves, they imagined everybody else was thinking about them, and, forgetting how irritating they were, they considered the strokes with which men resented their stings as conspiracies. Some people may say, “How could this man who killed several people be a religious man?” I reply, “After a fashion.” This man’s religion was a celestial globe representing the heavens. He wrote hymns and prayers, and consulted his guide as to the course of his outward life, and not as to his



inward. He trembled before his God, when he had time; he threatened Jerusalem once with a visit, but he could not accomplish it. He looked to the heavens as an outward guide, and had no thought of setting his passions in order because of religion. Such was the man, and such were the times in which he lived.

His father, Giovanni by name, was married to his mother for some time before any children were born. At length, his wife presented him with a girl, and, before Benvenuto was born, so certain were the parents that the child would be a girl, that the name was fixed on. When the nurse took the babe to the sire, who was, according to Cellini, of a philosophical disposition, he said, "What God gives me, I shall always receive thankfully:" but when he saw it was a boy, he clasped his hands, lifted his eyes to heaven, and said, "Lord, I thank Thee from the bottom of my heart for this present, which is very dear and welcome to me. He is well-come—*Benvenuto*." The old gentleman had certainly defective views of women's rights. The name was a happy omen. Names make natures, and only fools give names by chance or accident.

It was the wish of the father that Benvenuto should become a great flute-player; and the child in consequence had a great aversion to flutes, though he made himself a capital player. After a while, however, the lad released himself from his musical bondage, and became a goldsmith, in which art he made rapid progress. He quarrelled frequently with his masters, because they would underpay him and take the credit of his work. Subsequently he quarrelled with his patrons, who used the most miserable shifts to evade payment. His conduct was brave on all occasions, and, although he had frequent rows, he was ready to settle his own quarrels at all times.

He visited Rome just as Clement VII. was elected, and was appointed to the joint position of musician and jeweller to the Pope. In the study the artist is king, in the pulpit the preacher, and in the warehouse the millionaire. Cellini never tolerated any interference by the ignorant in matters of art. When an old money-grubber goes out of his peculiar province to teach poets, artists, and preachers how to do their work, he must be treated like an impertinent Jack who has leaped out of his box—he must be put down, and the lid must be securely fastened. The Pope

told Cellini "to be hanged." He told the Pope to be hanged himself. He stood up for the dignity of his art—for the superiority of the master to the criticism of the dunce—vindicated talent against gold, rank, High-Mightiness, Grand-Dukery, or any other anointed imbecility which might come in his way.

A man of genius, with talents most versatile; hot, ferocious, violent, vindictive; he spared no man in his rage, and no woman in his lust; his vice knew no bridle, his passions no reins; brave to a fault, rash beyond measure; he yet had what very rash men seldom have—an amazing fortitude and power to bear. He was as great when rotting in a dungeon, as he was furious when he roared fighting in the street; quick to quarrel; sensible and sensitive; his imagination marvellous, quickened at times into madness, until at last he held colloquies with his guardian angels, saw Christ in the sun, invoked spirits—and they came,—and got a halo round his head, which remained invisible to the multitude, visible to select friends, to whom, no doubt, in pointing it out, he communicated the quickness of vision by which it was to be seen. In violence, Cellini was like a wild beast. *He* count a hundred before he swore? Not a bit of it. *He* hesitate before he smite? Not he; he intends to smite, and he lies in bed contriving how to do it. If he could not get at a man at once, he plotted and planned, and rolled revenge like a sweet morsel under his tongue. To punish an inn-keeper who had demanded his reckoning beforehand, he lay awake all night, deliberating whether he should set the house on fire or kill four horses which were in the stable. As he could not safely do either, he revenged himself by ripping open four beds, doing damage to the extent of fifty crowns. Pardoned by the Pope for murder, he was thrown into prison, by the Pope's orders, on an accusation of having taken from the Castle of St Angelo, during the sack of Rome, jewels and treasures belonging to the Church. Having escaped from prison, and been taken under the protection of a cardinal, he was betrayed by his friend, who yielded to the temptation of a bishopric, and again imprisoned, this time in a damp and noisome dungeon. Here he made a composition of powdered brick-dust and water, and, with a pen made of a splinter, which he gnawed from a door, wrote a sonnet, and a dialogue between the soul and the body. His other modes of spending his time were, reading the Bible during

the short period that the sun visited his dungeon, singing psalms, drawing on the walls, and "piously meditating."

Here it was that the intensity of his imagination caused him to have a vision of Christ in the sun. He had fervently prayed that God would show him the cause of his imprisonment; it never occurred to him that he had done any wrong. It was characteristic of the man to subpoena the Almighty to give evidence in his behalf. He believed in God, and that He was on the side of the just. *He* was just. His doctrine was, "Help yourself, and God will help you." He prayed to God, "Here am I, Benvenuto Cellini; come into court and give evidence; let me at least know why I am here." Did the revelation of divine grace, as he regarded it, have any effect upon his life? Not a bit of it. After this, he got into worse scrapes; loved, swore, fought, just as much as before. It is not in the nature of wonder-working, or any phantasmagoria whatever, to affect the spiritual, moral, and conscientious nature of a man. People may see miracles and be fools, behold wonders and be as big beasts as before. Cellini's superstitions were perfectly consistent with the moral, or rather the immoral life which he led. It is possible to have a religion sincerely believed in, and a worship reverently engaged in, to believe in the great invincible powers and tremble before them, to have certain seasons of devotion, and then to consider the business over, lock the temple, and go out for a spree. Of religious aspiration, or ashamedness of moral iniquity, Cellini knew nothing. Religion was to him astronomy, astrology, sooth-saying, anything but a guiding and restraining light, or a reforming and regenerating spirit.

And as the man, so his works. A man cannot put into his works what is not in himself, and where he is defective they are defective. And though a great many art-mongers have a notion they can set a beast down to draw an angel, the result will only be the form of an angel drawn by a brute—what a man has not in himself he cannot put into his art. Cellini's love was nothing but an amour; of love, as Michel Angelo understood it, he had not a glimpse. His art also was of the earth, earthy. He wanted the imaginativeness which ennobles the works of Michel Angelo, shines through the eyes of the Madonna of Raffaella, and puts Beethoven—notwithstanding what scientific musicians may say—

far above all other musicians; for, master of the earthly side of music, he also saw the unearthly, mystical side of it, and has imprisoned the angels in what appear to be simply bars, staves, crotchets, breves, and blots.

Of the struggles of the inner-life, Cellini knew nothing. I admire his works, and admire the man; but when it comes to loving him, I cannot do it. I admire his pluck, revere his genius, like to hear his opinion of himself; in many respects he was an admirable man, but with a cloudy sense of right and wrong, and with nothing clear, crystal-like, about him. He was veracious, though vain, despite that some people cannot see the possibility of the conjunction; but he was "of the earth, earthy," and I cannot love him.

I am informed that a large number of you have not read the book. I regret that you should have led so great a part of your lives without reading so charming a work, but I envy you the pleasure you will find in reading it.\* It is the best written, most vivacious book of its kind we have.

\* Translated into English by W. Roscoe. See also "The Life of Benvenuto Cellini," newly translated into English by John Addington Symonds, with portrait and eight etchings by F. Laguillermie; also eighteen reproductions of the Works of the Master, printed in gold, silver, and bronze. London: John C. Nimmo, 1887.

## ILL-USED MEN.

LAMENTING the fact that I had not the privilege of arranging the Lectures of this Institute myself, I will express a hope, at the outset of my discourse, that you will sympathise with me in the difficult task of reconciling the public mind, after it has been for two successive weeks devoted to the gorilla, to the consideration of mere men and women—ill-used men. I have some boldness in asking of you this boon, because I doubt not that most among you consider yourselves as ill-used men, but at the same time I candidly state my belief that however many of you may have been badly treated, the greater number, if you put it honestly to your consciences, will find that you have received far more good than you have ever deserved, and have been treated much better than you could ever have expected. I deny not that here and there one may have received an injury; but, if you carefully balance up the book of life, you will find that you have done the same thing to others, and have no right to complain.

In answering the inquiry, who are ill-used men? I exclude martyrs and confessors entirely, because theirs is a kind of suffering above ill-usage altogether, and, to instance what I mean by the term, I will state my opinion that Socrates, while a martyr when drinking the hemlock draught, was an ill-used man in his relations to Xantippe, his wife.

In most cases I hold that ill-usage is nothing more than the rushing in of the great forces of life when man's carelessness and folly open the way for them. If a man *will* go blundering along the streets of London, perambulating from side to side—Birmingham fashion—he can blame nobody else but himself if he gets his clumsy and disorderly head knocked against some other head as hard as his is soft; and this is a fair type of the majority of the cases of ill-usage. I hold that, as a general rule, ill-usage is nothing but the necessary influence of the necessary laws of life, whereby the wrong people inevitably get into wrong places

—the round pegs get into square holes, and all goes wrong together.

At the same time, I admit that there are what are called “unlucky” men—men whose cogs will never fit into the cogs of that greater wheel of circumstances which surrounds all of us; and also men whose orbits are always bad—men who never can pursue their little course but some great body will come into contact with them, drive them out of their course, or smash them into dust at once.

There are men also, who reap consequences without having the advantage of the causes that brought them about. For instance, it takes the gout a long time to grow in a family, but it *does* grow, and it often grows from a good cellar of port in the possession of an ancestor. Now, what I do think hard is that a man should have the port without having the gout; and what I think more tragic still, is that another man should have the gout without having had the port. But still that is one of the great laws of life. We cannot avoid it, and we dare not impugn its wisdom. Did we, we should be like the great civic functionary—not of Birmingham, I am happy to say—who determined to have a south wall built all round his garden.

The truth is as it ever stood—“One soweth, and another reapeth.” And the great reconciliation is to recognise the fact that all the generations of men are but a continuance of each other; that the child is the father continued, and that the follies of one age are visited upon the people of another. Taking the national debt as an example, what had we Englishmen of the present day to do with all the stupid quarrels of those stupid Georges? or what had we to do with the replacing of those absurd Bourbons on the throne of France? But still we have to pay the cost. And right too, I hold; and I despise all those sneaking people who come up with it as a great grievance, pleading the rights of Englishmen in doing so. I hold that those rights are a very sufficient set-off against the burden, and until noisy demagogues are willing to relinquish all the rights and privileges they hold by virtue of their birthright, I contend they have no right to complain of the evils accompanying those rights until the one outweighs the other. All is in accordance with the great law of Nature, and to illustrate that law I will produce instances; but

where to begin with the catalogue of ill-used men I do not know.

To begin very low down, I consider Luther an ill-used man because he was born before the invention of tobacco. If tobacco had been invented I am sure Luther would have smoked, and if he had smoked I am sure he would have treated the Pope like a gentleman, and would never have Billingsgated kings. That must have been an ill-used man, too, of whom Addison relates that he shut himself up for six months to compose anagrams on his lady's name, and then found out that he had spelt it wrong. I could lay that man's case to heart; but there is a moral to it—always get your mistress to *write* her name before you spend six months in writing anagrams on it. Then there is the case of the barber, living in Sydney, who found a new kind of sea-hog, and resolved to invent a new kind of grease out of its blubber. He made his grease; operated on his wife and himself; both went to bed and woke up bald, and remain to this day martyrs to science. So with the tailor and his customer, who misunderstood each other. The tailor made a pair of breeches, and they split. The customer complained, and the tailor, after considerable altercation, found that they were made for walking, not for sitting, which had caused the splitting. Again, there was a man during the reign of Kaiser Otho, who wore puffed breeches. Puffed breeches then were filled with flour, and when the wearer of the breeches sat down on a seat he sat down on a nail, and the nail tore the breeches, and the rent emitted three pecks of flour, and the man who wore the breeches was an ill-used man. Why he should have sat down at that particular time, and in that particular place, is a mystery; and why there should have been a nail there, is to me an inscrutable mystery; but there is the fact, and the sufferer I consider an ill-used man. Then there are the touching cases of many poor philosophers and authors—men who suffered both by printers' blunders and the misunderstanding of posterity,—and there is another class of persons whose case is extremely affecting—those who are hung by mistake.

But passing these by, there is a class of men who are condemned by mistake, and who receive what is called a "free pardon." A "free pardon," indeed!—I despise the term with all the contempt of which my soul is capable. The very idea of

pardoning a man who has committed no crime is to my mind revolting. Rather ought the nation, through its heads, to ask the poor victim to grant pardon to the dull-headed juries and the precedent-bound judges, than for them to grant it him.

But of all ill-used people in the world authors seem to be singled out as the chief. Cervantes wanted food; Camoens died in the hospital at Lisbon; poor Tasso went out one day to borrow a crown; and Racine on one of his monthly visits to Louis XIV., when asked if there was anything new, said, Corneille was dying for want of a little broth. The Marquis of Worcester, one of the great men of science when science was small, had to petition for a little money to carry on his investigations. Otley, Sydenham, and others, died in a spunging house.

Great Shakespeare, almost alone, was one of the few men who were not ill-used during their lives. They could not ill-use him. He never took poetry to an onion-market for sale; he took it where it would be appreciated. But while preserving his bones by his epitaph, he could not preserve his works. Every dull-headed scribbler and heavy critic, right up to the present day, has inflicted on him the penalty of the peace he enjoyed during life, by murdering him when dead. He has been ill-used by Dumas, and by another Frenchman in the present day--a Frenchman who supposes that he can alter the great dramatist to advantage; can (with presumption unequalled) take out what Shakespeare has written, insert what Shakespeare has not written, and make up the deficiency by his own vile gymnastics.

But as Sterne dealt with the question of slavery by singling out one instance, and despised the talk about "general humanity," and the "interests of the race," so will I deal with ill-used men by singling out a few instances only, thereby letting in a light by which may be seen the whole question.

The instances I shall choose are Matthew Flinders, and James Hargreaves. The history of the former, as the first useful discoverer of Australia, may be traced from the time he started from England in his little ship, the "Tom Thumb," through all his dangers, shipwrecks, and imprisonments, till the time he returned to England to find that his discoveries had been appropriated by a Frenchman while he was in prison, and that his services were to go unrewarded until the day of his death, while his widow died in



penury. Turn this man round which way I will, I cannot find a single weakness in his character or his actions; he was brave, clever, indomitable, but still he failed; and he is one who may be classed amongst those who are really the ill-used men of the world. As to James Hargreaves: he, sitting alone there in his little home in Yorkshire, finding that he could not get enough from the spinners of cotton to supply his wants as a weaver, cast about for a way to spin faster. After many weary days, and weeks, and months, he found out a method by which he could spin eight threads in the same time that one had previously been spun; and being asked for a name for the instrument, he looked lovingly upon his wife, and said, "We'll call it Jenny;" and the modest Jenny has come down to posterity, and will go to remotest generations, with the name of the "Spinning Jenny." But no sooner was it found out, than the insane clamour of workmen raised a mob, who destroyed the invention, and drove Hargreaves away from his native town. And the only resulting good I can see, is that it distributed the man abroad into other towns, carrying his invention whithersoever he went. At the same time, poor Hargreaves died in a workhouse; his wife, a widow, sunk into that black mass of under-current, which ever under-runs the tide of England's prosperity; and thus the man whose labours gave England the greatest wealth she ever possessed, sunk into oblivion unrewarded. Such a man as that I consider an ill-used man.

Having introduced these two men as exceptions to the rule that ill-used men have only themselves to blame for their ill-usage, let us now look at some of the sources of ill-usage. Some men, I grant, are truly unlucky. They have a fatal propensity to step in just when the blow is falling. They do not deserve it; it is intended for some rascal; but they *will* step in just in time to get it, and they do get it, invariably. One man comes to the sowing and another to the reaping; one does the work and another gets the reward. These I consider ill-used men.

Then sometimes a man gets ill-used for too much shyness, and too much deference to society, and at another time for too much love of gold and silver.

People get ill-used, too, for undertaking to be little providences to all the world—to take care of the concerns of other people; this is a *certain* source of ill-usage.

Ingratitude is another. To hear people talk, one would think that ingratitude was a thing to be surprised at when it comes. It isn't. It is one of the things I always provide for; I have it registered among the unpleasant things I expect—frost, snow, cold, east wind, ingratitude; that's how it runs in my memorandum.

Some instances of ill-used men I may give you, in order to see how far their treatment corresponds to some fault in their doing, or to some weakness in their character; for fault and weakness I hold to mean the same thing in the eyes of the world, and I assure you that you may as well be guilty of the one as the other.

Samuel Crompton, the inventor of the cotton mule, was an ill-used man; but then he was so shy and proud—he invited it. The world did not want proud shy men, and while it let barber Arkwright make £2,000,000 of money, it let Crompton get under the bed to starve, and at last gave him only a miserable gratuity, half of which was spent in canvassing to get it; and all this after he had given to England an invention which was one of the greatest wealth-producers she had ever had.

Glancing back, there was Francis Bacon. His question is altogether too large for the present lecture, but he was an ill-used man. The world ill-used him, and he ill-used it; for while one of the wisest of men he was one of the meanest; and though ill-used, I am not quite sure that he did not deserve it.

Then there was poor James Bruce. He went to Africa, and wrote a journal about it, like some people in modern days who have been to Africa and elsewhere. People whose experience goes no further than their own little tea-table say such journals are lies, but they are not: granting that there is a little romancing about them, still they are true in the main. They are like those portraits one gets—a penny plain, twopence coloured—brought home plain from Africa, and coloured in London. So that on the whole I consider Bruce an ill-used man, partly because of his little decorations, and partly because of the narrow-minded stupidity of his countrymen.

Then there was poor Admiral John Byng; he was a vicarious person offered up for the good of the public. He died like every tenth man in a regiment that is decimated, not for the individual punishment of that tenth man, but to frighten all the rest. He

had had ships ill-provided, and a cowardly ministry was hounded on by a noisy nation, so he was shot for cowardice—not because he was a coward, but because the nation was impatient, and, as Voltaire wittily said, “*pour encourager les autres* ;” like the man who was sentenced to transportation, not for stealing a horse, but to prevent horse-stealing.

Then there was poor Beau Brummell, a painted butterfly, that amused everybody during the summer of his life, and when winter came met a butterfly’s fate—a miserable death and oblivion.

There was also that great man Buonaparte, —shrieking Frenchmen and some miserable Englishmen to the present day will persist that he was an ill-used man, because England put him in prison at St. Helena. For the life of me I cannot see it: it was not a question of the law of nations to be settled by Grotius, Vattel, and Puffendorf; it was a question of self-preservation. Here was this man, the butcher of humanity—a man who lied by nature and told the truth by accident, who had neither ruth, truth, nor pity—and we got hold of him after beating him in battle, and we locked him up. Now we are asked to pity him! Whenever I am asked to pity him, I say, “I shan’t;” and I at once fortify myself by opening the Bible upon the history of Nebuchadnezzar, where I find that howsoever high men may build their Babel tower in this world, it must fall before it reaches to heaven. And looking at Buonaparte’s miserable conduct in prison, and his death, I should say, if I were the jury who sat on his body: “Died of imprisonment, and served him right.”

But now we come to a very different man, and that is poor Burns, who will remain for ever a man best worth studying of all men—so blameable, so loveable; so wrong, so glorious; so traduced, so canonised; so outraging his country’s creed, and yet so taken to his country’s heart. It is worth everything to hear a real Scotchman grow graciously weak and largely tolerant when talking about Burns. How Scotland can love Burns is worth studying; Scotland does not love bad people, but it loves Burns, and the only way in which I can account for it is because Burns himself loved everything, great and small. Still, Burns was an ill-treated man. You all remember that brief outbreak of prosperity when he was taken up to Edinburgh, and petted, patted, and pawed by society, and how he went back again to his obscu-

riety because he would stand on the rock of independence. He tried to serve two masters,—society and his verses—and he was rewarded by neither. Altogether, he was an ill-used man; but he was in fault himself, and not the world. Who calls John Locke or Milton ill-used men? They glorified their obscurity by serving one master truly, and despising the other; and they had their reward.

Byron was another ill-used man, who tried to serve two masters. He despised English society, and trembled at it; he tried to please it, and to write his verses, and he met his reward, for he was as much in fault as the world.

Haydon, the painter, was another ill-used man; but it was purely his own fault. He would paint high art when people did not want it—would paint acres of hooked-nosed Romans, and bore the public with Dentatus, Scipio, and Co., when they wanted something else. He was like a man taking beautiful pebbles to market when people wanted eggs, and telling the people that they ought not to want eggs, because they led to carnality and had a nasty and disgusting connection with bacon. But people would not have it—eggs they wanted, and eggs they would have, how beautiful soever the pebbles might be. So with Haydon. He persisted that the people ought to have what they did not want, and he went from a prison to a lunatic asylum, and died a suicide. Had he done as his friends Wordsworth and Wilkie did, he would never have been an ill-used man; *he* was in fault, and not the world.

Putting, then, all these men together, I find they all had a fault or a weak place, where the great forces of life might rush in and overwhelm them—some thin place in the garment, where the east wind came in to torment them. And my advice is, “Be single-eyed; don’t try to serve two masters, but serve one truly, and then you will never feel ill-usage: you’ll be above it, and if in obscurity, will glorify that obscurity instead of making it a punishment.”

As to the question whether ill-usage is on the decline, I am of opinion that it is, because, owing to the increase of knowledge, toleration is becoming a principle, instead of being exercised by accident.

Then as to the necessity of the existence of ill-used men, and

their uses to the world. Their lives are a moral to be read and learnt of all men. I believe ill-usage has been one of the most powerful influences for good this world ever saw. It distributed good and great men abroad, and brought out all their energies. Persecution drove the Huguenots and the Valois to England, where they established their arts and manufactures; and persecution drove Paul to preach in ten cities when he would only have preached in two. Ill-usage, too, is useful to the individual, if he will only deal rightly by it. If a man is abused, he should just go home quietly and find out how much of the abuse he deserves. That which he deserves, he should resolve never to merit again; but with regard to that which he does not deserve, he should stand up boldly for his principle, and live down the abuse, instead of whining about it. Then, like the oyster, though wounded, he will repair the breach, and repair it with a pearl.

## THE RELATIONS OF GREAT MEN TO WOMEN.

YOU are all well aware that there are two sides to every subject ; and it is not surprising to find that on the one hand man has said and written the most malignant things of women, and that on the other the most eloquent, most feeling, and most loving words in prose and verse have also been uttered by him regarding the sex. There is a serious difficulty in the way when writing or speaking on this subject, for a woman is prone to gather all the compliments that have ever been uttered regarding the sex, and apply them to herself. Though it would be exceedingly easy to quote all the bitter epigrams and glowing compliments that have been written on the subject of women, I do not see that any great good could be got by following that course. It will be more profitable to see what the greatest and noblest have not only said about women, but have found them to be, and have helped to make them. The subject is one which I would advise you to look into ; not as one for sport or pastime, but as a question of great importance. It may raise our ideal of what woman should be, and raise woman's ideal of what she should be, and perhaps lead to some little atonement on the part of some for the offences of older and foolisher days against women, with the tongue, with the heart, or, worse still, with the life ; for happy is that man who has not sins against woman to lay to his charge—happy that man whose tongue has not said a flippant or a foolish thing about woman, and whose life has received no deadly stain from lowering that which God intended to be one of man's chief elevations. So that we have this evening not only the purpose of amusement—which always goes hand in hand with instruction—but we want to see whether or no from these great men we can get any guidance upon this great question of the relation between man and woman.

Let us try and look a little at both sides of this curious and interesting question, and we shall find that slowly but surely the

estimate of woman has risen in the world. If we go back to old days, to the Jews in the time of Josephus,\* we find that confidence was not to be reposed in woman, and that her testimony was not to be received in Courts of Justice, on account of her levity and boldness. Happily this has found no mention in the Pentateuch—in the Law of Moses. Probably it was a bad custom that had grown up. Again, we find one of the great Fathers of the Christian Church defining woman as “a clothes-wearing animal—a clothes-loving creature.” The sage Confucius declared women to be like children, and that it was exceedingly difficult to know how to treat woman—if you treated her gently and kindly, or with too great familiarity, she was certain to overstep the limits, and you lost her respect; and on the other hand, if the rule was too strict, and you treated them with rigour, there was a continual disturbance. One of the great Greek writers put this sentiment into a woman’s mouth:—“More than a thousand women is a man worthy to see the light of day.” The greatest man that ever lived in the old world, the most gigantic intellect of all, he was terrible on the subject:—“Foppish men will be degraded after death to the form of woman; and if they don’t make some effort to retrieve themselves, they will become birds.” I need hardly remind you that that was one of Plato’s sayings, contemplating the terrible metempsychosis of mental sinking to lower and lower stages—that if one misbehaved, one would sink into a woman. That is perhaps the most marvellous of all sayings on the subject of women. But certainly, as to some women I have seen, I know no form into which one could sink that would inspire more terror—worshippers of the bonnet shop, adorers of dress, chroniclers of small beer, tattlers for talk, slatternly sluts. What form of life could a wise man dread more to sink into than into that? and how hard it must be to retrieve one’s self when degraded so low!

These bitternesses have run into the holiest relation of all—the married life. In marriage the great trial is made; and the old proverb puts it pretty clearly, for Chaucer says—“Marriage is such a rabble rout, that those who are out are fain to get in, and those who are in are fain to get out.” A wonderful piece of solemnity on such a subject is Sir Walter Raleigh’s argument on

\* *Antiq.*, iv., viii., 15.

woman having a soul. A famous French Dominican, who had shriven women by the thousand, and confessed them by the hundred, stated that the confessions of women were ordinarily wanting in three particulars—the confession of luxury, love of dress, and unmeasured love of talk. From this, may we not deduce that women neither love luxury, dress, nor talk? Contrasting the honour done to the feminine sex in Grecian sculpture with the ugly epigrams to be found in Grecian literature, we may argue that woman cannot have occupied a low position among a people whose national tastes found expression in such forms. The Bible story of Jacob's love is one of touching beauty: Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and those years seemed unto him but a few days for the love he bare to her. As to the evil things that are said by man about woman, she need never be discouraged about them. If the evil things were said by an angel, it would be terrible; if they could be said by a just judge, they would be awful; but said by a sinner to a sinner, what do they come to? For you may be certain that, as a man rises in nobleness, his estimate of woman rises with him. You may lay it down as a rule that no wise man will say very bitter things of woman, except it is when his position calls upon him, priestlike, to rebuke. Else, I should say, that at the level at which a man finds the woman he rails against, he must have been looking for what he finds.

Passing over the position occupied by women in English history and literature, and coming more immediately to my subject, I will divide the relations of woman to man into three distinct classes—the Platonic connection, the connection where a man gets mischief in the union, and the connection where he gets good. It is within the holy enclosure of marriage alone that lofty spiritual union is possible. If these things of which I have spoken be true, then had we better get within the sacred holy pale, and we shall then see some of the varieties in marriage. There have been four great classes of marriages:—First, the household partnerships, against which I have nothing to say. Then marriages of idolatry—sometimes mutual, and sometimes one-sided—when mutual, not very interesting to any but the idolaters themselves; when one-sided, oftentimes very charming to behold. Then there are marriages in which intellect, community of pursuit, and



delight in the same studies, have been the bond of union. Last and chiefest, are the marriages where pilgrimage towards one common end, by one common road, under one common protection, and with one common loving communion of song and praise to God, has raised woman to what alone can make her great—a great, clear understanding on the part of man that women are not made for man at all, but are made for themselves; that a woman exists here in this world by Divine right just as a man does, and that woman has a soul that has to grow for God.

These things will never be set right by women squeaking about their “rights”; by talking about their capabilities as contrasted with those of man; by twaddle as to whether a woman ever wrote a “Paradise Lost,” or a piece of music worth listening to. These are very pleasant subjects for discussion in Debating Societies, or whilst waiting until the tea grows cold; but will never come near settling the great question. We shall never have thorough greatness until woman is made free of freedom, which is as necessary for a woman’s high and noble life as for a man’s. Men contend for freedom for themselves, but are not willing to concede it to women. I do not mean freedom to gad, gossip, and tattle; but to cultivate herself according to her best understanding and desire, choose her own books, plan her own scheme of education; and freedom to be let alone. Those have been the noblest marriages in which each has left to the other the largest freedom compatible to dwellers together in the same house, and being bound as it were within the same circle of the one marriage ring.

Dealing next with the different divisions under which I have classed marriages, with regard to the first—the household partnership—it represents a great many marriages, and it is limited by the bread-basket and bound in by time; it is something pleasing, and nothing more. The next class—the idolatrous—are somewhat curious. It is said that Aristotle so loved his wife that he burnt incense to her. There are two accounts of this, and let us hope, for the sake of his sanity and her sense, that that is the true one which says that it was after her death. Some do not believe the story at all, but I do, because there is a great desire on the part of many men to lay down the burden of their strength and take up weakness. Hercules did this, when he allowed himself to be bullied, so to speak, by that little wife of his, when, by the

slightest exertion, he could have made an end of it. This was part of Samson's danger, and of Aristotle's folly ; but, after all, there is a strange fantasticalness of love about it that makes it very pleasant withal. Then we have, on the other hand, all down history, wonderful examples of women who worshipped their husbands, and for different reasons. With some, there was community of thought, feeling, action, inclination ; and others have adored their husbands' talents for what they made, because they bought them finery, and kept their houses over their heads. The wife of Samuel Clarke, the compiler, who never wrote an original sentence, or was visited by a single thought, thought his compilations sublime, and showed the respect in which she held him, in many curious and odd ways. Pliny's wife adored him, as much as he her, and in all his works and pursuits shared with him the toil as much as possible. The same was the case with Madame Roland and her husband. Zinzendorf had a similar feeling for his wife, and expressed it many times in his writings.

John Wesley, however, presents a very opposite picture. A more utter dunce in the management of a woman than John Wesley the world never saw, and his marriage was one of the greatest failures. In early life he went out to Georgia as a missionary, and immediately upon his going out he was set upon by a young woman, who had determined, if possible, to marry him. He hung back for a long time, and when brought to the point, went and laid his whole case before a Moravian bishop, who had no connection with him, and asked his advice. The bishop, being one of a class who it is not desirable should have very decided opinions about things, came to the sage conclusion that the matter was one deserving of serious consideration. Upon this, John went to the Moravian elders, in his trouble, and was eventually advised by them not to marry. He did as he was bid, and shortly afterwards his lady-love consoled herself by taking another husband, and at the same time returning to the curls which she had given up at John Wesley's request. She doffed her white robes, and arrayed herself in the colours of the rainbow, went to a ball, and actually ate suppers at night, and sat up late. All these were things which John, as her pastor, could not overlook, and after a time, having tried other means, he virtually excommunicated her by refusing her the Communion ; upon which her

husband immediately did what at the present time is done under similar circumstances—called in the parchment gentlemen, and commenced an action against the minister, to avoid the possible consequences of which he fled to England, and eventually married a widow. The story of his unfortunate married life, and his futile because badly-conducted attempt to manage his wife is concluded with the wonderful entry in Wesley's Journal, when his wife finally took herself away. "I did not leave her," he says, "I didn't send her away, and I shan't send for her back."

Then, again, there was the case of Albert Durer. Great as an artist, glorious as a holy soul, the admiration of all : the friend of Luther, the acquaintance of Melanchthon ; but the story of whose life is one long plaintive wail of misery, occasioned by his union with one with whom he had nothing at all in common. The same was the case with John Milton, Sir Thomas More, and with many others.

Why, then, did these men make mistakes? I cannot answer upon any other ground than that Nature, by some inscrutable law, arranges that by different natures, alike mental and physical, becoming united in marriage, an average shall be maintained.

There being no two men alike, and no two women alike, you will see the difficulty of grouping or classifying the relations that great men have held to women. Perhaps the readiest, and, after all, the truest grouping that can be made is—those relations in which love is connected with friendship (the most admirable of all human sentiments), and those from which friendship is absent. In those instances in which men have loved women whom they could not respect nor admire,—between whom and themselves there was no *friendship*—no matter how long the passion might continue to act, or how strong the inclination might once have been, their love could not be lasting ; it never was noble, and must sink down into contempt, indifference, or quarrelling.

To many, it may seem strange to class friendship with love ; but friendship is the greatest power that man has, the noblest relation that can exist between two human beings. There can be no true marriages without friendship ; with it they are possible. Friendship is above all blood-relationships, and entirely nobler than all common connections of life. I cannot help having relations ; I am not consulted about the matter ; if I do not like

them I cannot change them ; if they do well, it is a credit to me accidentally—not by my will, intelligence or choice. I do my duty by them, sometimes from law, sometimes from habit, sometimes from decency, and, possibly, sometimes even from fear. If my brother does well in life, it reflects a little glory upon me ; if the father is a fool, it is the son's misfortune ; if very wise, it will probably be the son's misfortune too. A great deal of undue fuss is made about loving one's relations ; but it is sometimes impossible to do so. If a man has relations, let him do his duty by them ; chronicle small beer with them ; but never suppose that a blood-relationship can for a moment enter into comparison with a friendship. Why? Freewill is the most glorious attribute of manhood, and freewill is exercised in choosing a friend. There is no destiny, no blood, no duty, no law, no accidental tie in it. My friend I choose, select, elect, crown. My friend is of my own making ; his glory is my glory and my glory is his. If my chosen friend is great, I am great ; for to have made a friend of one truly great is at least to show that one has the capacity of knowing greatness when one comes upon it in the walks of common life in this world of ours. In selecting a friend, there is no constitutional passion at work ; between one and one's relations there is. The emotions have very little to do with it at first ; therefore free from force, free from habit, and free from necessity, I exercise an intelligent choice. When I choose my friend, it is intellect to intellect, heart to heart, soul to soul, love to love, and life to life ; and all this comes from that most glorious part of a man's nature—a free and intelligent will. But though friendship may seem at first sight different from the love of which I have been mostly speaking ; yet when once made, it can call to its help all the emotions, all the impulses, all the intuitions, nay, all the blood-passions of life.

See, then, why I put friendship as the highest power of which man is capable. It is above the straits and restraints of destiny ; it is the creature of freedom, the child of liberty. The power to make a friend is one of the most glorious distinctions between man and all the creatures beneath him. They cannot make friends. The gorilla has no friend ; he knows not how to choose one. He has a mate, a child, a dam, a dad, something before him, and something after him ; but he elects nothing out of his free will.

Therefore I do not care how close the relationship the anatomists may choose to say exists between men and apes. I may have no inclination to go to the side either of apes or angels in the controversy as to the origin of man, but, whether I choose it or not, I am on the side of the angels, for God hath made man "a little lower than the angels."

Glorious and glorified friendship imported into the ordinary relations of life, dignifies, spiritualises and sanctifies them. If there be no friendship in the relations between a parent and his child, the power of the parent over the child is but consecrated tyranny, legalised despotism, a Divine rod put into the parent's hand. Filial obedience, without friendship, is but bondage, the slavery of compulsion, the bowing down of necessity or daily want. The relationship between a king and his subjects, without friendship and respect, is the most degraded superstition that this grovelling world ever bowed down to. We have seen in this world, and read in history, many cases of this kind, in which grovelling devotion has been paid to men who had nothing to recommend them but the accidental fact of their being Cæsars. It may be right to pay taxes to a king, whether he be liar, knave, or fool, but I would say to such a king, "Cæsar, take your taxes and get out of my way; I have no love and no respect for you." I have lived long enough to know that countries have been ruled by egregious blockheads and royal debauchees, between whom and their subjects there has not and could not be any spark of either respect or love: and this rule applies to the highest things that can concern a man. If worship is paid by a man to a god between whom and himself there is no friendship, the worship becomes an idolatry, a superstition, and a baseness. In classical times, men were so much better than Jupiter that they were obliged to despise him; but he was up there; he had thunderbolts, and could send down some Olympic favours. The worship of him was an idolatry, a degradation, and a superstition. In brief, then, without friendship, parental authority is but tyranny, filial obedience bondage and slavery, loyalty a vile superstition, and worship an idolatry and a baseness.

Now I come to the main point, and no doubt some will make little objections, and say, What has friendship to do with the love between a man and a woman? To this I answer, Everything.

And I would ask, What is love between them *without* friendship? Married life without friendship is joint stock housekeeping, legalised lust, prostitution under the sanction of law, and always will be, let the world call it by what pretty name it likes, and call in the priest to bind the parties, and the lawyer to register the fact. Perhaps, for the necessities of society, all sorts of unions, provided the priest has something to do with them, ought to be called marriages, and treated as such; but I have seen an abundance of connections which pass under the pretty name of "marriage" in the world,—but where heart does not go with heart, nor soul with soul, nor intellect with intellect,—and there is no marriage but in name. The married lives of John Milton and of Albert Durer are melancholy examples of this kind of union. John Milton was not the friend of his wife; he could not be; and what was their marriage like? Let anyone read the bitter history of it. Had Albert Durer been his wife's friend as well as her lover and husband—had it been possible for him to be the friend of that little fool—it would have been a noble marriage; but as it was, the life of a great man was frittered away, because, at the request of his friends, he married a woman that was good for nothing but to be looked at. It is impossible to have a noble alliance unless there is either admiration, an ability to join in or take an interest in each other's pursuits, or at least sufficient intelligence to appreciate what the man or the woman may be about. Love without friendship is a plaything for children, a pretty subject for a valentine, very good for little fools of either sex; but it cannot rise for a moment to the dignity of a great passion, and can never bear the wear and tear of life, the loss of beauty, the chillness of age, or the sure approach of death.

There is one curious group of cases in which friendship is almost the sole element between men and women—where the usual forms of love are kept, as it were, down. This is what is technically called Platonic love, a subject which many people are incapable of understanding, but which rises above the sneers of the sensual and the foolish jests of those who betray their earthliness and their animalism by making a jest of what Dante believed in, Petrarch wrote about, and Michel Angelo devoted himself to. When those great Italians saw a beautiful body, they were led by it to contemplate the grace of the soul. This year (1865), will

see the six hundredth anniversary of the greatest of the Italians, and I may pay my little tribute to that great man in perhaps no better way than by trying to make clear what was the relationship between those great souls and those to whom their verses were addressed ; what was that kind of love in which sublime friendship was almost the only ingredient, where all the lesser attributes were used simply as steps of the ladder which led to the greater. Perhaps the best example of this class was Michel Angelo, a man with a character as severe and noble as his works, and who makes one feel an interest in a work in exact proportion to its excellence. He was greater than any of his works, and perhaps the purest and noblest artist the world has seen—a great artist, yet no worshipper of pictures. He knew that where God gave external beauty, He intended it as a finger to direct attention to the inner and higher beauties. By studying truth he sought the beautiful, but by studying the beautiful he sought for the good ; for the beauty was simply goodness in externals. This was the doctrine which Michel Angelo laid down, and it was upon this he, and the great Italians I have already named, acted. There are many who say there can be no love between man and woman that does not look to marriage, that it is impossible, and they go for their authority to the Romans. Among the Romans the word *amicus* meant a friend, but the feminine of the word meant a mistress, because that people did not believe that there could be friendship between man and woman stopping at friendship. But the people who loved and admired Ovid were not likely to understand Dante, and whilst the early Romans may be preferred in matters of conquest, we must, in matters relating to the spiritual, come down to the later Italians, who believed in the feminine of *amicus*, and thought it possible to make it purely feminine, and yet keep it purely spiritual. The love—the Platonic adoration of Angelo for Vittoria Colonna—whose beauty, talents, and virtues were celebrated by many distinguished contemporary Italians, and who was described as the model of Italian matrons—was called into existence and cherished by the very principle which I have already laid down as being the guiding rule of the school to which the great artist belonged.

There are some men that almost every woman loves ; and they will be writing letters to him, telling him their little sorrows, or

confiding to him their religious scruples, which is often very bewildering for the man. It leads a man into difficulties. It led poor Martin Luther into difficulties. There was Swift, too. You will say, Did any woman ever love *him*? Yet a noble lord (Lord Orrery) has said that Swift's house was a seraglio of very virtuous women, who attended him from morning till night with an awe and assiduity that was seldom paid to the Grand Seignior himself. Almost every woman that went near Swift loved him. And yet how bitter, and peevish, and angry he could be! I have thought of taking the history of Stella and Vanessa some day. I cannot venture upon it now. It would take a long lecture to go through the marvellous history of all that passed between Swift, Stella, and Vanessa, and it would want a very minute analysis, which might include some things not altogether good for young folks to hear.

Then there was Goethe. How women would write to him and love him! And he was not altogether so worthy of it. Gigantic as was his genius, there was not much of heart about the mighty German, after all. One remembers how, when one lady sent him some rosy red apples, he strung them up and hung them out at his window, that he might make some philosophical observations in colour on them. The donor would have much rather that they had been eaten, even though put into a pie. No woman, and no man with any feminineness of nature, can forgive him for that. One cannot help thinking that such a man might "botanise on his mother's grave."

Jean Paul Richter knew women through and throughly, and had a good opportunity; but he took a good deal of the housekeeping view of women. He said he liked a woman who could cook him something nice. That is all that some women are capable of. Let me not be mistaken; for a knowledge of cooking is very proper, and I think the education of women is sadly deficient in this respect. Richter was a man that women loved. But Richter, Goethe, and Swift were not women's men in the common sense. A "ladies' man," in the common sense of the term, is one of the most contemptible of frivols that ever plagued God's world—a creature who hangs about women for the purpose of carrying things that do not want to be carried, and who never seems to be so happy as when showing what nature



intended him for and fortune crossed—to be a lady's maid. The other men of whom I have spoken were lords and gods to these.

Then there was William Cowper. His house, too, was a perfect seraglio of virtuous women. Mrs Unwin—one husband dead—stopped with Cowper and cared for him, devoting her life to wait on this man, with his dark soul, his fitful temper, and who had at times nothing to give her but a perverted hatred. She was so kind he hated her when madness was upon him. He turned to her who loved him so well a fierce face, and repaid her with a tongue of bitter scorn. But she abode with him and cared for him through all. Bye-and-bye came Lady Austin, brilliant and fascinating. What could she find to induce her to take a house next door, and have a door put in between the two, and go in, and not very much want to come out, and be there those two whole years until the grand explosion came? The grand explosion that took place between Cowper and Lady Austin was very mysterious. Everybody conjectured the cause of the separation. One said that Mrs Unwin was jealous; another that Lady Austin was too exacting. Some said that Lady Austin got tiresome, and it is very likely she did. There is nothing so tiresome as the loving attentions of the woman you don't care for. Lady Austin's tiresomeness seems to have been that she loved Cowper a great deal more than she was loved by him, and she was always calling for those little demonstrations that women delight in. No woman is content with being loved, unless she is told so, and that pretty frequently. The Rev. Mr Scott's view of the case was that two women could not be constantly in the society of one man without quarrelling sooner or later. In that case, how I feel for the patriarchs! What a pretty time they must have had of it under the polygamy dispensation, if that is true! It has been gravely argued that Lady Austin could not have been in love with Cowper, and their respective ages and qualities have been cited in proof; but I argue that Cowper possessed all those qualities which would make a woman love a man. Southey asked, "Is it probable that a lady would fall in love with Cowper at the age of fifty?" That is a problem. Everyone knows Cowper's portrait and his muslin nightcap, and his passion for hares. Was Southey wrong? Egregiously wrong. Cowper was just the man a woman would fall in love with. It is always a delight to a woman when a man

has the faculty of lifting the commonplaces of her life up into sweetness and nobleness ; and Cowper with his wonderful poetical fancy could do this better than any other man that ever lived. Even his weakness was attractive ; for a woman likes nothing better than to have a good deal to do for the man she loves. A man who knew a good deal about women, said that there was nothing a woman liked so much as to lend money to her lover. This is perhaps one reason why Lord Churchill—the first Duke of Marlborough—was such a favourite with the ladies, because, not being a very scrupulous person, and having a great quantity of debts, he gave women an opportunity of lending him money, and was perpetually laying himself under this obligation to them. The relations between Cowper and the two women just mentioned were very lovely. In a Buckinghamshire village, Plato was justified, Dante made practical, Petrarch illustrated, and Ariosto carried out.

Martin Luther was very much exercised in the same way with the nuns. When the convents were broken up, the sweet doves knew not where to go, except to the window-sill of Luther. He had to consider first whether a monk could marry, and then whether a monk could marry a nun. At last he did marry. He didn't pretend Platonism ; but it was a good, serviceable, earthly kind of marriage, and it had the true friendship in the nobleness of it. Upon the whole, it was a very sweet and noble marriage with that sometime nun. He used sometimes to refer to her as his doctor at home. Sometimes he retreated away upstairs when he had something difficult to do. Upon one occasion he remained upstairs three whole days and nights, until she was nearly broken-hearted, and she went up to him, and then he was sad that he had sacrificed her so much. I grant that they had a cloud sometimes ; as who could pass through life without ?

John Flaxman is another illustration of the joy proceeding from a union based on true friendship. He was one of the purest souls that Old England ever bore. His wife, Ann Denman, was a darling. It has been said of them that the church tried a marriage and performed a miracle, changing them into one flesh and one blood. Meeting with Sir Joshua Reynolds, that arch old bachelor made the ill-natured remark that Flaxman was ruined by his marriage. Flaxman and his wife went to Rome, and on

their return, he dedicated a book containing forty designs to her, after they had been married fourteen years. At last Ann Flaxman died, and though his days were not done, all his sunshine was over, and he lived in the twilight of what remained.

Samuel Johnson's marriage, and the long, long shadow the loss of his wife threw over his wonderful life, might also be referred to. Touching extracts from his Prayers and Meditations I might read, too, showing the depth of the love which he had for her, and which he cherished to the end of his life.

I will now conclude. I had thought of indulging in a peroration, but the awful performances to which I have sometimes been compelled to listen under that name deter me, and I shall, therefore, only ask you to ponder upon the principle I have endeavoured to lay down, and, if just, take it to heart—that no union between man and woman can be holy, sweet, or enduring, except it be a union of two who turn together in true friendship towards a greatness and a goodness beyond them both. All the rest is but the flicker of a fire, brightly blazing, soon dying,—unconsecrated by friendship, therefore a morning light that will not hold out till noon.

## THE STUDY OF GERMAN LITERATURE.

### I.

A TIME has been when it was needful to apologise for lack of patriotism in speaking anything in praise of foreign literature,—for literature has had its “native industry” party, like other things, and a true Briton has scorned to show a liking for the foreign. But this notion is well-nigh gone out, and men are beginning to see that the study of foreign literature is needful in order to that full culture to which every man should aspire. No single literature, any more than any single school of art, can have possession of the full, the whole truth. In painting, one school excels in form; another in colour; and the one supplements the other. The full monopoly even of national blessing has been given to no land; what the inhabitant of the tropic gains in fertility, he loses in the thick presence of wild beasts and reptiles; and what the northern man loses in fertility of soil or mildness of climate, he gains in strong-nerved arm and strong-piercing intellect. Just so with literature, which is but a mental copy of the outer world. The monopoly of truth is given to no single literature; its beauties and blessings are distributed to different lands; and, as no man now thinks it necessary to dress wholly in native manufactures, or to confine his food to native produce, so it is coming to pass that he no longer desires to wear no literary robes except those woven in the old home loom. This principle needs to be understood, for the coming Catholicism, unlike the past, will consist of men of different sects, creeds, and parties, each bringing what of truth he has to the great common store.

In this country, the great parties in politics and religion are being broken up, and every man is invited to a grand coalition of all the true and thoughtful men, who are united in that best bond of fellowship, a common end and aim,—the aspiration after the absolute truth. The literature of any single country may be good

up to a certain mark, but must be defective ; for it is only the mental exponent of the peculiarities of that country, and in it may distinctly be traced the influence of natural and national peculiarities.

Is it needful, then, to combine the elements of the literature of different nations? This will depend upon whether literature is looked upon as mere "entertaining knowledge," or is regarded as a true culture. It is reserved for the modern Germans to teach this higher and sublimer view of literature. In this country it has too much degenerated into an amusement ; light, entertaining literature is in high demand ; something that will never give a man the head-ache, but which will enable him to pass away time, or, as a wicked phrase has it, to "kill time." The Germans, on the contrary, look on the literary man as one of the priests of his age, set by God between the infinite and the finite, to reveal the one to the other ; he stands as the old prophet, to read for the mass of mankind the mystic hand-writing upon the wall ; for to man, Nature is as a hand-writing in hieroglyphics, which must have a Daniel to expound and make it clear. The true teacher will find it his province and duty, to interpret to the majority of men the meaning of the hieroglyphics of nature, history, and the soul ; understanding their meaning, he will translate into the common tongue these hidden mysteries of God.

This notion of the duty of the literary man will supply also the true notion of literature,—that it is the translation into the known and vulgar tongue of the previously unknown and too deep. Literature will be to you a culture needful ; and it is only in this view of the matter that I have to discourse,—on literature, not as an entertainment, pastime, or amusement, but as the appointed mode of cultivating the intellect, the heart, and the spirit. Hence, we learn the necessity of its being total and complete. Men of one idea have always been tedious and tiresome ; they need a little journeying and voyaging, in order to see that their small acre is but a little thing when compared with the great wide world around them. All the authors of England, or of France, or of Germany, do but supply their own province of human knowledge. God has suffered no nation to monopolise the whole truth ; He has distributed it more or less among them all ; and if a complete culture be the object we seek, it can only be gained

by extracting out of various literatures the peculiar elements they severally contain.

The men of old were always more or less indebted to foreign literature. Those well acquainted with the old Greek literature can trace the Egyptian elements in it ; which give depth and darkness to the otherwise too light and sunny philosophy of the Greeks. The wise men of the Greeks went to what to them was as a foreign University, to supply them with that needful portion of literature which their own country could not by possibility give. So, too, the Roman was in large measure thus indebted to the Greek ; the young Romans went to Athens as to their foreign University ; it being needful to put upon the harsh and hard iron of the Roman nature, some of the pure and refined gold of Greek philosophy. In the earlier part of the mid-ages, much of the beauty with which the doctrines of the Christian church were set forth, was derived from the old Greeks, and the early Greek fathers of the Christian church. The great quickening of the human mind in Europe was a revival of the old Classics. The men of our own golden age of literature, the men of Elizabeth's time (and after all they are our best) are usually cultivators of foreign literature, great classics, and acquainted with foreign tongues ; and we can trace in their writings the beneficial influence of this foreign culture.

If these things are true, it becomes us to aim at a full, and therefore at a foreign culture ; so as to supplement a due knowledge of our own literature. As in water-colour drawings there is first laid on a neutral or ground tint, consisting of all the colours to be used, so with the culture of the mind. Some of the early years of life should be an attempt to know everything, and when this neutral or ground tint has been laid on, the man may put upon it any more positive colour which the bent of his mind, or the needful requirements of life, shall dictate to him. Young men are sometimes warned against studying too many things, and recommended to select some one branch of knowledge, and apply themselves diligently and exclusively to that. Up to a certain time of life, I believe that to be bad advice. The cases are numerous of literary, self-educated and self-taught men, whose early reading has been most promiscuous. The early life should rather be a gathering in of various and diverse knowledge, and

upon that ground-work may be interwoven that particular study which life requires shall be as the pattern upon the cloth. When a man is not to be literary by profession, his culture in early life should be diverse and manifold. A foreign tongue will gift him with an amount of knowledge, which he would not otherwise possess. If he is to be a literary man, it is needless to say how necessary a full and complete culture will be to him. I regret that there should be so little of this complete culture; that man should be satisfied with becoming learned in the quantities of Greek syllables; with getting up a Latin metre, or writing a most elaborate treatise upon the Greek *digamma*. The soul, being harmonic, needs harmonic culture, and every original part of man's nature should get from him its due measure and supply of food. All men should struggle to acquire what the Germans call many-sidedness, so that whichever way they are turned, they shall present a polished face to the circumstance, and always be found ready; men amongst men, children amongst children, grave with the grave, and gay with the gay; shall hold with Solomon, that everything is beautiful in its season, and that there is a time for everything; they shall know how to mourn with the mourner, and rejoice with the joyous. Can a single literature do all this? I believe it cannot, and will note some things in which I think our English literature is rather defective.

English criticism is full of strange absurdities, and may be classed in several schools. One very popular school takes this for its rule,—Given the book, to find the man, and in the book to see everything of the man. The rule of another school is, to forget the book in good, hearty abuse of the author; its question is,—“What school does the teacher belong to?” Having found that he does not belong to “our side,” then, of course, it is proper to squeeze all the verjuice of a critic's nature upon him. Then there is the balancing school of criticism, still much in vogue, where if you put a penny-weight of praise in one scale, in order to show your great impartiality you put a penny-weight of blame in the other, and everything on the one side is counterbalanced by an “if” or a “but” on the other. Thus, of a poet, it is said, “His flights are very daring, *but* somewhat profane;” “his similes are very original, *but* they are not always in good taste;” “the man appears to be well-meaning, *but* he has mistaken his end and aim.”

So this wriggling, balancing criticism, runs on. The majority of man's errors are built upon what were once truths,—based upon virtues, are assumed virtues; and in this case criticism ascends the throne, and assumes the virtue of perfect impartiality.

English criticism has much of that dandy spirit of the last age, which never admired, never wondered, or was surprised at anything; which held it a mark of low breeding to show astonishment. To such a man you can never show anything but he has seen or known it before; and he deems that a cold, calm, stoical indifference, is the proper position for a well-bred Englishman. This indifferentism has crept into our literature, and many of the cold-blooded authors of the last century were of this starched, stiff-necked school. At last it reaches the critic, who sits upon his throne, deeming it weak, and utterly beneath him, to show feeling or express enthusiasm. These critics do much mischief, very little good; and men should just learn to do their own praising and blaming for themselves. By means of such criticism as I have described, men come into society ready to give verdicts on books they have never read, just from knowing what the reviewer says about them. They are thus saved the trouble of thinking; the critics do it all. Thus the *Edinburgh Review* put down Byron, extinguished Wordsworth, and shut out Coleridge. In one short sentence, the critic despatched his man:—"This will not do, Mr Wordsworth;" and so he was at once put out. "Here sit I, critic; if you come not up to my standard, you must be stretched till you do; if you are beyond it, you must be lopped down till you are short enough."

Criticism is a very different thing among the Germans. It is not a mere attempt to stretch out or contract to a particular standard; not a mere analysis of the mechanism of a metaphor, or a laboured dissertation on style, or a mere weighing and balancing of blame and praise; but it is an attempt to render even plainer than the author has done, that which he has written; understanding the author's symbolic characters, the critic comes in as interpreter between him and the reader. This kind of criticism, though becoming more frequent in England, is not yet much in vogue.

But what have the Germans done in criticism? There was no very sound criticism on Shakespeare in England, till we imported



it from the Germans, and since then we begin to understand the poet better than before. Now, Coleridge, Hazlitt, and many others, are teaching us the true criticism of Shakespeare; not the mere verbal criticism once in vogue, but spiritual criticism; understanding what he means, and seeing what is involved in his writings, and bringing out the deep and hidden meaning of the poet. But this they learned from the Germans, who unite with us cordially in love and reverence for that greatest of the great ones. The German critic did not discuss why the poet had drawn such characters; he went up to Shakespeare as to Nature; he said, "I am not to object that the poet has made it thus; it is there, and I am to expound it, it being there." When a man pronounces an author or a passage to be unintelligible, he is often writing his own verdict, instead of the book's. While he thinks he is blaming the author, he is only telling how dull and stupid he is himself. English criticism, then, is defective in true criticism; or what of true criticism is in it, is mainly borrowed from the Germans. Criticism forms a large part of a man's literary education, and no Englishman will get a thorough understanding of its true nature without being more or less indebted for it to the Germans.

English literature is yet very defective in æsthetics, or that branch of culture and criticism which applies to the science and philosophy of the artistic, or what we call the "fine arts." The criticism of painting and poetry in this country is improving; still there is much cant about these things, and I am sorry to say that it is mainly borrowed from our journals. The Jenkinism of newspaper criticisms on music, painting, the drama, &c., is much to be deprecated. Look at the fine phrases so current in newspapers. No newspaper writer ever writes that a man is burned to death. Oh, no; he "fell a victim to the devouring element." In newspapers, no man is ever drowned: he "finds a watery grave." Æsthetics would set all this right; for there would be a quiet waiting of the *word* until the *deed* were understood. The false criticism is a squeezing of the deed into the pre-arranged forms of the word; whereas, in æsthetics, there is a quiet and reverent waiting of the form upon the deed. The poem itself is the antecedent deed, and the critic sits reverently at the feet of the artist, musician, or poet, and is content to interpret the word already given birth to in the deed. The whole criticism of the

fine arts is better taught by the Germans than by the English ; it is reduced by them to a science, and æsthetics forms a most important branch of German literature.

As to the spirit of literature, English literature is not, on the whole, a religious literature, though in some branches theological enough. It is high time men should know the difference between theology and religion ; for they have been so interwoven together that in this country they have been often regarded as synonymous. The more catholic will hold that there is some common point on which men of diverse churches and sects can yet meet ; that truth has always won for itself disciples and advocates ; that under the roof of the Roman Catholic Church, and in the most unornamented conventicles, there have been bred good, true, and pious men,—true children of God, and sons of the light. If religion and theology were one, this could not be ; for then these men of different theologies could not all be religious. Religious life, apart and distinct from theology, has been little found in English literature, always excepting the time of Elizabeth, many of the writers then being the most pious spirits the world ever had. Many of our old poets breathe, in every part of them, a truly religious spirit. But when that godless monarch, Charles II., came in, there followed in his train a number of godless writers, who would be ashamed to be seen in such vulgar company as a religious doctrine, or a religious man. It runs through the writers of the last century, till we have such bigoted anti-bigots as David Hume, who is not to be suspected of bigotry ; but he never did a man justice who had a spark of religion in his composition. It is a boast of the literary men, that they are the true *illuminati* of the time ; that it may very well do for the people to be religious, that religion may be an excellent thing to keep the populace in order, but is a most unseemly appendage to a gentleman, a most unbecoming thing for the illuminated artistes and literary men of the day to possess. Hence, much of our literature is an atheistic and godless literature. For the truest atheism is that of the heart ; living a life without God is a true atheism, and the number of intellectual atheists, of whom we have heard so much in the literary battles of the past age, is exceedingly few. This fault is being cured much in modern English literature, and has been cured much in modern German literature.

There still linger among us specimens of the old school, as even down to lately an occasional pigtail may be seen. Now there are many literary pigtails, who come forth and warn us against the tendencies and dangers of German literature ; against its atheistic and irreligious spirit ; whereas I would turn the tables, and say, the modern German literature is the most religious in the world—I do not say theological, but religious—in its spirit, its temper, its heart, and its life. For religion of a true kind no more continually obtrudes upon us its theology, than does a wise man separate the moral from the fable. German literature is wise in this respect ; they have not first written us the tale, and the practical improvement afterwards. They have not summed up with a few moral reflections ; but a religious temper and spirit is inwoven with the piece. It is not like the religion of many, a sort of side chapel, that can be easily removed ; but it is an integral part of the edifice, without which a part would be unroofed, or in decay. When I say the German literature is religious, I do not mean that men will be able to cull many religious propositions, or extract many ready-made sermons out of it ; but they will find in it a pious, lowly, simple-minded, and humble faith. Though there may be little *said* about religion as a doctrine, there will be much *done* about religion in its spirit.

To take another case : it has been said that Englishmen have a great dislike to a scene in the market-place ; that it is something unmanly for a man to be given to deep feeling, and it is often thought a manly thing to repress an emotion. Now, this spirit has got thoroughly into our literature ; it does not like to show too much emotion. But this becomes a fault ; it is carried to an iciness which sends a deadly chill through it, and takes out those feelings which it was at first but hiding, and a man begins to find at last that the emotions which he has long hidden will die out of him. A man may mask his feelings until he has none to mask. This is true of a large part of English literature ; there is a keeping down of this sort of feeling, a being ashamed to be seen under such a weak aspect. Not so in German literature. There, all these home and heart feelings are fully embodied ; and in my next lecture I will show how these feelings are gloried in by the great German, Richter.

I remember but few English books which give a true picture of

the boy-life of a great man : the man is made to forget the small circumstances of his life. This is partly borrowed from the vulgar philosophy which can see nothing great in small things, and which fails to see that what is done in childhood is a mark made in the yielding mass, which is never effaced until death, nor at death. The German seems to go back with delight to be a child again ; and hence Richter tells us of the delight one feels on a summer day in watching some lazily-flowing river, and disentangling certain unfortunate straws and chips which have halted by the brink. Is there any use in detailing these things? To the shallow man, the would-be great man, and the really great-small man, there is none ; but to the deep-hearted and wise man, much, for they show him the different forms in which one spirit has manifested itself ; they help to teach him the great lesson, that man is at all times the same ; that childhood is but a different masking under which the spirit works ; and they teach him also that most needful lesson of identity. It is needful for the man that the link should in no case be broken, between his early childhood and his after manhood : if it be broken, the main beauty of life is over, for that is to trace the dawning of the light of his morning of life until the perfect day. Too many Englishmen would make us believe that, Minerva-like, they came forth at once matured and full-armed ; whereas the high, devoted German shows how he came forth a little child, with much vacancy, with much to be done, and how, by many small events, the after-culture of the full man was effected and brought out.

If literature be an exponent of all life, there should be in it something corresponding to what is called Home. One of the best elements of the English character is the love of home, and woe-worth the day when Englishmen give it up, and learn to live all abroad, for the safe-guard of this country's character is the keeping up of the home feeling ; but, strange to say, our literature has very little of this character. The French and Germans live more out of doors than we do ; and yet our literature has very little of the homely ; we have no glory about these little home things, while the German, who lives more away from home, is actually in his literature the most homeful. Many such passages in the life of Richter would sound absurd to many Englishmen ; and hence comes the notion of German literature so well expressed

by the modern author, who says the time was when the very mention of it gave us a notion of fryings in frowsy back parlours. There is use in this element, this home-feeling, in literature, as there is use in the love of home in the character of a man. Great men have most of these quiet and deep-running elements, these under-currents of life ; and if it be such a constituent part of the goodly character of a man, it should also be a constituent of the goodly character of a literature ; because the home-feelings in the man demand them in the literature. All this philosophy of the home, this Dutch painting of the interior, is to be found in the greatest perfection in the Germans.

In our criticism, there is too much finding fault with one thing, because it is not another thing ; but how useless is it to quarrel with the Dutch painter, because his interior has not the glory of a sunset of Claude ; he never meant that it should, but a picture-gallery would be incomplete if it should possess a Raffaele and a Claude, and have not a Wilkie, a Teniers, or an Ostade. So, in literature, there should be the Dutch interior as well as the Italian landscape ; holy pieces from the Gospel, and also pieces from the simple life of the fireside. This is not to be found enough in English literature ; we must go abroad to the Germans for these paintings of interior scenes ; and it is only by the deep and simple-minded writers of those lands, that we can be supplied with these true home-pictures, which appeal so powerfully to every feeling in a true man's heart, and which are necessary to give a Catholicity and a full culture to his mind. Here I will close, and in my next lecture show some things in which the English literature is defective, and also in what it may be supplied by the Germans.

## II.

In the preceding lecture, I have spoken of some of the points in which the German literature would supplement the defects in the English literature ; or, to speak more mildly, of some of the points in which the German has excelled the English literature. These are the home department of literature, or that attention to the smaller things of life, which have been overlooked in a literature that has grown artificial, supercilious, and vulgar, on

account of seeing no greatness or grandeur in anything that did not bear the outward stamp of rank or wealth: for the toadying spirit of an age creeps into its literature. That of the last age was infested with this small, vulgar lackey spirit, which waited upon the rich man, and which completely turned the spiritual laws of the world,—which are, that its authors, thinkers, and poets, are its true rulers; and that its governors and rulers be but the hands, moving in obedience to the spirit and soul of those who are the thinkers of an age or time. This sort of spirit has led to the neglect of the smaller things of life in our literature, and this defect is well supplied by the study of the great Germans.

I have spoken of reading a few illustrations in which the smaller things of a man's life are heeded or cared for; because these writers know that nothing is lost or wasted, and that the composite character of a man's after-life can only be understood by diligent and patient study of the smaller events which went to construct that life or character. Of course, in this respect, Richter stands pre-eminently forward; for he is the German who, sooner or later, will be most loved by the English. He has a noble spirit, and a noble genius; and though his style is eccentric, and there is much that is unintelligible at first, yet there plays around him such a kindly feeling, he writes in so hearty and genial a spirit, that where we cannot always trace, we always trust. I will read you the passages from Jean Paul's "Life of Quintus Fixlein," in which he presents to the reader some reminiscences of childhood, when he revisits his birthplace in after-life; and his description of the Barn-Church, etc. This is a remarkable specimen of the style of this great writer. Many of the allusions being foreign, would not reveal themselves to an English reader at once; but the humour, the quiet and quaint drollery of the scenes, and the reminiscences of little matters, will indicate to you both the lack and the supply of what he means. Richter is remarkable for humour; using that word in its best sense, and as differing from that noisy thing called wit; because humour lies very near the borders of the pathetic, and as often calls up tears from the gentle heart of man, as smiles. I will read you, first, the humorous description from Richter's story of "Schmelzle's Journey to Flätz," of the preparations for travelling of that over-cautious person, when about to take a

short journey from one town to another, and of his fright when, wandering by the way and seeing a tablet at a distance which he supposed to be some monumental memorial, he found it inscribed,—"Beware of man-traps;" after which I will read you the account of his nocturnal and ghostly adventure.

## SCHMELZLE'S JOURNEY TO FLÄTZ.

*The preparation.*—The 22nd of July, or Wednesday, about five in the afternoon, was now, by the way-bill of the regular Post-coach, irrevocably fixed for my departure. I had still half a day to order my house; from which, for two nights and two days and a half, my breast, its breast-work and palisado, was now, along with myself, to be withdrawn. Besides this, my good wife, Bergelchen, as I call my Teutoberga, was immediately to travel after me, on Friday the 24th, in order to see and to make purchases at the yearly Fair; nay, she was ready to have gone along with me, the faithful spouse. I therefore assembled my little knot of domestics, and promulgated to them the Household Law and Valedictory Rescript, which, after my departure, in the first place *before* the outset of my wife, and in the second place *after* this outset, they had rigorously to obey; explaining to them especially whatever, in case of conflagrations, house-breakings, thunder-storms, or transits of troops, it would behove them to do. To my wife I delivered an inventory of the best goods in our little Register-ship; which goods she, in case the house took fire, had, in the first place, to secure. I ordered her, in stormy nights (the peculiar thief-weather), to put our Æolian harp in the window, that so any villainous prowler might imagine I was fantasying on my instrument, and therefore awake: for like reasons, also, to take the house-dog within doors by day, that he might sleep then, and so be livelier at night. I farther counselled her to have an eye on the focus of every knot in the panes of the stable-window, nay, on every glass of water she might set down in the house; as I had already often recounted to her examples of such accidental burning-glasses having set whole buildings in flames. I then appointed her the hour when she was to set out on Friday morning to follow me; and recapitulated more emphatically the household precepts, which, prior to her departure, she must afresh inculcate on her domestics. My dear, heart-sound, blooming Berga answered her faithful lord, as it seemed very seriously: "Go thy ways, little old one; it shall all be done as smooth as velvet. Wert thou but away! There is no end of thee!" Her brother, my brother-in-law the Dragoon, for whom, out of complaisance, I had paid the coach-fare, in order to have in the vehicle along with me a stout swordsman and hector, as spiritual relative and bully-rock, so to speak; the Dragoon, I say, on hearing

these my regulations, puckered up (which I easily forgave the wild soldier and bachelor) his sun-burnt face considerably into ridicule, and said: "were I in thy place, sister, I should do what I liked, and then afterwards take a peep into these regulation papers of his."

"O!" answered I, "misfortune may conceal itself like a scorpion in any corner: I might say, we are like children, who, looking at their gaily painted toy-box, soon pull off the lid, and, pop! out springs a mouse who has young ones."

"Mouse, mouse!" said he, stepping up and down. "But, good brother, it is five o'clock; and you will find, when you return, that all looks exactly as it does to-day; the dog like the dog, and my sister like a pretty woman: *allons donc!*" It was purely his blame that I, fearing his misconceptions, had not previously made a sort of testament.

I now packed in two different sorts of medicines, heating as well as cooling, against two different possibilities; also my old splints for arm or leg breakages, in case the coach overset; and (out of foresight) two times the money I was likely to need. Only here I could have wished, so uncertain is the stowage of such things, that I had been an ape with cheek-pouches, or some sort of opossum with a natural bag, that so I might have repositied these necessaries of existence in pockets which were sensitive. Shaving is a task I always go through before setting out on journeys; having a rational mistrust against stranger bloodthirsty barbers: but, on this occasion, I retained my beard; since, however close shaved, it would have grown again by the road to such a length that I could have fronted no Minister and General with it.

With a vehement emotion, I threw myself on the pith-heart of my Berga, and, with a still more vehement one, tore myself away: in her, however, this our first marriage-separation seemed to produce less lamentation than triumph, less consternation than rejoicing; simply because she turned her eye not half so much on the parting, as on the meeting, and the journey after me, and the wonders of the Fair. Yet she threw and hung herself on my somewhat long and thin neck and body, almost painfully, being indeed a too fleshy and weighty load, and said to me: "Whisk thee off quick, my charming Attel (Attila), and trouble thy head with no cares by the way, thou singular man! A whiff or two of ill-luck we can stand, by God's help, so long as my father is no beggar. And for thee, Franz," continued she, turning with some heat to her brother, "I leave my Attel on thy soul: thou well knowest, thou wild fly, what I will do, if thou play the fool, and leave him anywhere in the lurch." Her meaning here was good, and I could not take it ill: to you also, my Friends, her wealth and her open-heartedness are nothing new.



*The Spring-guns.*—I had almost forgotten to mention, that in a little village, while my Brother-in-law and the Postilion were sitting at their liquor, I happily fronted a small terror, Destiny having twice been on my side. Not far from a Hunting Box, beside a pretty clump of trees, I noticed a white tablet, with a black inscription on it. This gave me hopes that perhaps some little monumental piece, some pillar of honour, some little memento, might here be awaiting me. Over an untrodden flowery tangle, I reach the black on white; and to my horror and amazement, I decipher in the moonshine: *Beware of Spring-guns!* Thus was I standing perhaps half a nail's breadth from the trigger, with which, if I but stirred my heel, I should shoot myself off like a forgotten ramrod, into the other world, beyond the verge of Time! The first thing I did was to slutch down my toe-nails, to bite, and, as it were, eat myself into the ground with them; since I might at least continue in warm life so long as I pegged my body firmly in beside the Atropos-scissors and hangman's block, which lay beside me; then I endeavoured to recollect by what steps the Fiend had led me hither unshot, but in my agony I had perspired the whole of it, and could remember nothing. In the Devil's village close at hand, there was no dog to be seen and called to, who might have plucked me from the water; and my Brother-in-law and the Postilion were both carousing with full can. However, I summoned my courage and determination; wrote down on a leaf of a pocket-book my last will, the accidental manner of my death, and my dying remembrance of Berga; and then, with full sails, flew helterskelter through the midst of it the shortest way; expecting at every step to awaken the murderous engine, and thus to clap over my still long candle of life the *bonsoir*, or extinguisher, with my own hand. However, I got off without shot. In the tavern, indeed, there was more than one fool to laugh at me; because, forsooth, what none but a fool could know, this Notice had stood there for the last ten years, without any gun, as guns often do without any notice. But so it is, my friends, with our game-police, which warns against all things, only not against warnings.

*First night in Flätz.*—Yet the wine did not take from me the good sense to look under the bed before going into it, and examine whether anyone was lurking there; for example, the Dwarf, or the Ratcatcher, or the Legations-Rath; also to shove the key under the latch (which I reckon the best bolting arrangement of all), and then, by way of farther assurance, to bore my night-screws into the door, and pile all the chairs in a heap behind it; and lastly, to keep on my breeches and shoes, wishing absolutely to have no care upon my mind.

But I had still other precautions to take in regard to sleep-walking. To me it has always been incomprehensible how so many men can go to bed, and lie down at their ease there, without reflecting that per-

haps, in the first sleep, they may get up again as Somnambulists, and crawl over the tops of roofs and the like ; awakening in some spot where they may fall in a moment and break their necks. While at home, there is little risk in my sleep : because, my right toe being fastened every night with three ells of tape (I call it in jest our marriage-tie) to my wife's left hand, I feel a certainty that, in case I should start up from this bed-arrest, I must with the tether infallibly awaken her, and so by my Berga, as by my living bridle, be again led back to bed . . .

[But being at an Inn he ties himself to the bed-posts.] . . .

Shortly before midnight, I awoke from a heavy dream, to encounter a ghost-trick much too ghostly for my fancy. My Brother-in-law, who manufactured it, deserves for such rapid cookery to be named before you without reserve, as the malt-master of this washy brewage. Had suspicion been more compatible with intrepidity, I might perhaps, by his moral maxim about this matter, on the road, as well as by his taking up the side-room, at the middle door of which stood my couch, have easily divined the whole. But now, on awakening, I felt myself blown upon by a cold ghost-breath, which I could nowise deduce from the distant bolted window ; a point I had rightly decided, for the Dragoon was producing the phenomenon, through the key-hole, by a pair of bellows. Every sort of coldness, in the night-season, reminds you of clay-coldness and spectre-coldness. I summoned my resolution, however, and abode the issue : but now the very coverlid began to get in motion ; I pulled it towards me ; it would not stay ; sharply I sit upright in my bed, and cry : "What is that?" No answer ; everywhere silence in the Inn ; the whole room full of moonshine. And now my drawing-plaster, my coverlid, actually rose up, and let in the air ; at which I felt like a wounded man whose cataplasm you suddenly pull off. In this crisis, I made a bold leap from this Devil's-torus, and, leaping, snapped asunder my somnambulist tether. "Where is the silly human fool," cried I, "that dares to ape the unseen sublime world of Spirits, which may, in the instant, open before him?" But on, above, under the bed, there was nothing to be heard or seen. I looked out of the window : everywhere spectral moonlight and street stillness ; nothing moving except (probably from the wind), on the distant Gallows-hill, a person lately hanged.

Turning away, however, from those points in which the English and German literatures are only comparative, I will now point attention to some positive things of German literature. It is the most suggestive literature of any with which I am acquainted. It is too much the practice with most men to read mainly for the sake of what is in the book ; hence, it is of more consequence to

them to remember what the book *says*, than what it makes them *think*. A great many men never have an idea visit them by any chance that does not come from somewhere else. All their thoughts are a sort of patchwork,—clippings from other people's production, and sewn into some pattern by their own contrivance. They are like the man of whom it has been said, that he laid so many books upon his brains, that he pressed his sense out at last. Men read as if they were "cramming," the problem being to see how much they can cram into a given space, in a given time. Hence, a catalogue and calendar of books read, is taken as a proof of wisdom. A deeply-thought man is worth a bushel of mere deep-learned men; because, if not deeply-thought, they can do little with their reading. They are like fire-engines, which, it is almost proverbial, are sure, just when they are wanted, to be dismally out of order, or else the man who keeps the key has gone to a distance; whereas the deeply-thinking man is ready at all times, in all places, in any emergency, in any difficulty. The end to be sought in a book, is not so much a mere author's catalogue and calendar of facts or opinions, as the amount of thinking it will cause us to do. Of course, some books, as dictionaries, catalogues, and calendars, are valuable *for* the list of facts they contain; but the higher class of books should be tested, not by what they tell to us, but what they make us think and do. People talk of "getting through" a book; they will say they have accomplished sixty pages at a sitting; with them there is no shutting up the book in the middle to think it out; no laying down the book to wander away, perhaps into higher regions than the author himself; but, like modern tourists, who talk of "doing" a city, or doing such a district in so little time;—as a man says, "I have done Rome, and I am going to do Naples or Florence," so you will hear a reading man say, "I have done Shakespeare and five books of 'The Faerie Queene,' and I have so many more to do." This is after all useful to them; but it is not of the highest utility; for the worth of a book or of a literature is not the amount of ready-made thinking that can be got out of it, but the amount of thinking that is caused by it.

A vast number of English books may be read, and yet be wholly guiltless of causing thought in the reader, being a sort of warmed-up dish of things known before, wherein it is the spicing

and due admixture that give the charm to the composition. Whereas, with the higher class of books,—such as the books of our old literature of the time of Elizabeth, without reading which, no man knows the deepest treasures of English literature,—and with the books of the old Germans, it is otherwise; by them a man is made to think; he is often pulled sharp up in the midst of a page, to think what the author means; and more thought will be the result of this class of books, than of whole catalogues of the amusing, light, and entertaining literature, upon which so many think they are spending their time profitably, but which is only, as a great author has said, a sort of mental dram-drinking and intellectual dissipation. Try the experiment; take the greatest works of the greatest Germans. Take the works of Coleridge, the finest specimen in English of a suggestive writer. No man can read his works without thinking, if there is the power of thinking in him. If there be the most fractional part of the power of thinking in you, Coleridge is the man to draw it out; for his books, and such books, are like the divining rods said to be carried of old to discover earth-concealed treasure,—they dip upon the gold alway; and before him, like some great magician, whatsoever lies sleeping and shadowed in the soil, will at his beck rise up and appear. As Coleridge says, many thoughts in the minds of men lie bed-ridden; there wants some thaumaturgic power to bid them come forth. What such healing power would do for the paralytic bodies of men, that should these books do for their souls; by their inspiration and utterance, they should cause these paralytic souls and bed-ridden thoughts to take up their beds and walk.

There is in many men much more good than is yet known to themselves; there are many who would not suppose they were able to think great thoughts; and if I were to charge you with being able to think greater thoughts than any that are written, you would not believe me; yet there often lie involved in the minds of men, the seeds of much that is beautiful and high in thought, and that want only to be breathed upon by the right wind,—that need only “the fair Favonian gale” to breathe upon them, in order to come to their blossoming and blooming. I am no advocate of that poor mock modesty which will not admit the high possibilities in every man. Let this high literature be a touch-stone and test; let these

great authors use their divining rods ; if there is any golden vein in the intellect, they will find it ; if there is not, why then all that is to be done is just quietly to shut the matter up and tell no one.

Suppose I turn the tables awhile, and say that the modern German literature has been exceeded by the English ; that the Germans never have come up to our greatest masters ; that there is no German that comes up to Shakespeare ; none of them that ever transcended Milton. Yet, in the words of a transatlantic writer, the mantle of these old Englishmen has rather fallen upon the modern Germans than upon modern Englishmen. This may be called unpatriotic, and treated as a sneer of an American on the Fatherland, towards which some of them show such an insane hatred. But try it, and you will find that the modern Germans can produce for us greater books than any in modern English literature. The Classics are almost all edited and annotated by Germans. We have none to compare in this respect with Wolff, Heyne, Schweighæuser, Wyttenbach, Herrmann, Creubner, and others. For history, who shall we place in comparison with Niebuhr, or Müller, or Schlosser ? In geography, Ritter far exceeds anything that we have done. In the history of philosophy and literature, every English book is but a reproduction of Brucker's great work upon the History of Philosophy. In theology, Englishmen of late have done exceedingly little : as it has been said, they have produced the Bridgewater Treatises, and new editions of Paley's Theology. These are the outside of their great achievements ; and some of us think that Paley, at the beginning, was but a small affair ; so that it is but the reproduction of a little thing upon which they have to pique or plume themselves. It were to weary you to read the names of all the Germans who have written great works on theology, but I may name Gesenius, Ewald, Michaelis, Jahn, Hug, De Wette, Rosenmüller, Paulus, Hengstenberg, and Tholuck. These are but a few of the great German theologians. For critical theology, systematic theology, men must be indebted much to the Germans ; for there is little done in this country, and what is done is either the translation or the reproduction of the works of German divines.

But their influences are feared. In what are the influences of German theology to be feared ? We have loud outcries against

their infidel tendencies. Why? For every German infidel that can be produced, his counterpart can be produced at home. This fear, then, is useless; men will read them, and the more noise that is made about them, and the more they are prohibited, the more they will read them; for stolen waters always were sweet, and bread eaten in secret always will have a charm. So with German theology; the more divines will ban and frown upon it, the more the juniors will seek after, and love it. The best way to oppose it is to say nothing against it. But then these laymen will trench upon the pastures of the pastors, interfering with clerical men, and putting their "poison," as it is called, in places where it should not be found. These matters, however, belong to that small kind of guidance, out of which we are working our way; for we now understand, that to be a teacher, it is needful to know both the things to be taught and the things to be opposed. In order to convince men of a verity, it is often needful to know the falsity. Besides, according to John Milton's book, which I regard as a masterpiece of English literature, his "Defence of the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing" (and unless a young man has read that, he has not read one of the greatest pieces of writing in this language)—in that work Milton tells us that all kinds of books should have their due place in the world, and every man should be suffered to study what he likes, because truth will never suffer in any combat. So with German theology: if false, we are not obliged to believe it; if pernicious, it is only a perniciousness to which we shall be exposed sooner or later; because, if we do not go to Germany to study it, or read it here in the original tongue, it will always be translated into our own.

In ecclesiastical history, we have no men to come up to Mosheim and Neander; and we have few later poets to compare with Goethe and Schiller.

Then, what shall we say of the great region of mental philosophy? In this country we have Dugald Stewart, and Reid, Jeremy Bentham, and J. S. Mill. The Germans have their Kant, and Fichte, and Hegel, and Schelling. Many objections are taken in this country to the German philosophy, which is said to be dreamy, transcendental, and unintelligible. It is fashionable in this country to denounce the Kantian philosophy, as a piece of unmitigated mysticism. But read what Thomas

Carlyle has said as to this charge of mysticism made against the Germans. Whether we are believers in the Kantian and other transcendental philosophies or not, it becomes us all to see what is the great and noble work which the founder of this philosophy, Kant, has set himself to do. The question whether he has done it is an after question; but what he proposes to do, what he regards as the work before him, *that* we all of us should understand, and then there would not be so much of that silly, shallow, flippant mode of talking about German transcendentalism so often heard amongst Englishmen.

The school in vogue both in this country and in France, in the last century, was one that maintained there are no inlets to knowledge but the five senses; or, as Locke would say, sensation and reflection. Try that; take the consequences; see what the masters of that great school of philosophy got out of it. There was Hobbes, who held that the only possible inlets to a man's knowledge were through his senses. Through that he arrived at absolutism in politics, unmitigated selfishness in morals, and nothingness in religion. These are not charges against the man, but the results which he himself drew from his principles. Every feeling, moral emotion, and virtue, are resolved by Hobbes into some form of self-love. He says that men are naturally in a state of war with one another; that when they go into society, it is needful for the good of society that they be restrained; they must therefore submit to government and law, for the purpose of restraint; and, the self-will and selfishness of men being strong, the stronger the government, the more will the ends of society be carried out. The government by one will be the strongest; and strongest when that one is absolute. He arrives, therefore, at absolute government. He also, by his system, gets rid of God. The senses do not reveal God; the existence of God is but a priest's tale; and, by a most unphilosophical process, common to many infidels in the last century, he looked upon the priests, who are the results of a religion, as the creators of it. I do not, therefore, abuse Hobbes as a man who ought to be persecuted; I do not believe that a man is not fit to be a statesman, because he has edited Hobbes; nor will I say that Hobbes's books ought not to be read. Given his premisses, and you cannot avoid his conclusions.

The school went on, and, owing to a mistake on the part of Condillac—who misinterpreted Locke's philosophy, and left out "reflection," and gave it out that sensation was the only inlet to knowledge—the French school went on from step to step, until, in the writings of Cabanis, we were presented with this proposition,—that the brain secretes thought in the same way that the liver secretes bile; and that, with respect to poetry and the fine arts, they are the production of the smaller intestines, whereas theology and other heavy matters of that kind, we must suppose to be the results of the larger. The whole of these philosophers were prophetically quizzed in that very clever book, *Martinus Scriblerus*, where we are told that propositions and syllogisms are produced by a meeting of two or more small intestinal canals. Well, Cabanis's school has got us down to this point—that poetry is the production of one of the smaller intestines. Other Frenchmen have reasoned the thing out, till they have got rid of the existence of God. The senses do not teach God, and although Paley says they do, the Frenchman cannot see it; for the senses never revealed to him the soul as distinct from the body, or that there is any such Being as God.

There is some degree of truth even in this. In this country, Paley is still sworn by and much believed in; but there are certain individuals for whom Paley can do almost nothing; who deny that his mode of proving the existence of God is true for *them*. He would make you meet with a watch in your walk; the watch, a thing of design, teaches a designer. Then he says; because the watch is known to have a designer or creator, analogically, therefore, Nature also has a designer or Creator. But some are inclined to say, "Stop; what is it you say? Is there not enough of difference between the works of man and the works of Nature to make us pause?" We go to Nature, we see something the maker of which we do not know. We know a watch; we know that a watchmaker made it; we have seen them make watches; but who was present at the making of Nature? Is not the Book of Job true in that passage where God asks of him, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?" Then, again, as to its mode of working,—whoever laid his hand



upon the *end* of Nature? As a great American has said, it is an ecstacy, a whirl; it is a continual round, emblemed by the old Egyptian serpent, whose tail is in its mouth; you can never come to a stop, or a halting-place; everything works into every other thing; the phases of the moon regulate the tides, and also regulate certain states of man's brain; everything hangs upon every other thing so much, that a modern philosopher has told us it is even probable that every footfall upon the earth will vibrate through to its centre. Nay, it is said that it is even probable that every pulsation of the air, caused by the words we are speaking, holds on communicating its motion, and, if so, we may be at this moment writing ourselves upon the eternal; and these pulsations are going on in an eternal series, so that, literally, every word that man speaks is eternal and never-ending. If these things be true of Nature, they make it doubtful to some, whether it is fair for us to reason from the small Paley-watch. Because little Paley-watch had a maker, it does not follow that this great natural *machine* (as some would call it), this great mystic Nature, had any maker. This is a process which has happened to very many minds. They have stood at Nature; they have mounted from Paley and the watch up to Nature; and, when they got there, asked themselves, "Who says this had a maker? It springs forth anew every morning; why may I not know this as the primary fact? Is there not sufficient educing daily from it to make me think that it had power in the original to educe and create itself? Nay, is not this more likely, than that there should be a self-existent, uncreated Creator from all eternity?" This is the position to which many minds,—I will say, too, religious, pious, and well-intentioned minds,—are reduced. French philosophy was reduced to the dead level of atheism; but many a man, who would fain believe, has been made an unbeliever through the Paleyan process of demonstrating the existence of a God. I will suppose you to understand this rule—that you cannot at will transplant belief; that because Paley proves it to *you*, it does not follow that he must prove it to *us*. Nor does it follow that, because a man cannot see it, as Paley puts it, that he is an atheist, or a dreamer, or an infidel.

Then this sensational philosophy, this attempt to prove the existence of God both from Nature and the works of man, is to

some a failure. There remains something still to be done. Virtue, according to the reigning school of the last century, was mere selfishness ; God was but an illusion, contrived by priests ; the next world was a dream ; nobleness was an ideal coin, known only in the world of the poets, and men were reduced to the coldest, deadest, and most atheistic materialism. This was the state of many, very many minds, at the time when the sage of Königsberg sat down to work out his problem—Is it not possible to base the existence of God and of the soul, as apart from matter, to put the reality of the world to come, eternity, time, and space, upon sure, philosophic, rational grounds? Is it possible, or not, to make these things matters of pure scientific demonstration? Can we not turn the tables upon these infidels, and show them that, instead of these things being merely poetic dreams or atheistic visions, they are written deeply and brightly by the rules of a science that is unshakeable? His object was not merely to state that,—to appeal to the conscience in a man,—but to base these things so philosophically that they could not for the future be overthrown. Many Englishmen seem to think that Kant's philosophy is nothing but a spider spinning a subtle web from his own thinking,—making the subjective life of thought to be the objective law of fact. Not so. His intention is to base these things in science, and to reason them out as clearly as if they were the result of mathematical evidence. Whether he succeeds or not, this should be looked upon as one of the greatest problems which intellectual man ever set himself to solve. Nowhere do I know any other instance of a man setting himself down to study with so high an object, or so honourable an aim, in so noble a spirit, as Kant did. He sat down to see if he could not demonstrate for the great thinkers of the world, the important, the high and great facts of the existence of God, the soul, immortality, and the life to come. He sat down to do this vigilantly, patiently, unhastily, and yet unrestingly.

What is his reward? To be sneered and scoffed at by men who are too shallow to understand him ; to have it said that he is irreligious, because he does not mutter the particular Shibboleth of some narrow sect ; to be laughed at as a dreamer, and pointed at by fools as a fool. His system is said to be unintelligible. I believe nothing of the kind. The terminology is singular and

new ; but open for the first time a botanical book, and see what you can make of it. Look at its names, its *cryptogamia* and *monocotyledons* and the thousand-and-one strange, hybrid, queer-looking words it contains. So is it with the Kantian philosophy. Its wording may be singular, eccentric, and strange ; but it does not follow that a deep meaning does not lie under it. I must confess that it requires too much thinking for the majority of men to study ; but with some few exceptions, it may be taken for granted that what one man understands English enough to write, another understands English enough to read. Many great thinkers have pronounced this book of Kant's to be perfectly intelligible ; there are Englishmen that do understand it ; their numbers may be few, but it is perfectly certain that in the main features of this philosophy, many Englishmen have understood it.

This is not the occasion for going into a lengthened explanation of this philosophy : it sets itself to see whether or not it can find a foundation for the belief in God. How does it do it ? It marks clearly the distinction between the understanding and the reason, which the philosophers of this country have confounded. The understanding is a much lower thing than the reason ; it deals with the real, the practical, the outside, the objective ; with things which are submitted to it from without ; it arranges and classifies them ; deduces from them ;—but the reason deals with the pure, and the absolutely true. Understanding deals with the relative truth ; reasoning, with the pure, absolute, original truth. Take, for instance, the cases of time and space. It is very curious to see the Scotch modes of arriving at the ideas of space and of the world of time. The difference, as Condillac puts it, is that if we touch our own body, we have double sensations, and if we touch another body only single sensations,—so the difference between double and single sensations gives the notion of the out world, and so on of time and space. Now, Kant found that this would not prove anything of the kind to him ; that this time and space were earlier facts than this body-touching ; that time and space were not entities at all, but conditions laid upon the human mind, outside of which conditions it can possibly know nothing ; that all our possible knowledge must be subject to the conditions of time and space, and that the great distinction between the mind

of the Eternal One and the mind of a man is this,—that the Eternal One is not conditioned by time and space, and man is; that God is omnipresent, because He transcends time and space. The soul of man is conditioned to believe in the existence of God, and though, by a course of logic-chopping, a man may at times say he believes there is no God, yet the old character in which it is written that God is, is indelibly graven on the soul; and though the understanding may chatter about the nonexistence of a God, there will always be found behind this pie-talking, a belief in the truth that there is a God who reigneth over the ends of the earth.

This philosophy has been much expounded by that great man, Coleridge, the distinction between the Reason and the Understanding being the basis of almost all his system. He has endeavoured to solve that problem which, for certain of us, must always be done,—to bring about a reconciliation between the objective religion of the Bible, and the subjective religion of the soul. If you refuse to bridge over this gulf; if you will not condescend from your high places of theology to do it, you will consequently lose your hold upon the minds of some of the men best worth having; you will get presented to you the anomaly of some of the best men in the country, coming never near your churches, reading never your theological books. Why? Because oftentimes the theologian, with his objective system, insists that you shall hold it, whether you see it or not, whether your reason says aye or no. Faith must have it, obedience must carry the day; and consequently hold has been lost upon many of the most thoughtful spirits. What does Coleridge essay to do? To reconcile the religion of reason with the revelation of the Scriptures. He endeavours to show that there is no lack of harmony between the teachings of reason and the teachings of the Bible; and he makes it out to the satisfaction of the minds of many men,—for some of the greatest minds of late have been the men who sit at the feet of that “old man eloquent,” or who have deeply studied his works, those most glorious of modern English writings.

This problem, Kant and the transcendentalists set themselves to do. Some think that they have done it; others, that they have failed. If you believe in the existence of God, according to

Paley, believe it, and bless yourselves, and be thankful that you can be so easily convinced ; whereas, to some, the belief in God is written upon the heart, in ink which the warmth of life brings forth in living characters. It must be written sympathetically in the soul, and the after life educes the characters. For some believe that when God made the soul, He made it to exist under the conditions of time and space, of belief in God and immortality ; it is for them a high and noble faith, the foundation upon which they, in common with you, hope to build up the future structure of our religion, our morals, and our faith. Let there be between the two schools no quarrelling, and especially let not the one school of Paley affect to sneer at the other as unintelligible, mystic, dreaming, and transcendental. I believe it, and I could show how it presents a harmony between reason and revelation, and that there is more of the Kantian philosophy in the Scriptures than is often supposed. But this there is not time for.

What is the success of Kant, can be shown only by the student of these things. "By their fruits," it is said, "ye shall know them ;" and we may maintain that the fruits of Transcendentalism are more rich and precious than the fruits of the Scotch or of any other of the Sensational schools. We can always show to what school a philosopher belongs, by the tone of his mind, and the hold that his faith has upon him ; and I say that there have been higher thoughts, nobler ideas, found in the transcendental schools, than any which the other schools have brought forth. To prove this more strikingly, go to the German literature, and you will find there a revival of that which so distinguished our early writers ; a continual striving after some great unrealized thing ; a continual attempt to reach the divine idea. There has been little of this in the English school of philosophy. The presence of the divine idea was always asserted by Cudworth, an early Platonist of this country, and by Henry More ; but since, it has been forgotten, and it is now revived by the Germans. It was a Platonic doctrine that there is a divine idea pre-existent to the realised form. Whether you choose to take it or not in such mode as Plato would have put it in ; whether or not there exists, as an archetypal pattern, an idea to which the after-birth is only an accommodation ; still it is clear to the thinker, that there must be in the Divine mind an idea of what the world's politics

and man's religion ought to be, and how society ought to be ruled and governed.

The object of these great authors is to penetrate into this divine vision of things. Every true scholar should set this before him as the aim of his culture,—if possible, and as far as possible, to see all things as they must look to the eye of God; therefore is it needful that he become pure in heart and thoughtful in head. Assimilation to God will give to us a nearer approach to the Divine vision of things. The more a man becomes like God, the more he will see like God, the more will the world look to him as it does to God. This is the attainment of the Divine vision of things; and to this are directed the sublime attempts of the old writers amongst us and of the modern Germans. It is the attempt, amongst other moderns, of Wordsworth and Coleridge, if possible to see the soul, and things political, social and religious, as they appear to the Divine mind. The divine vision of things being attained, the after-life will be regulated thereby. If I can but for a moment get but a glimpse of my life, as it appears to God, then have I mapped out the course of that life; then I know at what to aim, and how to aim at it. This belief should be firmly rooted,—that there is a divine idea how things should be; that it is possible for the heart and intellect to attain to a knowledge of this infinite vision, this divine idea; and, this being granted, a man's after-life will be a continual struggle to reproduce, in his word, thought, and deed, the divine vision or idea. Fichte has laid this down in his work on the Vocation of the Scholar, that he is to make plain to the people the divine idea of life and of society; and if transcendentalism has done nothing more than to revive this idea, it has done much. If it has revived the possibility of knowing the divine idea, it has done enough to entitle it to every honour.

Suppose, for a moment, this transcendental philosophy not to be true, it has yet its use for Englishmen to study. The bent of the English mind has been practical; and is becoming, as Carlyle says, to do everything by machinery, for now nothing can be done except by a sort of mental machinery; everything is done in clubs, societies, leagues, councils and committees. No man stands or walks alone. Every spiritualism is to be done by machinery, a series of resolutions, meetings, *soirées*, and tea-bibblings. The old

idea was, that the force originated in the soul of the single man ; that his iron will formed the thing ; but the fractional men of to-day must unite themselves into a crowd before they get force enough to originate a new idea, or to do a noble deed. An Englishman, in the full and total culture I have been advocating, should endeavour to cure this propensity to raise up machinery and to have little faith in himself. It will be cured, more or less, by an infusion of German transcendentalism. This will teach man how to turn his gaze inward, to watch the soul ; and give him an explanation of the Master's meaning, when He said that the gain of the whole world, at the loss of the soul, or inner life, was a folly. German literature will interrupt the gadding life of the intellect, and bring us back to the old hermit character, so needful to the mind. For men who do not stay at home in the intellect at times, do little, and can do but little. All the great spirits of whom we read in Scripture, had their forty years' or forty days' sojourning in the desert ; symbolic type that he who would do a great work must always have his desert time, his hermitage, and must get away from crowds of people, for they do not improve the soul. Moses had his days in the desert, and the great prophets had theirs. Christ, too, had his sojourn in the wilderness, teaching to the thinker that it is needful for a man who is to come forth to be a prophet in the midst of society, that he know how to keep himself at home, and be able to find in his own soul a true hermitage, and a true desert, where he may fast out his forty days of temptation ; and, having resisted the evil one, be prepared to resist himself in every outer fashion in which, in the midst of the world, he may present himself. Such a desert-dwelling, such a hermitage, and sitting at home, will transcendental literature afford ; it will be a putting away of the babble of the world, a sitting lonely and still, and making the soul self-reliant and trustful.

German literature has done much to revive the faith in man, which a mistaken theology in this country had well-nigh trampled down ; for the true depravity of man, according to this philosophy, is not in denying his possible, but in viewing his actual. The true notion of a man's being wrong, is in admitting himself high in the possible, and small in the actual. The great folly is for a man who can do much to do little ; to say, " I never can do

well ; it is not in me ; and therefore I cannot much have gone astray." What say the great Germans ? They say, with the spirit of Paul, "Through God who strengthens me, all things are possible." They make a man compare the possibility of his nature with the actuality of his life ; what a man *may do*, with what he *has done*. No man can think too highly of his possibility, or too lowly of his actuality. "Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought to think," it is said ; but not of the *future*, the *prophetic* man. It is of the man to-day he must think lowly, not of what the man may *become* through years of patient culture, diligent study, reflection, righteous and upright doing. True humility is to think little of the man of to-day, but to think nobly of the man of to-morrow. To-day the fight is before him, the race is to run, the statue to bring out, the picture to paint, the transfiguration to undergo ; we are in an uninitiated state, having done little, and let us keep up the comparison between the high possible and the little that is done, in order that we may say—"I, of myself, can do nothing ; but through God, who strengthens me, I can do all things." This, German literature will do for us ; it will teach us the high possibilities in man ; how the true life of a man is to be an epistle written, a deed, an ever-speaking word ; that a man should look at Nature as an incessant revelation of the divine idea. Everything in Nature is a projected thinking of the Divine Mind, a thought of God crystallized or petrified into a form. So should the life of a true man be the continual putting of the divine word into the human deed ; a translation of the infinite into the finite, a continual revelation of how in a man there may dwell the divine element.

In this sense should our lives become divine, and each one of us become a prophet, a priest, and king in God. A continual prophet, because he teaches the age what the divine idea is ; a continual priest, because he offers up in sacrifice to God, a contrite spirit, an upright, manful, and pious life ; and a continual king, because by the indwelling force he rules Nature, he rules his own soul, and his own small creation ; over which it is rightful for him to look, and see that it is altogether good. For the deeds a man can do, the thoughts he can think, the thoughts he can cause to spring up in the minds of others, the deeds he can give birth to—these are a man's seven days' creation : and when



he has done this, then may he too look over this fair world of his own, and smile upon it, and pronounce—"It is good."

Here, then, I must close; the time has allowed me to say but a few things; but if I have inclined any to begin the study of German Literature, or those who are already studying it to go more deeply into it,—especially if it should make you earnest, true-hearted, faithful, upright, studious, and devout men, my end will be fully, fully gained.

## FAUSTUS, FAUST, AND FESTUS.

### I.

THE subject of the present lecture is rather out of the common course. I have purposely chosen a subject which is not ordinary in these institutions, for I believe that in them a due share of attention is given to mechanical and other science, and it is supposed that because men are mechanics, necessarily their thoughts must always run mechanically, and that the institutions being denominated Mechanics' Institutions, it is proper they should have little but mechanical subjects. But I consider that the day's work of these men interests them quite as much in the mechanical as any of them wish to be,—sometimes a trifle more. I am sure of this, that the deepest mode of moving man is to deal with the deepest subjects, and they are the internal life of man rather than the external ; and, with a view of supplementing what I believe to be a defect in these Institutions, I have chosen a subject that will lead to this theme.

The poems I have chosen are only the subject around which I intend to group many remarks and observations,—which will serve more to interpret the spirit of the poems than to criticise them,—as we move onwards ; and I mean to show how they are intended to solve certain peculiar problems common to our nature.

We will notice, in the first place, the traditionary Faustus. Fust, the printer, has been sometimes confounded with Dr Faustus, or Faust, the scholar, many of whose actions were attributed to the agency of the devil ; he was accused of having transactions with the evil one, and herein the schoolmen but followed the ordinary course of the theology of that day. Printing was also attributed to this agency, though there is a strange inconsistency about the devil patronising the printer of Bibles ; but it never seems to have struck the theologian that the character of Satan must have greatly changed when he became the patron

of the Bible Society. This Faustus was put down as one of the magical race, and his is the name under which one of our old dramatists, many of the German poets, and one of our modern poets, have attempted the solution of some of the greatest problems that ever troubled the mind of man.

And here, with respect to Supernaturalism and the superstition found in old traditions, legendary lore, poetry, and romance, the writers of these could not invent a ghost; therefore the supernatural in literature exists by virtue of the supernatural in man. The most matter-of-fact, moralistic philosophers themselves, who spurn such tales as old wives' fables, have strange phases of feeling, which none of their moral philosophy can account for; and these undefined states of mental being are the primitive suggestors of supernaturalism in poetry. The man, too, fatigued with work, and vexed with the troubles and cares of the world, whose ruffled spirit is unaccountably soothed by a quiet walk in a summer evening, enters into a transcendent state of soul which "passeth understanding;" and so when a party are sitting round the Christmas fire listening to the ghost-tale, though, of course, no one believes it, yet all are caught trembling towards the end of the recital. No patent philosophy can get rid of the fact; all know the tale is a bag of moonshine, yet a very moonshiny feeling comes over them when listening to it. At times, suggestions seem to be injected into the mind, when no material being is present; and we must conclude that, whether it be from angel or devil, fairy or fay, the suggestion comes from the spiritual world. It is said that these matters belong to the superstitions of the middle ages, and ought now to be dropped, but I contend that the poet ought not to give up these questions, any more than the painter, who is allowed to embody his virtues and vices.

Concerning the Magic of the middle ages, it was the opinion of Coleridge that the ultimate ends of astronomy and chemistry must be astrology and alchemy. I consider those old tales of magic were a prophetic looking forward of the human spirit to the ultimate result of science. Astronomy will ultimately show us that the astrology of the ancients was in the spirit of the thing true; that the whole of this great universe of God's does its work together; that our fate is bound up with that of all things—Nature being but a veiling, or a web, for God; a *reveling*, or

revealing, or unveiling, by which God manifests Himself ; its texture is woven into one woof, whole, circular, and complete, so that no vibration can be in one part, but must necessarily be felt by all. The same with chemistry : the old chemists had a long list of elements ; the problem with the modern chemist is to reduce the primitive elements to the smallest possible number ; and who knows but they will be reduced to one ? Who can tell but that its ultimate end will be to show that matter is a condensation of spirit ; that it is a woven veil for spirit ; that the world around us, and all matter, is a protection for spirit, in order that it may not be exposed naked to the influence of life ; and so God has curiously grasped it—condensed it—until it has become material ? With respect to the old chemists who sought the *elixir vite*, and the power to transmute everything into gold, Godwin, in his *St Leon*, has shown how useless it would be, and even the old Greek shows us Midas, with his power to turn all into gold, till his very food became golden, at length finding that man must be content to live upon very common wheaten bread, made, ground, and baked in the common fashion.

But we have not superstition about us now ; there is nothing wonderful with most of us now-a-days. A Latin or Greek scientific phrase for everything makes all mystery vanish. The world is perfectly clear to us ; we can bring it into our laboratory, bottle it in our jars, and label it carefully. I wish to show men that these things are as wonderful as ever ; that, as Carlyle says, insanity is as wonderful, whether it is called by that name, or by the modern term, nervousness. I might show how the supernatural tales of the middle ages were a garment under which those men concealed, or rather manifested, the same truth which we manifest in quite another way. Take, for instance, Satan : he always stands an index of his time ; and the spirit of any age may be told by the Satans of that age. There is the Lucifer of Milton, on whose brow we read the archangel fallen. And then we descend to the ecclesiastical theology, where Lucifer gets himself strangely vulgarised, and appears hooped and tailed, surrounded with fumes of sulphur. Then the Mephistopheles of the German drama exhibits Lucifer as belonging to the paradisiacal times, in which it was necessary he should have a certain degree of beauty about him. These things, however, are called superstition ; but

it must be remembered that these things must have been in the man before they could be drawn from him ; for no embodiment upon canvas, or in poetry, is an absolute fiction,—it is only the clothing in which certain spiritual ideas, dwelling in the soul of man, have themselves embodied. Very much indignation and sectarian rage might be saved if men would see that many doctrines, tales, and fables which they think worthy, in good Dryasdust fashion, to be shown false, are, in fact, reality ; because they should not look for realism in the thing, but rather in the soul that shines out of it. It matters not whether there are mermaids or fairies ; they are in the mechanism of the soul, and it matters not whether natural historian ever caught one, dissected it, and stuffed it : they are to the soul what the embodiment upon canvas is to the painter,—a visible, outward realisation of the presiding truth in the spirit.

Taking Carlyle's idea, that poems are the clothing in which society seeks to embody a truth that it has in the spirit, and a feeling which it feels in its soul, all the middle-age magic and superstition become meaningful. We can put a meaning into anything, and it matters little whether the man meant it or no. What matters it whether he intended some particular point in his works, if it can be extracted thence ? This is the power which makes literature glorious. I have never read the exploits of Jack-the-Giant-Killer, or he of the Bean-stalk, without being able therein to read a spiritual lesson. The end of these lectures is to drive men inward ; if possible to get them to see that the true land of gold is in the spirit and the soul ; that the fault and disease of much modern literature is its failure to turn the vision inward ; for the glory of our olden poets is in their introspective, in-looking vision, and the shame of much modern literature is, that it picks up all outward things, and seeks to deify them, instead of showing man the great land of his inner spirit. That internal life is worth all the external. It teaches that every one of us is, if we did but know it, the highest ultimate fact of creation. The great poet—each of us, indeed—may exclaim, “ Here stand I, and around me God has grouped, as in a workshop, all creation. All literature lies around me ; all things are tributary to me ; at the gates of my soul they must enter in and pay tribute.” Of all things in this world I can say, “ For me they are, to me they

come ; for me they are executed ; and they must each consent to be stamped with my mark, and so become my own." I desire, therefore, for this object, to turn every man's attention inward to the culture of his own spirit, and to a deeper regard for the ideal life. The end of all true spiritualism and religion is to transfigure : when wrongly taught, they seek to make negative—they wish us to lay down humanity ; but the true spiritual literature bids a man go up into the mountain with his humanity, with all his passions, affections, feelings, and there get them transfigured, and made to shine glorious and Divine.

Another object is, to endeavour to point out to youth how to solve some of the great problems of life for themselves ; for there are many questions which they cannot get solved by regular teachers, who will tell them that it is improper to think about many things. But then they will and do think about them, even though told they are pernicious in tendency and idle in result. Here they are ; books about them are here, and they are here because they are wanted ; and men will read them, and therefore it is best they should read them wisely. Many of our accepted teachers are living in one world, and we in another ; they in some small Pedlington village of the world, and we in the great work-day world itself. They do not at all know the spirit of the young men of their age ; for whom it seems never to have entered their conception, that their cut-and-dried philosophy is not sufficient. Here, then, a young man, standing forth prophet for the young, I will try to assist them to settle, as far as they can, those afflicting problems which lie so heavily upon them.

In the *Faustus* of Marlowe, is one of the first revolts of the mind of modern Europe against the theological and philosophical systems of the middle ages, according to which, if any men doubted, they were put down by force ; if they questioned, they were put down by burning. By degrees, however, the study of the old Greek and Roman literature led man back again to some of the old questions. Men tried in vain to accommodate themselves to little theological cribs, which, in the words of an old prophet, were "so short that a man could not stretch himself upon them, and the coverlet so narrow that he could not wrap himself in it." This first showed itself by the magicians, the natural philosophers, Friar Bacon, and other thinkers of the day ;

then by Wycliffe and the reformers. It found a home with some of the earlier dramatists and poets; for much of their writing had at last broken from the narrow, iron, rigid rule of the ecclesiastics of the time. This poem of Marlowe's gives us one of the first indications of this outbreak; of the inclination that was coming over the age to take theology out of the hands of professional theologians, and let the people go through it for themselves. The dramatist entered into the monk's place, and thereby gained hard names, and was accused of being an atheist and an infidel. He may have been an atheist; but that means one thing in one man's vocabulary, and another thing in ecclesiastical parlance. One man will call another an infidel, if he does not believe as he does; but the other may be glad he *is* infidel, or unfaithful to the other's little vision of life, and that he cannot stretch himself conveniently upon his small crib. So these men are denounced as infidels, because they, being laymen, seek to answer great questions of life for themselves.

The principle embodied in these books is, first, the transcending of knowledge. Solomon, it has been said, was the Faustus of antiquity, and there is not a more meaningful book in the world than his *Ecclesiastes*, which contains some of the earliest expressions of man's dissatisfaction,—a very happy state for a man to be in, according to the peculiar school of philosophy which I advocate. Dissatisfaction and discontent are, according to one of our great poets, the proof of a man's greatness and immortality; therefore, I do not like contented people. Fill a thing to the brim, and it is contented; and satisfied people, with their sleek, comfortable looks, may be said to be filled to the brim. You can do nothing with them; they are hopeless; they have their reward. The other class of men are restless, dissatisfied, never content; and Solomon went through the great problem which all go through in the attempt to fill the human mind. He tried strong wine, singing women, &c., and found all was "vanity and vexation of spirit." He attempted to fill the infinite with the finite. All material things have a limit; but the soul of man is infinite; and consequently all the pourings in of this finite will fail to fill up the soul. This is the first great lesson that the tales of Faustus teach. Faustus tried to fill up the infinite with knowledge. He tried Solomon's mode, but found that "in much study there was wear-

ness of the flesh." Next he applied himself to magic, in order that that might help to fill up the void left in his soul. This is described in Marlowe's poem, in the first scene; and then, in the last scene, his twenty-four years term having expired, we find him waiting in agony of soul the arrival of Mephistopheles to seize upon his prize. Faustus tried the accepted studies—logic, physic, law, and divinity—and found all distasteful. Now, are there not some men who feel that they have already transcended knowledge, with information which outstrips the author's, and hence they care little for reading, finding it to be only what they knew before?

Through the whole poem, a good and a bad angel attends Faustus, the one endeavouring to dissuade him from evil, and the other to tempt him into it. This is an instance of that dualism which runs through the soul of man. The demon and the angel are within him, and these embody the idea of the continual struggle and fight within his soul, which was expressed of old by St Paul, when he said that the will to do right was present with him, but not the power. The Germans express the same idea in their stories of the evil spirits playing at chess, or throwing the dice, for the soul of man. From this idea comes the belief that every man has his guardian angel and his evil spirit or genius, and in proportion as the one or the other becomes stronger, so is man taken down towards the infernal regions, or upwards towards heaven. Faustus, in the poem, prays to the devil, and so gains the devil. This is the spiritual truth, that what a man's god is, that will he himself become. Given the gods of a nation, or of a man, and you get the nation, or the man. Pray to the God above, and you become good, that is, god-like; pray to the devil beneath, and you become devilish. Make gold thy god, and thy face gets yellow from very worship of gold. Hence, in the Scriptures, covetousness is classed with idolatry. Whatsoever the soul maketh its chief good, is its god. Pray to the devil and he will come to thee. "Resist the devil" (say the Scriptures) "and he will flee from thee." I would guard against being misunderstood, by stating that I use the word "devil" in a poetic sense, as the external formative expression of the evil spirit or principle in man.

Mephistopheles, when asked why he was so eager to possess a



man's soul, answers, that his domain may be enlarged, and he calls it a glorious soul, a true realm. It may be well to be taught in this, even by an evil spirit, when he says that this is a glorious soul, because in it are all possibilities; it is the highest thing, that for which angels of God and spirits of evil are always restlessly contending. The scenes between the completion of the infernal pact, and the expiration of its term, are filled with buffooneries unworthy of Marlowe, of Faustus, or even Mephistopheles. One thing desired by Faustus is the power to call up the past, to live in the past, and see the men of the past; and the soul of man has that power. But what has Faustus bargained his soul for? For power to know all things; to transcend time and space; to revel in ceaseless action; to try and know everything, and not to be sated thereby. The desire to know everything, is the infirmity of great spirits; they are not content to take up any one sphere of life and master that, but are incessantly troubled with the desire to penetrate into all knowledge, and to know all mysteries. To master all secrets was the end of the old magic; this Faustus seeks to do, and for the power to do it hands himself over body and soul to the demon.

I have gone rapidly and briefly over this poem, in order to spend more time on the much higher poem by Goethe, and on that sublime drama by a living writer, *Festus*. In the future lectures I shall show how much better the sublime doctrine of the purifying power of evil is understood; for all this drama is an attempt to solve the meaning of evil. This problem is one worthy of all the curiosity which men sometime in their lives have felt; and without at all trenching on the province of theology, in these metaphysical lectures, it may at times fall within my province to see whether it be not possible to grasp this mighty problem:— Given, the source of a thing, and that source good and true; whence comes evil? why comes evil? what does evil do? and what are its final results? What God has created, must of necessity be finite, which implies a limit, and the possible transgression of that limit. But why should man pass the limit? Why should he sin? Here will come the great meaning of Goethe's Faust, and of Festus, to show that greater good, greater strength, power and wisdom, come from man's having fallen, having been tempted, and sublimed by sorrow and suffering, than could possibly have come

from the mere negative virtue that is untried, untempted, and has never got a chance of falling. Innocence, and not being tempted, are sometimes called virtue. The word virtue means something manly or strong ; the mere negation of doing wrong is not virtue. Hence comes the Scripture philosophy, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Sensualism says, "Sorrow is the worst thing that can happen ; ease is the great thing to be looked for ; riches is the great thing to be struggled for ; comfortableness is the end of man's being." This is the one picture ; the other is strangely adverse to it. Weeping, in the one is an unmitigated evil, and in the other a good ; ease, in the one is the end of life, and in the other one of the vipers to be shunned. Whence comes the difference? Because that virtue which comes forth from a man's having been tempted, troubled, and tried ; which comes from visiting the house of mourning rather than that of feasting, is the only true virtue. Holiness is worth all the misery, weeping, and sorrowing which it is expected to come through. If so, a spirit sublimated by the earthly life, tried by the earthly trial, and brought through pure and holy, is in a higher condition than the spirit of one who, untempted, never fell, and untried, never suffered.

Now, in this first poem of *Faustus*, evil is the end of the thing. There is no purifying power about it. In the next poem, I will show the subliming of a soul, through evil, not theologically, but poetically ; the salvation of a spirit by its baptism of weeping and of tears ; and, in the third poem, will be seen the process of a change of spirit, by which evil is made a necessary good. In all this, I am not laying down a doctrinal theology, nor will I be tried by its rules. These things will trench upon the doctrinal theology of many ; but they are the poetical teachings of certain approximations towards spiritual truth. According to the old gloomy theology of the middle ages, evil was nothing but a primitive power,—the lash laid upon a man for doing wrong ; it was the mere vulgar, prison-house discipline, still enacted amongst us in the shape of jails, in which we shut up men, to make them as miserable as possible. When I hear anyone exclaim of another, "Hanging is not half bad enough for him," I set down the censor as a benighted man living far back in the old middle ages, with a very close-fitting, hard, iron-fisted, material theology about him.

All he understands about evil and sin is just this,—given so much sin in a man, to get as much pain as possible out of him. He has never seen behind evil the sublime spirit at work there. He looks upon evil with the vulgar eye of the slave-dealer, and will impose pain, and suffering and sorrow, as those vulgar, wicked, and hellish slave-dealers will lay on the lash of physical torture upon those under their power.

Here I come to one of the greatest efforts I will make,—which is to teach the holy ministration of sorrow, suffering, and pain; to show wise men that punishment should never be an end, but a means; and, if possible, to interpret the great problem of what evil, sorrow, suffering, and sighing, are sent to do in the world. They are that fire-baptism wherewith we must be baptized, in order to become pure. But the fire-baptism of Faustus, according to Marlowe, has nothing purificatory in it at all; it is a consuming thing; a sort of ledger-account,—so much sin, so much pain. This is the defect of the poem; it is a mere cycle of sin and pain,—the lash laid upon a man for his sins. I shall lead you through this problem, and show how, by degrees, men came to a clearer knowledge of the end of suffering; and how, in things political and social, our theology ought to influence our social justice; for when society becomes the inflicter of punishment,—when it not merely *suffers* men to suffer, but *causes* them to suffer—it ought first to have thoroughly investigated the problem; and when it lays on the lash, it should be medicated,—dipped and dyed in all healing herbs, so that while inflicting the wound it may bring the cure; like the lash of old. The office of society in punishment is to fulfil the old saying, that the blueness of the wound is the healing thereof. When it causes blueness, let us see that it is healing; for every stripe laid upon a man should be a blessing upon his soul; should be as a flame of that fire-baptism which is burning him to purify.

Here, then, I close this book of *Faustus*, the first protest of modern Europe against the cramped, cast-iron system, which treated the Holy Bible not as a living oracle to be applied to by living spirits, to give a living answer to living questions,—as of old in the oracles, the Pythoness mounted her tripod to answer the questions of a living man. Take her answer given to a man who did not ask the question, and what is the worth of it? It

will be mystic, cryptic, secret, to him ; but to the man who asked the question the thing will be clear. So is it with the Bible ; its answers are intelligible only to those who ask the questions. For with too many of us, do we not come up to that old Book as a matter of duty,—scarcely able to get up an interest in it? Is this because it lacks the beauty of other books? No ; it is because our teachers do so tread it into the mire with their false mode of teaching youth, that we lose the fashion of the book ; that has indeed lost for us the due value of the book. If the old Greek Lethe existed, and if I ever sighed to drink one draught of it, it would be that I might in a moment forget it altogether and read it a first time with all its fashion of truth and spiritual beauty new upon it, unmuddled, untrodden, unspoiled by the foot of any man. Whence came this spoliation. Not from the book, but from its failing to be treated as the living oracle of the living soul. It is injected into us before we need it, put into us before we ask it ; instead of waiting till we feel wants and ask questions. Whence came the fault of Faustus? Because the theology of his day, the old ecclesiastical theology, was the supplying of a full cycle before the man had demanded it ; like much of modern teaching of the catechismal kind, where a child has to get everything learned before it asks or wants it. Bye-and-bye, man became dissatisfied with this old vision of suffering ; he wished to see what was behind it, and we shall be led through the more genial metaphysics and more truthful poetry, until we are gotten to say, “ It is well for me that I was afflicted, for before that I went astray.”

## II.

Having gone rapidly over Marlowe's *Faustus* in the first lecture, I will now proceed to the much higher poem of the great German,—the importance of which is attested by its translation into almost every European language, and by there being nearly a dozen English translations of it. It is the most significant book of modern Europe ; one that all young men who think must think through ; for it is an exposition by a great thinker of those phases in a man's character when he feels revolutionary and when the things that are, are not for him, and he obeys simply because the laws are pre-

scribed by the existing authorities. I shall especially notice the spiritual lessons which I deem most obvious in this poem; leaving mere verbal criticism to the thousand and one critics and commentators who have written upon it.

The poem opens with a prelude in Heaven—which of course is pronounced profane, immoral, and improper; but in all such cases the apostolic precept must be remembered, “To the pure all things are pure.” This “prelude in Heaven,” if read by the profane, to him will be profane; if the reader be divine in spirit, to him it will savour of his own divinity. It is not very different in structure from the celebrated prelude to the Book of Job. This prelude in *Faust* is necessary, because in it the character of Mephistopheles is fore-shadowed and shown; it is necessary he should appear here, in order that we may know what kind of demon is afterwards to be seen in the poem.

There is a peculiarity about this Mephistopheles not noticeable in previous impersonations of the evil spirit. The Lucifer of Milton, and the Cain and Lucifer spirits of Byron, contain only one of the ideas associated with him,—that of a fallen spirit who, after his fall, endeavoured to enlarge his kingdom, by the winning to sin and darkness of human spirits; whereas, the Book of Job, followed by Goethe in this poem, represents Lucifer under another aspect,—as taking out a kind of commission from God Himself, whereby he is suffered to tempt a spirit, and this suffering and tempting is made part of that universal plan of God, by which forth from evil good shall come, and out of temptation the highest divinity of spirit shall be born. With Milton and Byron, Lucifer is antagonist to the Divine; in Job and *Faust*, he is a subordinate instrument of the Divine. This peculiarity of Mephistopheles shows forth that philosophy, which regards all evil as a minister of final good, which makes all guilt become a purifying, which gives to the world, and to the men therein, that fiery baptism without which the earthly spirit can never become sublimed and pure. For there is a spiritual chemistry which always teaches, that man is a mixture of pure metal and earthly dross; that fire must be beneath the crucible, and man be subjected to it, that the dross may run from the pure metal, and the true gold of goodness and godliness come forth therefrom and thereby. Milton’s “Tractate on the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing” is one

of the sublimest writings outside the Christian Scriptures, showing that the highest virtue, the greatest good, the sublimest properties of man, always come through a full freedom, leaving space and scope for a full riot either in right or wrong.

Dismissing the "prelude in Heaven," we are now presented with Faust, dissatisfied and restless; his dissatisfaction leading him to adopt various courses to gain what he seeks. It is singular that the leading idea of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* was already embodied here; for Faust passed through various processes till he came to his "Everlasting No," which he, too, like Teufelsdröckh, was about to terminate by suicide. What saved Carlyle's hero? What he most beautifully calls "an after-light of Christianity;" and Faust is saved by hearing a sublime Christian hymn from the full-voiced harmony of a cathedral choir. What was this "after-light of Christianity"? Its theory was gone from, its dogmas had departed out of, the soul; the spirit had transcended its small formularies; but yet its feeling was on the soul, and though it had lost the intellect, it had not lost the heart; the best part was left, its heart-influence, its interior light. Lesson this that wants understanding, that many a man, who is even now doubting the formularies and doctrine,—in heart and spirit, though not in head, holds by Christianity, virtue, and faith. Faust proceeds through various forms of earthly pleasure and sensualism, and is at last redeemed rather by grace than desert.

The cause of Faust's discontent was that which causes the discontent of all the great spirits of the world,—the continual struggle between the real and the ideal; the continual attempt of the spirit to realise the ideal; the continual shortcomings of the real when weighed in the scales of the ideal. What is the ideal? It is something before a man which he conceives of, up to which he holds it possible for him to come, and up to which his life is or ought to be a continual march. The painter's ideal may be the picture of *The Transfiguration*, at Rome; the sculptor's, that statue the *Apollo Belvidere*; these form for them the visible ideals; they know they may possibly come up to them; every stroke of the brush or touch of the chisel, in the mind of a true artist, is an attempt to touch these ideals,—he, with his realities, to get that sublime ideal once more reached. A man's life should always be this. Take the lives of two men, the one having no ideal, the other keeping an ideal before him. The first is a

victim to circumstances, subject to be blown about by every wind of doctrine ; a vessel unhelmed, unpiloted, unruddered ; with no definite harbour, no soundings, no chart ; consequently, his course is erratic, at the mercy of the winds and waves, to-day eastward, to-morrow westward, with no definite line about it. Though a man's being should be circular, his course should ever be in a right line ; and nothing but having an ideal before him will make his life a march in a right line,—as the poet calls life “ a march, ever onward.” The unidealistic man, having nothing to which to be continually looking, and up to which to be continually marching, must lead an eccentric, wavering, almost useless life. Such men are not lords of circumstance, but lorded over by it ; showing not the strong hand of the master, but the crouching back of the slave. But what is the problem of life to a man setting an ideal before him ? Out of a human spirit to beget a new and Divine spirit ; out of this humanity, surrounded by circumstances, favourable and adverse, to bring about one more God's child in the earth, one more divine image in the form of man. Novalis says, that the true Shekinah (or God's dwelling) is man's body ; that there is no Shekinah of outside temple, as in the old Jewish times ; but wherever man comes, God comes, and the body and spirit of man are the true indwelling places of God. So say the Scriptures,—“ The Holy Ghost dwelleth in you ; ” “ the kingdom of Heaven is in you,”—always pointing to the great truth that the human is to accomplish in this life the divine.

All past literature, history, and the circumstances around us, are the materials with which we are to work, and out of these elements we are to eliminate the divine. Man without an ideal is working up to nothing ; his life is accidental ; it is all a chance what he shall come out ; he will be what winds and circumstances make him ; he has no notion of making himself, by and of the divinity in him, by God's force from within, by earnest endeavour and continual strife. The work for the earthly man (but few men reach it) is to harmonise the ideal and the real, and see how the one works into the other. Yet there is danger in it, and I have seen men start fairly and well, but not having reached the full harmonic process between the ideal and the real, they come bye-and-bye to settle down, sleek and satisfied, and having effected a partial harmony between the ideal and the real, have forgotten

much that lies beyond them. This is particularly the reason why we cannot in this country sympathise wholly with Goethe ; hence most Englishmen love Schiller better than Goethe ; and Carlyle much prefers Goethe, probably because he looks on the great calmness of the German not as mere indifferentism, but as the result of a most masterful struggle, by which he has won his way up the ladder, round by round, scaled his Olympus, and therefore it is proper for him calmly and quietly to look down upon the struggle of humanity which he has passed through.

There is nothing much commoner than to hear people, especially young people, finding fault with life, and dealing out common-places, in condemnation of their sphere and their circumstances. One man can see nothing romantic in trade, and is always sighing after some blissful state of independence, *alias* idleness, in which he thinks he could fully develop his nature. He has an ideal and also a veritable real, but he utterly fails to harmonise them, and has even gone so far as to say that they are not harmonisable. But man's problem is to harmonise them, and the great German did it ; he saw a possibility, through common-place details, of working out a sublime result. The real is the only way which men must travel to get to the ideal ; and these men, who quarrel with the place where God has placed them to work in, seek a result without the process necessary to produce it ; wish to grasp the effect, without originating the causes ; for it is the continual working of these petty causes that brings out the lasting and beautiful result. Suppose the sculptor were to sit down before his block of marble, and sigh at the vulgar process of chiselling, which at length brings out the statue,—seeing nothing romantic in a great round-headed mallet thumping away,—what would be the result ? Did any man ever sigh a statue out of a block of marble ? Would either wishing or grumbling get it to come at its bidding ? No ; the great masters have been the greatest workers ; and those who have understood the real best have been the most patient and quiet strugglers to reach the ideal. Think of this, then, and never be pestered with sighing over your sphere and your unfavourable circumstances. The more unfavourable your circumstances, the more scope there is for the mastery of them, if you have only sufficient spirit and force to prevent you, craven and coward like, from sitting down and



crying over your misfortunes, instead of getting up to redeem and rescue yourselves. Faust has an ideal, and also a real; which latter is also the real of Faustus. Both have mastered one study after another; have exhausted and outgrown them.

Another principle in this poem is the exhausting power of the soul. If a lamp be put in a certain amount of air, the very freshness of the air makes it burn more brightly, but more briefly. In a little time the air is exhausted; then comes languor, paleness, blueness, death. Such is the history of the soul of man. The spirit is a consuming fire; it first consumes the surrounding air, and then seeks more,—it burns up the real, and if then new draughts of the ideal be not admitted, draughts of the new air of the possible yet unachieved, the soul must droop and almost die. In this way Faust's discontented soul has burned out and exhausted the things of mere knowledge, and is now gasping for air; the light of his soul is burning blue and dim, painfully gasping for some fresh, new atmosphere for the soul to breathe. Then comes his misfortune: he seeks it in the wrong place; he looks for it downward rather than upward. The crisis of every man's soul-history is just when this gasping process begins,—when the young man has exhausted and outgrown the air in which he has hitherto lived; then is the turning time of man's life, and whence the supply of the new atmosphere for the soul shall come, is the main problem for this life and the life to come. Faust's soul has burned up the small atmosphere of theology, divinity, and science by which it was surrounded; and when a man finds the small air chamber in which nurses, teachers, and society have put his soul, becoming exhausted, let him watch well, for it depends very much on who supplies his new atmosphere, whether his course be upwards to light or downwards to darkness. Faust would have kept upward had he maintained between himself and the Great Spirit the filial relation; for this is all things to man; "Sons of God" is the epithet and title applied to men; God has called us his children; and if, at the turning-point of a man's life, he preserves the filial relation, feels himself still a child of God, and therefore looks upwards, to the eternal hills for the new air, and sighs that thence may come the new atmosphere of the soul, the man's course will be a safe one; for it is possible to transcend the dogmas of the intellect and yet keep the heart nigh to God,

maintaining the filial relation to the great Father of spirits, and preserving in the interior life the true filial love.

At this turning-point of life, then, the great thing is to look upward ; to say spiritually what David said long ago,—“ Though my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord God will take me up.” Faust does not do this : he gives up this filial love to God, and proceeds to try the problem by calling in the aid of magic and evil spirits : hence his path is downward. Yet is he redeemed by the influence exercised over him by the woman whose fate is mixed up with his own. She, keeping true to her faith toward God, when her prison doors are open, and escape is possible,—and herein is her trial,—refuses to escape, and bears her baptism of sorrow and fire ; and then a voice from Heaven proclaims that, spite of the fiend, “ She is saved.”

That this influence over Faust is represented as coming from woman, is another peculiarity of Goethe's books, especially of his “ Wilhelm Meister ;” for a great part of the education that Wilhelm receives, is gained through a succession of influences, rising in the scale of excellence, given forth from various women. Coleridge has said that in the faces of all truly great men, a certain femininity will be discovered. He makes the remark over the portrait of a rough old sailor, Dampier, in whose rough, weather-beaten features he says there is a certain portion of femininity to be found. This idea Emanuel Swedenborg has expressed in another mode, when he gives each of us a pair of angelic attendants, one masculine, the other feminine, the masculine the teacher of the intellectual or mental nature, and the feminine spirit the instructress of the heart or affections. Herein he bodies forth a great truth, and one that wants understanding—that the truly full and perfect education is to develop in masculine natures the feminine spirit, and in feminine natures the masculine spirit ; and only when this is understood shall we have full and perfect education.

Some of you may have marked how the Christian religion owes its peculiar character, as diverse from other faiths, to the development in its main features and in its whole spirit, of the feminine character. Take two remarkable passages, one from the Old Scriptures and the other from the New Testament. The Old Scriptures represent God as an eagle. “ As an eagle stirreth up

her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings : so did the Lord alone lead him." This was the relation of the old religion, its discipline was war ; God was the Lord of Hosts, fighting the nations. Turn to the New Testament ; Christ says, " Oh Jerusalem, I would have gathered thee under my wings, as a hen gathereth her chickens." In the Old Scriptures the eagle is fit emblem of the old stern warrior faith, stirred up to warfare ; in the New Scriptures the hen is as fit emblem of a mother faith, soothing her children to loving-kindness.

The great Roman Catholic painters always keep true to this idea ; in painting the Holy Family, they always give us the Madonna accompanied by the child,—the young Jesus looking into the face of the Madonna, taught by her ; and beautiful is the spiritual meaning of that. In religion, the maternal element must never be left out ; it can be traced distinctly throughout the Christian religion. What did not its Master and Founder owe to the fact that he was born in Bethlehem, of the Virgin Mary ? The influence exercised by Mary on the Christ, and through Him over Christianity, being the maternal influence to which he was subject. Hence we find throughout his character, the feminine influence remaining constantly in his exceeding loving-kindness. The phrase " mother church " is another form of this idea, though, sometimes, the church is too much like the scolding virago, with right hand uplifted to smite and scatter her children. Whatever church you belong to, see that it is a *mother*-church, for such it was intended to be ; such was the prophetic meaning of the human spirit when it invented this phrase. See, then, that your church be to the sick and sorrowing of the world a true mother. Where do the woe-stricken go in their trouble ? To the old, endeared place of their home ; to the mother. So should churches be mother-churches to the people, when sorrow-stricken ; they ought, as they bear the name, to have the spirit of Him who said, " I would have gathered thee under my wings as a hen gathereth her chickens."

What is true of the individual is also true of society. The heroes that most men worship down to to-day range themselves under the old faith of the warrior, when men had fighting to do ; but there is a new class of heroes coming in. Take, for instance,

John Howard. Men acknowledge him to be a hero, because in him were developed the maternal or feminine influences. His business was to look to the woe-stricken and sorrowful, and to stand to them in the relation of maternity. There is sufficient discernment in the right feeling of this age to say that the man was a worthy hero.

The whole education of women must have revision and alteration; for it is now sorry enough in most cases. It is so much continuation of piano-strumming, whether or not there is any music in the soul; such an offering-up upon the altar of frivolous fashion two hours a day, whether or no there is a spark of music in the spirit, until wise men are becoming weary of the name. Music unfollowed out, or followed out by those who have no soul or spirit of it, brings us at last to what is called, "brilliant execution," which is mechanical excellence where the spirit is wanting. All this will have to be altered; because it will be found out that there is no time for the mere getting up of brilliant execution; there is spiritualism to be developed; there is a nature to be cultivated as richly dowered as is man's. This is a true redemptive influence, under that faith, which, having its Master born of a woman, gives to him both the manly and the womanly qualities in their right place, and which can only bring society to its full and final development, when it unites in the man the strong and the gentle, and in the woman the gentle and the strong. And we find that the men who can strike a strong blow when it is wanted, are also gentle and loving spirits. Look at old Martin Luther in his strong, manly faith; when warned as to the danger of going to Worms, he exclaimed, that if the devils were as numerous as the tiles on the houses, they should not daunt him one whit. Then read in that beautiful German those letters to his little child, and we shall have one of the finest combinations of the masculine and the feminine,—the stern and the rude exterior, with the gentle spirit and the soft warm heart beneath, when loving-kindness was wanted,—that the world's history can supply.

This is shadowed forth by Goethe, when he makes the redeeming influence on his hero to proceed through woman.

I will now turn to the character of the tempter and the temptation. In nothing is the changed spirit of the times shown more than in the different temptations supplied by such a book as *Job*,

the *Faustus* of Marlowe and the *Faust* of Goethe. Job was the sufferer, or the patient man ; but he was not patient in the vulgar sense of the word. He is said to have been the most patient of men, and hence the notion that he did not complain ; whereas we find he did complain, and that bitterly ; he cursed the very day of his birth, and wished it to be blotted out. He was not patient in that sense, but in the higher Ulyssean sense ; as it is said of Ulysses, he was “ a much-enduring man,” and saw how much endurance brought forth much strength. But still he was the patient or sufferer. The temptations did not come from within. The Lucifer of Job tempts him from without ; touches his body, and gives him sickness ; removes his children, his flocks and his herds ; and so he is tempted. The *Faustus* of Marlowe is tempted through the common-place passions ; he yields when riches are brought before him. He wavers for a minute or two ; Mephistopheles sends two attendant spirits, and the hero is won over to Mephistopheles, by a dance of spirits, who bear rich robes and crowns ; and so, by these outer things, appealing to some of the lower parts of his nature, the wavering man is won over to evil. Mark how the spirit of the times is now raised. In the work of Goethe *Faust* is not a patient, much-enduring sufferer ; neither is he a poor baby, tempted by a crown or robes ; but by a higher temptation, the desire to know, to feel, to exhaust, to mount, to transcend the little. He is tempted through his own spirit, rather by the Lucifer within than by the Lucifer without. He is tempted according to the philosophy of Scripture, which says, “ Resist the evil one, and he shall flee from thee,” of the philosophy that where there is no devil within, there is no power from the devil without, which enables all true men to say, “ I fear neither man nor devil ;” for when the devil in men’s soul is cast out, no outer devil hath power to harm. *Faust* is chiefly tempted through the principle within him, through the ministration of his own great intellect, through his own soul ; and he is a barometric gauge by which we may see how much this age has risen over preceding ones. An early age tempted a man by the mere privation of good, and by physical suffering ; and another tempted him, by giving him the outward things of life : this age, with its deep questionings, its much thinking, its earnest problems, tempts its *Faust*, through its Lucifer, by an appeal to some of the things within, an appeal to

the in-dwelling life and spirit. Mephistopheles, in this Faust, does not so much supply the man with temptation, as become the agent and minister of what is already in the man ; and in nothing is the superiority of the great German shown over those who have treated this subject, more than in making the whole temptation and the power to be tempted to dwell in the soul and spirit of his hero.

True to the real origin of the fable, one of the early temptations of Faust comes through the use of magic, and here he has but bodied forth the "haste of the spirit to be wise beyond what is written," or rather the belief that there is a knowledge which transcends the written.

In my last lecture, I entered into what may be thought a Quixotic defence of the old astrology and alchemy ; showing that they were only spiritual prophecies of the true end of scientific study ; but there is another principle in the history of Faust, the desire of man to unite the parts into a whole, and to take the whole into parts. You give a child a new complicated toy ; at first the whole gives it pleasure ; but then comes the restless desire to take it to pieces, and to see where the noise comes from. Such, with great children, is the history of mind in the world. We are pleased to-day with the whole of Nature ; but there comes over us a strange restless desire to take the whole into its parts. One of the great Germans says, "Man does not see the forest, but the trees of the forest ;" but sometimes he sees the forest. At one time we mount to a hill-top, and look around upon the prospect, in which, as Emerson says, we do not see Johnson's farm, or Thompson's house ; but we see the whole, a circularity, an entirety, a oneness. But most men have not the power of seeing the whole ; they are obliged to see the parts. The majority of men see but the little things they are acquainted with. Life to them is not life as it is to the poet, but in the vulgar sense, as they talk of "the religious world," "the political world," "the theatrical world" ; that is, a carving up of life into small lives or worlds, and the majority of men never see outside of these little worlds ; they live in the commercial or the dramatic life, and even literary men have got a small world of their own. We consequently hear of "the literary world," a degradation of thought and literature into one of the small spheres in which man can move, very much like

the booksellers and their Row in London, where they herd and congregate. This is a disease not incident to the great mind. The restlessness of a great man is to see the whole, and to be quit of this small vulgarity. These worlds are to the poet and the true sage, as if when I was looking over some great prospect, some one should say, "Squire Johnson lives in that house, and those fine trees belong to the Right Worshipful the Mayor." What greater impertinence could be committed?

Faust desires to gain a view of the soul and of life, to turn it inside out; and, having taken it to pieces, he desires to put it together again; and these two principles will agitate the mind of every great thinker. Much of science is right here. It is a dissection, an anatomy of parts; but unfortunately many scientific men seem to think the parts of Nature are like the parts of a worm—able to go on as an independent existence. Hence, one man gives us chemistry as a part, and boasts of his little joint of the worm; and another man cuts life into a bit of theology. Life with them is not life, full, circular, all-abiding; but life cut down into theology, science, or trade. Dissection is right if, through the part, you may the better learn the whole; and if we thus reduce Nature into science, in order to see how the whole is made up, it is well. This, every man should strive at. The tendency of science is often to cut Nature into parts, to hang it up as a collection of limbs, or anatomical specimens; and one man spends all his life in studying the anatomy of the hand or the foot. We must strive against this. Hence comes the call for the poet, the sage, the synthetist,—the man who can put these pieced members together, and make them live. Milton said, that when Truth came into the world first, it was a virgin of lovely and perfect form; the enemies of Truth mutilated it; they divided its limbs, like those of Osiris, and scattered them to the four winds of Heaven; the friends of Truth had nothing to do but to gather up and bring together these scattered limbs. Now these limbs which have been so well dissected, the poet, the sage, and the true theologian, when he shall arise, will bring together, and lay them like the bones we hear of in the prophet's book,—where the spirit breathed upon them, and the dead limbs stood up and lived. Each one shall bring that limb of Truth which he has been keeping so carefully guarded; they shall bring them together, and pray

the Great Spirit that, breathing on them, He would unite them into one whole, that they may stand up and live once more.

I have shown the elements in Faust's restlessness and discontent. He was sick of Nature being pieced into divinity, theology, science, and politics. He wished to gain a standpoint from whence, once more, he might see Nature joined, whole, circular, the true expression of the great, all-present God. Here I propose closing; and in the next lecture I will endeavour to go into some details of the piece, reading a few of the more remarkable passages, and also carrying out some of the ideas of the poem at greater length. I shall also direct attention to the *Festus* of Bailey.

### III.

Having supplied you at the last lecture with the spirit of the thing, as a preparation, I propose now to go rapidly through the poem, commenting upon it as I proceed. The tragedy opens somewhat as Marlowe's does, with Faust giving us the first intimation of the exhaustive powers his spirit carried on with respect to the several sciences in which he had been engaged. He speaks of the difficulty he had in penetrating to the spirit or essence of things, and passes a severe sentence upon human knowledge, which oftentimes is rather a dealing in words than essence. Hence arose the old magic, which was an attempt to penetrate beyond human knowledge. But much that is called knowledge and science is a most skilful hiding of the ignorance and the sensualism that is behind it. I will read you an extract from the poem, which describes Faust as going on turning over the leaves of the book of magic till the Ertegeist, or Spirit of Earth, rises, whose song is one of the most remarkable passages in the poem. It forms the germ of one or two remarkable chapters in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, especially one on "Natural Supernaturalism," an attempt to show the philosophers of to-day that they have not yet succeeded in taking the mystery out of Nature.

*[He turns the leaves impatiently, and perceives the sign of the Earth Spirit.]*

How otherwise upon me works this sign !  
Thou Spirit of the Earth, art nearer :



Even now my powers are loftier, clearer ;  
 I glow, as drunk with new-made wine :  
 New strength and heart to meet the world incite me,  
 The woe of earth, the bliss of earth, invite me,  
 And though the shock of storms may smite me,  
 No crash of shipwreck shall have power to fright me !  
 Clouds gather over me—  
 The moon conceals her light—  
 The lamp 's extinguished !—  
 Mists rise,—red, angry rays are darting  
 Around my head !—There falls  
 A horror from the vaulted roof,  
 And seizes me !  
 I feel thy presence, Spirit I invoke !  
 Reveal thyself !  
 Ha ! in my heart what rending stroke !  
 With new impulsion  
 My senses heave in this convulsion !  
 I feel thee draw my heart, absorb, exhaust me !  
 Thou must ! thou must ! and though my life it cost me !

[*He seizes the book, and mysteriously pronounces the sign of the Spirit. A ruddy flame flashes : the SPIRIT appears in the flame.*]

SPIRIT. Who calls me ?

FAUST (*with averted head*). Terrible to see !

SPIRIT. Me hast thou long with might attracted,  
 Long from my sphere thy food exacted,  
 And now—

FAUST. Woe ! I endure not thee !

SPIRIT. To view me is thine aspiration,  
 My voice to hear, my countenance to see ;  
 Thy powerful yearning moveth me,  
 Here am I !—what mean perturbation  
 Thee, superhuman, shakes ? Thy soul's high calling, where ?  
 Where is the breast, which from itself a world did bear,  
 And shaped and cherished—which with joy expanded,  
 To be our peer, with us, the Spirits, banded ?  
 Where art thou, Faust, whose voice has pierced to me,  
 Who towards me pressed with all thine energy ?  
*He art thou, who, my presence breathing, seeing,*  
*Trembles through all the depths of being,*  
 A writhing worm, a terror-stricken form ?

FAUST. Thee, form of flame, shall I then fear ?  
 Yes, I am Faust : I am thy peer !

SPIRIT. In the tides of Life, in Action's storm,  
 A fluctuant wave,  
 A shuttle free,  
 Birth and the Grave,  
 An eternal sea,  
 A weaving, flowing  
 Life, all-glowing,

Thus at Time's humming loom 'tis my hand prepares  
 The garment of Life which the Deity wears !

What does the Spirit of Earth mean when it says it weaves "the garment of life which the Deity wears"? I have before explained that Nature is both a veil and a revealing ; that to the sensual and thoughtless man, it most effectually hides God, for he sees nothing behind Nature ; it appears to him as a good piece of upholstery-work, well put together, and that is the end of it. He no more sees any Spirit behind it, than behind his furniture. But to the seer, the fore-looker, Nature is but a veil ; it shows the features sufficiently through it. Time, space, circumstances, materialism, matter, and form, are all parts of the great veil that is woven to hide God from man. It is said in the Scripture that "flesh and blood may not see God." Now the material world and its substance, all form, time and space, are the web, continually weaving, by which God is hidden. These may be said to be to the inner spirit what the outer skin is to the body ; they are the outer skin of the soul. Look at the hand of a working-man ; it has become hardened, and callous, or corny. Look at a sensual man, whose life is a continual attempt to be comfortable ; his progress through the world is always a continual hardening of the outer skin. Consequently that skin of circumstances and materialism, which was given to man that he might walk unharmed and uninjured through life, becomes a positive let and hindrance, preventing us from seeing the secrets of Nature. The life of one of the "comfortable" men, one of the cider-down philosophers, is a continual thickening of the veil, making it more and more difficult for spiritual influence to reach him. The idea of a highly intellectual man, a great poet for example, being a person of Falstaffian proportions, does not at all accord with our feelings. We think of such a man, that he has to all appearance been the winner of one life, at the loss of the other. For it is said, "If thou wilt save

thy life (of the body), thou shalt lose thy life (of the spirit); if thou wilt win thy life (of the spirit), thou must lose thy life (of the body)". As a general truth, it is a leaning of the mind of man to a great spiritual truth, that the surrounding of the spirit with too great a veil of flesh hinders—it is a shutting-out, a hiding. Waller remembered this when he spoke of "The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,"—the body to him being the cottage. If its windows become darkened by sensualism, thickened by too much comfort, then necessarily is the spiritual light and meaning shut out from him. The secret of Nature, as Goethe says, is an open secret. It is secret, because we may pass by it every day and see nothing of it. It is open, because if we put ourselves under proper discipline, then do the mysteries of Nature begin to reveal themselves. The Greeks were right in this, for their fauns and dryads were shown to none but those who passed through the woods with light footsteps and a loving spirit. The man who thickens the veil by an undue dwelling in circumstances, and a pandering to the sensual, by over-feeding, over-drinking, and over-sleeping, necessarily shuts out the God-like and spiritual from him.

Hence came that race of men in all ages—the recluse and faster—appearing in the Hebrew age as the Nazarene, whose meat was not of the flesh, who practised asceticism; then appearing at a later time as the Essene, the anchorite, the hermit, and the monk. Did these men express a view of spiritual truth, or was it a mere garb of masquerading? Are all these men to be looked upon as mere mummers? Not so. All these men represent a spiritual truth; it may be in a variety of forms. For there never walked a spontaneous man on the earth, however grotesque or eccentric,—there never flourished a creed, however harsh-sounding its doctrines,—there never was a sect in philosophy or religion,—there never was a dogma of any kind,—that was not, at one time or other in its history, the expression of a felt reality and truth. This long array of fasters are embodiments of a spiritual truth, that the two natures in man are in antagonism one with the other; that the fostering of the one is a subtraction from the other, and that a taking away from the one is an addition to the other. The soul of man has so little chance, that if a man practise no asceticism, if he forget the apostolic precept to endure hardship, he is not the man to penetrate into the secret of Nature, or the man to

whom the highest knowledge and wisdom will reveal itself. The word fasting is vulgarly interpreted "no eating," whereas it expresses the whole of the self-denial and hardness to which a man subjects himself for the growth of the spirit.

The soliloquies of Faust are interrupted by his scholar, a thorough descendant of the pedantic Dryasdust school—a man who sees nothing off his book, and in it sees nothing but the words of the book. He holds converse with his master, and Faust gives him a stern rebuke (which he does not understand) of the oratory, preaching, and lecturing, by which the majority of men are governed.

FAUST to WAGNER:—

You sit for ever, glueing, patching ;  
 You cook the scraps from others' fare ;  
 And from your heap of ashes hatching  
 A starveling flame, ye blow it bare !  
 Take children's, monkeys' gaze admiring,  
 If such your taste, and be content ;  
 But ne'er from heart to heart you'll speak inspiring,  
 Save your own heart is eloquent !

And again :—

Is parchment, then, the holy fount before thee,  
 A draught wherefrom thy thirst for ever slakes ?  
 No true refreshment can restore thee,  
 Save what from thine own soul spontaneous breaks.

He gets rid of his scholar, and is afterwards about to take poison, but the sound of the Easter chant prevents him. These strains have lost their power to touch the heart, and yet "an after-light of Christianity," that borrowed from childhood, saves him from suicide. Faust teaches the doctrine which the apostle Paul so graphically painted, of the indwelling of a dualism in man. Certainly in the outer world there is dualism—light and darkness, evil and good ; so in the mind of man there are two principles, one which motions us ever upwards, and the other ever downwards. Hence Coleridge says, if a man be not mounting upwards to God, he is sinking downwards towards the brute. Faust's will inclining towards the lower principle, he went through a round of sensualism under Mephistopheles. Plato accounted for the fact

of the two souls of man by teaching the doctrine that the soul had a previous existence ; that we were formerly in a higher state ; that birth was a lapsing, a coming down ; that when man was born it was the surrounding of the soul with the web or veil of which I have spoken before. Like the floating music of a strain heard long ago, which still rings in the ear, the better part of man's nature is, according to Plato, a remembrance of the original state from which birth was a lapse or falling. A similar doctrine is taught in the Pythagorean metempsychosis, which teaches that the soul of man is continually going downwards, until, the scale of descent being completed, it begins to grow upwards until it reaches full glory in the presence of the primitive Spirit from whence it came.

Having passed rapidly over the earlier scenes of the poem, we are led to the contract which Faust finally makes with Mephistopheles ; and the bitterness of his soul rises till it vents itself in curses the direst ever man uttered, ending by cursing "patience most of all," meaning by patience the power to endure and to suffer.

FAUST. Though some familiar tone, retrieving  
My thoughts from torment, led me on,  
And sweet, clear echoes came, deceiving  
A faith bequeathed from Childhood's dawn,  
Yet now I curse whate'er entices  
And snares the soul with visions vain ;  
With dazzling cheats and dear devices  
Confines it in this cave of pain !  
Cursed be, at once, the high ambition  
Wherewith the mind itself deludes !  
Cursed be the glare of apparition  
That on the finer sense intrudes !  
Cursed be the lying dream's impression  
Of name, and fame, and laurelled brow !  
Cursed, all that flatters as possession,  
As wife and child, as knave and plough !  
Cursed Mammon be, when he with treasures  
To restless action spurs our fate !  
Cursed when, for soft, indulgent leisure,  
He lays for us the pillows straight !  
Cursed be the Vinc's transcendent nectar,—  
The highest favour love lets fall !

Cursed, also, Hope !—cursed Faith, the spectre !  
 And cursed be Patience most of all !

CHORUS OF SPIRITS (*invisible*). Woe ! woe !

Thou hast it destroyed,  
 The beautiful world,  
 With powerful fist :  
 In ruin 'tis hurled,  
 By the blow of a demigod shattered !  
 The scattered  
 Fragments into the Void we carry,  
 Deploring  
 The beauty perished beyond restoring.  
 Mightier  
 For the children of men,  
 Brightlier  
 Build it again,  
 In thine own bosom build it anew !  
 Bid the new career  
 Commence,  
 With clearer sense,  
 And the new songs of cheer  
 Be sung thereto !

In the chorus of invisible spirits that follows, the words as given by one translator, "A beauteous world thou hast destroyed and made it void," refer to the interior life, and the calmness, quietness, and repose which the final curse and anathema of Faust had overthrown. This curse is intended to remind us of the struggle which, up to the last, takes place in the mind of man ; for it takes a long and gloomy descent before a man becomes utterly lost.

Hence the merciful spirit of modern times, which gives to even the worst, one more chance and hope ; believing that there never is a case in the life of man in which the germ of the good and true is utterly lost. So these invisible spirits, at the last moments, when he has cursed and anathematised all the sources of good, invite him to "Begin of life a new career." Modern times teach this lesson ; for even in those who have renounced all the good in them, a diligent search may show a spark, which a careful fanning will revive and bring to perfection. It is a pity that poets (and especially those pronounced by the religious to be heathen) should be needed and called in to teach the real golden rule of the Christian faith, whose Master taught the doctrine that the poet

teaches here, when he said to the woman, "Go, and sin no more." That reply rather appealed to what little was left of truth, than to the much of evil that was there. Society has yet to study and to learn, that in the eleventh hour, and in the last second of that hour, when the twelfth and final hour is about to strike, there is yet hope. Let us hope that Christianity, combining with the poet in a benevolent and better understanding of spiritualism, will show that it is the duty of all men to give their time and efforts to the restoration of the old image which has not been so much lost as effaced from the mind of man. For the teaching of the poet, and of the true preacher is, that it is with the soul as with the old coin or medal,—the inscription rusted over, which the antiquarian, if he has love enough, can bring forth in its original beauty, showing who was the divine Emperor, by whose order this coin was first stamped in the die. Such appears to be the soul of man under its worst circumstances: a medal on which was once struck the divine head and superscription, now rusted over by the commerce of life, and by oft dipping into the wine-cup of life. But only let us have love enough, patience enough, and work hard enough and long enough, and the old image shall come forth: and if we subject it to the heat of the true alchemy of love, it shall come forth revealing the year it was struck, and the meaning of its original form. Work so with the human picture: have faith that there was once something there; that it is not some hideous being, or no-thing, but that it is a divine painting, overclouded with the smoke of this world and the darkness that sin hath made there. Work, then, in love, in quietness, in much patience, and verily a picture of "The Holy Family," or of "The Transfiguration of the Holy Lord," or some other picture which may be written on the spirit of man, will come forth and repay you for your toil, and justify that faith which is nobler than sight, for "the just walk by faith, and not by sight."

The conditions of the bargain to be made between Faust and Mephistopheles follow,—Faust desiring that all pleasure and pain should be known and felt by him; that he should have power to run through all the scenes of life unsated; and the bargain is so put that Mephistopheles is outwitted, and the spirit of evil is baffled. There is meaning in this; it teaches us the Scripture doctrine that it is possible to resist even the devil, and he will flee.

It shows that he is but a part of the whole which works to good,—a knotty problem certainly, but one that must be solved. If Mephistopheles be an evil spirit unwillingly working out a good, it will not do, as at the end of Marlowe's *Faustus*, to give him the final triumph. It is necessary, in the bargain which Faust makes, that there should be a loop-hole left, to prevent the evil from ending in evil, and to make it work out a final good. Marlowe understood no such doctrine; it was not his aim to show the ministration of sorrow, pain, and evil. The scene in the cellar at Leipsic, for a true spirit of wild merriment, was never outdone; and the wildness shows its genuineness. For the scene in the witches' kitchen, many Germans have got a spiritual meaning; but it is somewhat above my reach, or out of my depth. A great deal of it seems Pantagrueistic, put in for the mere oddness of the thing. It might be proper to have one division in our literature for the Pantagrueistic—*Don Quixote*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *The Doctor* (by Southey), *Tristram Shandy*, all belonging to the Pantagrueistic school—being oftentimes eccentric merely for eccentricity's sake, and containing, under the mask and bells of a seeming jester, some of the deepest and highest wisdom. Why do the old dramatists, Shakespeare among them, make some of the deepest wisdom come out of the mouths of court fools? There are reasons which I cannot now stop to show. The dreamers of society are the men from whom the greatest truth comes; and the enthusiast and the dreamer are the modern wearers of the cap and bells: still now, as it was then, from such men comes the wisdom, without which the work of these practical men would be a most sad mistake—a most inane bubble.

We are now introduced to the character of Margaret, who first meets Faust in the street, where he offers her attention; from which the maiden shrinks. But she is won by degrees, until she accepts Faust as her lover. Here again, "to the pure all things are pure." With a supreme contempt and scorn for mock modesty, with a most utter contempt for a great deal of modern prudery (which thinks the more about evil, for its affectation of not liking to speak about it), which in private feeds upon that which in public it shudders to hear,—the poet has represented the maiden as tempted and falling, as being yielding, and so involving herself in the stern meshes of destiny and fate. She did



not so much yield from evil as from ignorance. She is one of the beings that are sorely put upon. Of course I am aware what the moralist will say to this. Still I retreat to the Strong Tower, remembering her who at the dinner time came in and anointed and wiped the travel-stained feet of the Holy One we love; and I remember that of her it was said, "Having loved much, she shall be forgiven much." Let modern prudery and mock modesty go learn a lesson of the Book which they pretend to reverence, but of the true soul and spirit of which they are as lamentably ignorant as if they never had read its holy page.

The poem goes on to show the gradual temptation of Margaret, the murder of her mother by Mephistopheles, the murder of her child, and of her quick-spirited brother, who fell in a duel with Faust. We are then brought to Margaret in prison, Faust having been kept in ignorance of her fate by being led away to the Hartz mountains, while the meshes of Margaret's fate were getting more and more involved. Faust returns, and finds her in prison, in the most utter woe. He invites her to follow him, but she refuses to go. Mephistopheles is about to triumph over this one more soul won to him, when a voice is heard from heaven, "She is saved." By what? By the grace of God; because at the eleventh hour, at her thief-on-the-cross time, she chooses rather to remain in prison and meet her fate, than to go free and live an after-life of scorn and shame. Some have quarrelled with Goethe about the immorality of having saved her. Let them go quarrel with the scene of which I have spoken, when a man who had spent his life in theft and crime, turned at the eleventh hour and looked to Him who was heard saying, "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Saved by love! but because at the last moment of life, when the exercise of the will was possible, that free will, as its final deed, turned to the light and from the darkness. The chance of escape was open to Margaret, but it was to a life of earthly shame and perhaps sin. To go to death was a sacrifice still possible to her, and her stopping in prison and yielding to her fate was her 51st Psalm, her true confession and penitence. "Lord deliver me," she seems to say, "from blood-guiltiness." This is the spirit of the deed, though the poet may not have expressed it.

Into the second part of the *Faust* it is not my intention to-night

to enter. I think it desirable that there should be a pause between any interpretation I have given of the first, and any possible interpretation it may be my good fortune to give of the second. The two are said to stand in the relation, one to the other, of the "Paradise Lost," and the "Paradise Regained." I have before noticed the redemptive influence exercised upon Faust, and this I conceive is symbolic of the great redemptive influence always exercised upon man, which, though coming from God, always comes through human agency, or certain means open and common in life.

The last poem of which I have to speak is one which is comparatively unknown ; but it is not fitting that it should remain so, especially in Manchester, seeing that its author might, to some extent, be called, from residence here, a Manchester man. If I make it better known, you will have to thank me for not letting the author have to say that a prophet has no honour in his own country. It is some years since the poem was first published ; and in a second edition it has undergone considerable alteration and enlargement. I will read the last page of the poem, which embodies the high spirit of the whole. A young man of twenty-three wrote it ; and let the world remember that high thoughts do not exclusively dwell in gray hairs. The object of the book is to enter into a fuller interpretation than was ever before given, of the ministration of sorrow and the end of evil ; to show how it is needful for every heart to be to a certain extent baptized in grief ; how with weeping, there is no true smiling ; how it is always needful to traverse the thorny path, in order to reach the heavenly gate, and how, as with Christ Himself, and as with martyrs in all ages, a thorny crown precedes a diadem of glory.

## L'ENVOI.

Read this, world ! He who writes is dead to thee,  
 But still lives in these leaves. He spake inspired :  
 Night and Day, thought came unhelpèd, undesired,  
 Like blood to his heart. The course of study he  
 Went through was of the soul-rack. The degree  
 He took was high : it was wise wretchedness.  
 He suffered perfectly, and gained no less  
 A prize than, in his own torn heart, to see  
 A few bright seeds : he sowed them—hoped them truth,

The autumn of that seed is in these pages.

God was with him ; and bade old Time, to the youth,  
Unclench his heart, and teach the book of ages.

Peace to thee, world !—farewell ! May God the Power,  
And God the Love—and God the Grace, be ours !

Bailey says that, to him, “night and day, thought came unhelped.” Nowadays, we have reduced metaphysics to such a science, that men deny the possibility of thought entering a man’s soul unhelped. We know the doctrine of the Association of Ideas, and are so learned, so versed in the doctrine of cause and effect, that, given a thought, metaphysicians will show how it arose, whence it came, how it was produced, by the running together of two or three little channels of thinking. The works of Martinus Scriblerus show us how thinking is the result of certain small channels, two of which make a syllogism, and three an argument ; and where these channels are small and become much twisted, they make what may be called “slow-coaches” ; the thought, having a long way to travel through a narrow channel, is consequently slow. I believe, on the contrary, in the view expressed in the Christian Scriptures, “one spirit, many forms” ; one course, many vocations ; one end to be served, many diverse modes of serving it. So Job says, “By the inspiration of the Almighty cometh understanding.” The old philosophy showed that there was One Spirit, many manifestations ; that the poet and the painter might also be preachers in their place and order, as well as the theologian and the divine. This the German *literati* understood, and in that beautiful treatise, on the mission, vocation, and nature of the scholar, Fichte holds out the idea, that the scholar is one of God’s anointed and appointed preachers, if he understands his mission and vocation ; that thought comes to him (as the writer says) “like blood to his heart.” Though it was said, in a special sense, to men of old, “When thou comest into the presence of the rulers, take no thought what thou shalt speak, for in that day it shall be given to thee what to speak ;”—still it does not follow that behind that special there was not involved a general spiritualism,—that there be thoughts that come to, or are given to, a man.

The course of study which the author of *Festus* went through, “was of the soul-rack,” the writhings of the spirit, the torture of

the heart, and "the degree he took was high : it was *wise wretchedness*." The meaning of this striking phrase I have explained, when I attempted to show the difference between the happiness philosophy and the blessedness philosophy. In one of two pictures, ease, riches, honours, nothing to do, and plenty to eat, are the light parts of the picture ; in the other, suffering, sorrow, and weeping, visits to the house of mourning, being persecuted and hunted for righteousness' sake, are the lights of the picture, and riches, ease, and sloth are the dark parts. This, I know, is a hard lesson to teach, and always has been. Still the author has made it out, and has taken a high degree in that "wise wretchedness" which brings happiness hereafter, and out of which blessedness is born.

Mr Bailey's dedication of the poem to his father, he calls a "needful apology" for the book. The poem opens with a long proem, in which (perhaps not wisely) the author has laid down the theology of the book,—in this differing from the preceding poets, who suffer the moral or doctrine to be interwoven in the facts. Great poets seldom explain ; they give the symbols, and leave their readers to make their philosophy for themselves.

It may be said that in a book everybody ought to see the same thing. So they ought, in books filled with dates and facts ; these ought to tell the same tale to the poet and the ploughboy ! But, as to books which are what the Scriptures declare of themselves, "living oracles," such works as are mere transcripts of the results of the highest philosophy and wisdom,—there must be no dead sameness and oneness about them. In the Scriptures, it is said, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful ; with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright ; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure ; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward." There is deep philosophy in this. As are men themselves, so will most things be to them. If books are to be to us living oracles, the answers will be made by the questioners. "Wisdom cometh from above ;" the form of wisdom is supplied on earth. "Revelation cometh down from God ;" the mode of revelation rises up from man. Hence, the forms of revelation will change ; the modes of religious teaching will alter ; but the one soul and the one spirit will march sublime behind them all. The oracle will give the answer, though the questioner will supply

the mode and shape of the answer. "To the pure all things are pure." Thou pure, the thing will be pure; thou impure, thou wilt reflect thy impurity there, and get it reflected back upon thyself. As face answers to face in a glass, so will spiritual books answer to him who reads and ponders them.

In this proem to *Festus* you will find laid down the theological opinions of the author, which I will leave you to study for yourselves. Then we have a scene in Heaven, answering to the scene in Heaven in *Job* and in *Faust*. The evil spirit is here called Lucifer, and in my next lecture I shall show wherein he differs from the Lucifer of *Job*, and from the Mephistopheles of Marlowe and of Goethe. Lucifer here is more like the Miltonic evil spirit than that Tallyrand-like spirit, the Mephistopheles of the German poem; this Lucifer is not the vulgar devil of modern times, but rather the Son of the Morning, fallen and scathed. It was needful that Milton should give us the fallen Lucifer, not as the vulgar devil, but as the prostrate angel; consequently it was this remnant in him of his former glory, and the necessary putting into him of the human and mortal, that brought the reproach of the very, very moral people upon Milton. But whether man draws a picture and image of God or of devil, there must be what is called anthropomorphism in that conception. The infinite must get itself translated into the finite, though it suffer in the process. While in the body, the spirit must condescend to the body; the infinite must be spoken of in a finite tongue; and in all attempts to draw the incarnation of the spirit of evil, the poet must come under the reproach of giving touches and traces of goodness, which the unmitigated evil nature of this embodiment of spirit does not seem proper to allow.

After the scene in Heaven, *Festus* is presented to us alone, in order that he may supply us with the cause and nature of his discontent. There is in the whole range of poetry no finer metaphor than the one in which, describing a man imprisoned by circumstances which he could not master, vexed by problems which he could not solve, *Festus* says,—

"Oh! I feel like a seed in the cold earth;  
Quickening at heart, and pining for the air!  
Passion is destiny."

He feels life within him, but the dead, cold earth about him; he

feels more life within than it is safe to express; the chillness of society, like that of the clods of earth, freezing and turning the energetic power of the heart in upon itself.

## IV

At the close of my last lecture, I briefly introduced Bailey's poem of *Festus*, concerning which a dim rumour has reached me, that at a reading society not far hence, it has gone the whole round of the members with every leaf most carefully uncut. With a view to prevent such things recurring, if true, I will now draw attention to this poem,—a long and difficult one, treating of almost all the vexed and difficult questions in metaphysics, ontology, and theology, with which the mind of man was ever troubled. It is a book only for the initiated. Then (I may be asked) why bring it before this auditory? Because now-a-days one cannot tell who the initiated are. In the olden time, men had to go to the appointed priests of the mysteries, who told them through what they must pass to enter into the true freemasonry of knowledge, and become esoteric philosophers; but now, the Rosicrucian philosophy is no more, and whosoever would be initiated, must, like Napoleon, put the crown on his own head; must initiate himself, ordain his own trial, and pass through it. It is therefore impossible for me to tell who are initiated, and who not. Authors are the true priests of initiation, and as their works stand open to everyone who will enter into them and understand them, everyone may become a philosopher of the mind's inner knowledge, without asking the allowance or fearing the banning of any man. Supposing, then, that some present are interested in such matters, who desire to ask and have answered such questions as are in the book, and who know what it is to watch the inner life, I propose to explain somewhat of the meaning and intention of the book.

The author acknowledges at once that it is theologic and religious. It is sometimes said that these things are altogether out of the province of the poet and the layman; but if I do not sadly mistake the signs of the times, they indicate the utter breaking up of all monopolies whatsoever. No longer are any

appointed race of men to be politicians or sole ministrants of metaphysics or theology; but every man will find his right to initiate and teach himself, and so become, after his own will and way, prophet, priest, and king. We are about to realise the sublime prayer of Moses, "Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets!" Hence we find politicians, poets, and laymen, becoming religious and theological teachers; and it is becoming open to all men to investigate those themes which belonged of old to appointed prophet or anointed priest.

The author says, "True fiction hath in it a higher end than fact." Fact is a very little thing, compared with truth, and true fiction, as compared with fact, is the possible compared with the positive. What is possible is the region of the ideal, up to which men must struggle and strive to come. The poet, after speaking of other poems treating on such matters, and the distinctions between them and his own, intimates that his own mission is to show the course of a single soul through life; and the great idea is that that soul is one of God's chosen ones, which He makes to go through the whole of life, with all its troubles, dissipations, pleasures and licentiousness, and to come out, saved by grace, and purified at last.

The poem is especially a revelation of the inner life of a man who has thought and suffered much. I have seen it said in some criticism on it, that it is a poem that will not last; that many parts of it will have to be remoulded and altered, because, with growing years, the poet will change his opinions; that there is in it so much that is temporary as to the writer, that it must needs pass away. But this is blaming the book for not being what it was never intended to be. It is a self-portraiture of a particular man's soul, at a particular time of his history,—when he is still a young man. Some may think it beneath their dignity to be taught by young men; but one of the sagest of the sage old men has said that it is a good thing for old men to associate much with young men, for it keeps their blood warm and their intellect lively, and maintains them in harmony and keeping with the coming age. Such is Bacon's advice to old men: it is like drinking at the fountain of youth again. Coleridge wisely says, that he who knows the speculative opinions of young men—of those between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five—has all the elements

of prophecy for the coming age ; and he is right, because the opinions of the young men of this age will become the deeds of the next. What we think, will be the law of the next generation, and what some of us are dreaming of (as the men of to-day may please to say), we shall by God's good pleasure rear up in a few years, and make it an actual and realised ideal. The very youth of the author makes the book more worthful ; as it shows how life looks to a man whose life-blood is yet warm ; and as it is not the besetting sin of young men to think deeply, or, if so, to express their thoughts, it is the more needful that this young man should reveal to us how life appears to him. He says that his blood is boiling, and at fever heat, and life appears to him with the trials and the troubles, and also with the buoyancy of youth.

The book, in its theology, may be said to violate the rules of catholicism ; for to be catholic or universal, a book must not express the theology of a particular creed. That was perhaps the catholicism of the past, and of many men of to-day ; but the new catholicism, yet to be born, will be that, when men will differ much in opinion, and little in spirit ; when men of all creeds will meet for one purpose, under one God, in one spirit, for the realising of one common end. The new catholicism will not need that men shall be bundles of negations, or marked and distinguished as holding particular opinions ; for when all persecution for belief shall get itself hung up in museums along with the thumb-screws of a past age ; when all nick-names, back-biting, and slandering of another, because he sees not the many-coloured rays of light of the same hue as you and I see them, shall be only remembered as old ghosts and hags of a former day,—it will not be needful that men should not have their peculiar opinions deeply and broadly stamped upon them. The catholicism of half-men must be that of negation ; that of full-grown men will be that of positivity, of individuals blended together through a charitable and loving faith, in unity of purpose, oneness of spirit, presented under many and diverse forms. The writer's theology is rather orthodox, and the book is cast under a theological aspect. The day is now gone by when a literary man will be as ashamed of his religion as of his poverty. The day was in this country, when a literary man was as ashamed of being supposed to hold religious belief, as some vain upstarts are of being caught with



their old-fashioned fathers. Some small, petty souls may yet be found who are ashamed of owning the old house at home ; and if I could ever speak contemptuously of any men, it would be of these, who are just the smallest and meanest kind of men the world has. Time was when our literary men were perfectly ashamed of anything like religion ; it was the vulgarest thing known ; and hence we had for many years a godless and truly atheistic literature ; for the true atheism is, " living without God in the world." But now our authors are not so ashamed of religion, and this poet is not ashamed to have, not the sort of undefined religionism of some, but a religion in definite symbolic forms.

The poem transcends all the usual laws of poetry. We have in it songs by angels, by spirits of earth, by demons, by men, women, and spirits of every grade, and kind, and order. The author causes us to visit heaven, earth, and hell ; leads us through scenes of festivity, village fairs, town market-places, and crowns all by giving us a most excellent sermon preached by Lucifer in the market-place. Then we have an hour's ride along with Lucifer over all the countries in the world. Call these things strange, grotesque, if you will, still they are the symbols under which the author has chosen to throw his version and vision of human life.

There are many to whom this will remain a sealed book ; and I hold that a certain degree of reserve is needful in communicating knowledge ; it should be, like Nature, an open secret ; you can have it if you will search for it ; but if to you the veil is thickened, and the spirit shut out by much dwelling in sensualisms, it will remain a secret to you. To such people, this book will remain a secret, and therefore cannot hurt them.

I am not going to defend the theological propositions of the author ; I will only name some of them, and leave to my auditors to make of them what they can. [Mr Dawson then read various extracts from the poem.]

The great doctrine of the book is to show the final restoration of all that God has made, to a state of glory and happiness. Whether that is a true theological proposition, this is neither the time nor the place to discuss. The poet holds that the love of God is infinite as man's imperfection ; that God watches all that men do, and allows them to do it ; that man made not himself,

but that what he does is preappointed by God ; that nothing is lost in Nature ; and no soul, though buried in sin, is lost to God ; that evil is not a positive state or principle, but the absence of good, which is the sole positive principle in the world. We are accustomed to talk of evil as an actual thing ; the author endeavours to show that it is merely the defect, the absence of good, in the same way as darkness is not positive, but only the absence of light ; and cold the absence of heat. Evil, he holds, is not a thing positive, but a thing negative, being the want of good, or the non-presence of what is right and true. Then here, as in the other poems noticed, we find the lesson that out of evil good must come ; lesson much needed, and that life should most teach, because, till it be learned, life will never become harmonic, the ideal and the real will never be brought together, and no man can “possess his soul in patience,” and “both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God.” The majority of the restlessnesses of men, their questions, scepticisms, and doubts, all come of their inability to see, or their neglect to try to see, how out of evil good is always coming ; how imperfection is the birthplace of perfection, and how the highest virtue never was or will be obtained, except through temptation, trouble, trial, and suffering.

The majority of men whine over their sufferings ; and many poems are mere whinings, more like that of the whipped cur, than those of men who have to struggle onward and upward to the light. They cry, because they cannot help it, or because the pain is great, and the stripe is hard. Had they but seen the true ministration of evil they would understand how these things work for good, and how there comes no real and true good but out of this sorrow and trouble, which, like the minor key in music, gives truth to the highest music, the divinest melody of all. The tones of Nature are often in this sad strain, and one poet has remarked how the wind, when it comes near men’s dwellings, begins to sigh and moan, thereby teaching that sadness is needful to the full harmony of Nature. These troubles of men, then, the author designs to show, are God’s appointed ministration for bringing men up to the highest and final state. Hence men of worth must suffer most, that they may rise highest ; for the martyr must needs be a martyr, and those who are to be raised to the apex of being, here or hereafter, shall have most of the wormwood and

gall, of thorny crowns, and buffeting and smiting; they must be wounded more than other men. Like their Master, they must be "men of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," more than other men: because, to refine and sublime a spirit, the fire must be hot, in order that the true gold may thereby flow out. It is not merely accidental, or from the unmitigated badness of an age, that the martyr should suffer; but it is a part of discipline that the martyr may never be without; for the high spirit must always be a suffering spirit.

This the author tells in his last page, when he speaks of taking "a high degree in wise wretchedness," and of "the soul-rack." It is not desirable, in the majority of cases, that men should paint this soul-sorrow; for if the interior life be once made public, it loses its beauty, and becomes common-place and vulgar. As the flower, passed through too many hands and admired too clownishly, soon loses its beauty, its fragrance, and its form,—so the inner life of man, with too much looking at, exposure, and publicity, loses its beauty and its value. But at times we need to have men whose inward life should be pictured outwardly, that we may compare their progress with our own. Our best thoughts are never spoken; our deepest sorrows never communicated; and this, too, is needful,—for those sorrows that can be talked of to everybody are small sorrows, after all. As in the old order of knighthood, whose badge was the thistle and the rue-leaf, men must eat the rue-leaves of life, and so become armed to fight the good fight. The bitterest herbs give out the most healing; the pleasant tasting things of life have nothing but their taste; the bitter things of life have something behind their bitterness. In order to extract the full virtue of it, the bitter herb must be well eaten, eaten throughout; and, like the little book of the apostle, though very bitter in the mouth, it will be very sweet after it is eaten. So with these sorrows of men; keep them at home, their full bitterness is extracted, and along with that their full healing virtue comes out.

*Festus* will be of use to all who have passed through this phase of man's history, especially to the young, who very seldom tell their troubles,—having a sort of presentiment, that as soon as they are made common they lose their value. Society does not put up with this sort of thing: their doubts must be subdued. And the

fear of man always does work a snare here ; and in no one thing is it more in fault than in the hiding which it causes us to put upon our fears, scepticisms, infidelities, and doubts, through which the path of the greatest believers always yet doth lie. It is useless to wish it otherwise ; it is the appointed order of things, that a man never stands in fair clear belief, except he goes through doubt to reach it. Must the thing be buried ? Is it never to have expression ? If it is not to be buried, this yearning of the spirit must out. It is by the hiding of doubts, and turning them inward again, that they come at last to prey upon themselves, and when the heart becomes its own prey, bitterness is the consequence ; that bitterness is sought to be allayed in outward licentiousness, and very many of those plungings into pleasure and riot, which the world has seen in young men, have been consequences of the hiding and concealment which the sages of the time have put upon all expression of doubt, difficulty, infidelity, or scepticism.

Byron affords a notable instance of this kind of thing. The man's inner life became soured ; he has poured forth much of that sourness ; but half those plunges that he made in inane and stupid pleasures, were caused by the reaction of doubts which society held it proper to repress and drive back upon the soul. Festus has all these doubts and difficulties, and, like Faust, plunges after one thing and another thing, tries all things, and at last is obliged to assume with Solomon, that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." I recommend the book to those only who understand these phases of human history ; who wish they could believe as others do, but cannot ; for, put on what outward seeming you may, in heart you are not what others are. The book will come to you kindly, and help to lead you. Let no man despair while doubting ; for it is like the aspirant to knighthood, watching and fasting all night in the cold lone chapel, ere he gets his spurs. So this cold chamber of partial doubt, difficulty, and scepticism, is but the long midnight vigil in the cold chapel, where, on the morrow, he will receive the true investiture of a child of truth, a lover of light, a son of God. The author, then, will attend you in this long vigil, and show how he has watched the long night through, and how his watchings brought him at length to the full and firm belief of those things which, at first, did appear at least problematical.

There are certain minds (always of a high order) not content to know the facts ; they must know the reason of the facts. No toy will long last for them ; they must take it to pieces. It is no use for Society to look grave at them, and shake her head, and say as puzzled fathers do when children ask improper questions, "It is very improper to ask," or "Don't trouble me." If you will not answer them, they will ask elsewhere ; for pleasure and riot will be freedom to them, and they will ask if truth is in them ; and it is only because the recognised teachers will not answer their question, or say frankly that it cannot be answered, that men turn to forbidden magic and evil spirits, as Saul did, when, forsaken of God, or forsaking God, he turned to the witch of Endor, and desired that even out of the charnel-house might come the answer which his impure spirit forbade him to win from the face of Nature or the holy Book of God.

When children ask awkward, puzzling questions, as "What becomes of the flame of a candle when it is put out?" "Why, having two eyes, do we see only one thing?" there are two fair modes of treating them : one is to say honestly we do not know ; the second is to try to make it plain ; but a third, and the commonest mode is to tell the child it is asking improper questions, or perhaps to bid the nurse take it out of the room. So we ask some puzzling political, religious, or other awkward questions, such as "Where evil comes from?"—"What is it meant for?"—"Why it should be?"—"Why, if there be One Source of things, should there be two kinds of things—good and evil?"—"Why, if the Father be all good, there should be so much evil in his world?" Ofttimes, instead of our appointed teachers answering these things, they bid our nurses take us out of the room ; and in the old times they took us out of the great wide chamber which had suggested these questions, and put those vexatious and troublesome children into another place, where, when the mortal was laid down, and the corruptible had put on incorruption, they might question themselves, or spirits of departed men, or perchance receive an answer at the judgment-seat of the Eternal.

This mode of removing troublesome children having passed away, another mode must come,—that of meeting the questions. This author tries to answer them as well as he can. Through his answers, then, we may become wise ; through his failure, we

may become strong ; through and by his failure, we perhaps may master better than he those high and solemn questions.

This poem opens with a scene in Heaven, in which there are more characters than in the similar scene in *Faust* ; songs are sung by cherubim and seraphim ; Lucifer appears, and gets a commission from God to tempt the soul of Festus, not as a mere antagonist principle, but as one of the ministers and messengers of God, who permits him to tempt ; but his power of tempting has a tether, beyond certain limit and length he cannot go ; and we are thus taught that the temptations of Lucifer are but one of the appointed "stripes by which we are healed." In the second scene, Festus is alone, and gives us one of the finest soliloquies in the poem—

FESTUS. This is to be a mortal and immortal !  
 'To live within a circle,—and to be  
 That dark point where the shades of all things around  
 Meet, mix, and deepen. All things unto me  
 Show their dark sides. Somewhere there must be light.  
 Oh ! I feel like a seed in the cold earth :  
 Quickening at heart, and pining for the air,  
 Passion is destiny. The heart is its own  
 Fate. It is well youth's gold rubs off so soon,  
 The heart gets dizzy with its drunken dance,  
 And the voluptuous vanities of life  
 Enchain, enchant, and cheat my soul no more,  
 My spirit is on edge. I can enjoy  
 Nought which has not the honied sting of sin ;  
 That soothing fret which makes the young untried,  
 Longing to be beforehand with their nature,  
 In dreams and liveness cry, they die to live ;  
 That wanton whetting of the soul, which while  
 It gives a finer, keener edge for pleasure,  
 Wastes more and dulls the sooner. Rouse thee, heart ;  
 Bow of my life, thou yet art full of spring !  
 My quiver still hath many purposes.

When the poet's years are considered, perhaps English poetry scarcely affords anything more remarkable or wonderful. Lucifer appears, and tells him the commission he has gotten from God, and offers to him certain temptations, as a price, not of his selling his soul to him, but of his for a time yielding to the guidance of the spirit of evil. In the several poems, the nature of the

temptation rises higher and higher. In *Job*, it is mere suffering or endurance : in *Faustus*, it is the mere gift for a while of low and sensual pleasures ; in *Faust*, the temptation is through the desire of the spirit : here, in *Festus*, Lucifer himself says—

—“ as the soul of hell and evil came I,  
With leave to give the kingdom of the world ;  
The freedom of thyself.”

Festus then puts to Lucifer many of the questions which trouble us, including all the metaphysical problems, those concerning the future world, and the vexed question of fate and free-will,—the mystery of which must ever remain as it is, a problem which it is not possible to solve.

A large part of the poem is spent in describing the various human loves that Festus goes through ; for the poet, for reasons of his own, has put most of the discipline suffered by his hero into the form of love. I will read you Clara's idea of true religion, and her beautiful song.

CLARA. True faith nor biddeth nor abideth form !  
The bended knee, the eye uplift is all  
Which man need render ; all which God can bear.  
What to the faith are forms ? A passing speck,  
A crow upon the sky. God's worship is  
That only He inspires ; and his bright words,  
Writ in the red-leaved volume of the heart,  
Return to him in prayer, as dew to heaven,  
Our proper good we rarely seek or make ;  
Mindless of our immortal powers and their  
Immortal end, as is the pearl of its worth,  
The rose its scent, the wave its purity.

I cannot sing the lightsome lays of love.  
Many thou know'st who can ; but none that can  
Love thee as I do—for I love thy soul ;  
And I would save it, Festus ! Listen then :

Is heaven a place where pearly streams  
Glide over silver sand ?  
Like childhood's rosy dazzling dreams  
Of some far faery land ?

Is heaven a clime where diamond dew  
 Glitter on fadeless flowers?  
 And mirth and music ring aloud  
 From amaranthine bowers?

Ah no ; not such, not such is heaven !  
 Surpassing far all these ;  
 Such cannot be the guerdon given  
 Man's wearied soul to please,  
 For saint and sinner here below  
 Such vain to be have proved ;  
 And the pure spirit will despise  
 Whate'er the sense hath loved.

There we shall dwell with Sire and Son,  
 And with the Mother-maid,  
 And with the Holy Spirit, one :  
 In glory like arrayed !  
 And not to one created thing  
 Shall our embrace be given ;  
 But all our joy shall be in God ;  
 For only God is heaven.

Festus, accompanied by Lucifer, goes to a village festival, where occurs one of the most remarkable passages in the book ; for Lucifer takes it into his head to preach the people a sermon, one of the most significant ever read. The people listen to it, and Lucifer, afraid that he has done them too much good, begins to abuse the people, who grow angry ; Festus then prays them a more sublime prayer, Lucifer gives out a hymn, and the people separate. There are some significant truths in Lucifer's sermon, and all of us might study it wisely, carefully, and well ; and in Festus's prayer, there is a beautiful political lesson taught. By saying that " mountains come of plains, and not plains of mountains," he implies that kings come because the people want them, and nations are not born because there is a king or two to reign. This prayer is one of the sublimest liturgies to be found anywhere. If such prayers were used, not in word only but in deed, the last and final paradise would soon come on the earth. There is also in it one of the problems which must come to be solved sooner or later, whether machinery is to be a grinding power, under whose crushing and pressure the poor must die ; or whether it



shall be what the Great Father intended,—a taking of the low mechanical work out of man's hands, and having it done for him by his ministers, the elements, in order that the poor may get some time for self-improvement. The poor will ask it before long,—whether machinery is to go on crushing them, or whether it is to set them free; whether none but the master is to be blessed by machinery; and whether the great God did not purposely intend it to bring about the last earthly millennium, when all men shall be prophets, priests, and kings, and when teaching, and spiritualism, and gladness, and joy of all kinds is to be shared, as much as may be, for all and by all.

This strange service is concluded by Lucifer giving out a singular hymn, and the next scene gives us a strange ride over the countries of the earth, which is chiefly remarkable for the short and rapid, but beautiful descriptions it gives of the countries of the world.

After that there follow many long dialogues between a student and Festus, the most significant and beautiful parts of the book; but I will not attempt to read or explain the many singular conferences they had. Towards the close of the poem, the poet says, as it began in the Heavens, so it must end there, and the peculiar theological doctrine of the final restoration of all things becomes consummated. No one need be excessively horrified at the doctrine, for it has been held by many a great and pious heart before. One of the hymns sung by the saints of the millennial era, addressed to God, expresses the assembly of the faithful of all ages, in the true spirit of Catholic Christianity, which knoweth that God will bring to Himself the great and good of every age, and land, and clime, such as have feared God and worked righteousness. It is worth contemplating, and singing too; for it has more true beauty than any of the more bigoted chants of man, which chant nothing but the glory of themselves, and of their church, and find no room for that delightful assembly which it delighted the apostle of old to tell of.—

SCENE—*The Millennial Earth.*

SAINTS AND ANGELS *worshipping*; FESTUS.

SAINTS. To Thee God, Maker, Ruler, Saviour, Judge,  
The Infinite, the Universal One,  
Whose righteousnesses are as numberless

As creature sins ; who Giver art of life ;  
 Who sawest from the first that all was good,  
 Which Thou didst make ; and sealed it with Thy love,  
 Thy boundless benediction on the world ;  
 To Thee be honour, glory, prayer, and praise,  
 And full orb'd worship from all worlds, all heavens,  
 May every being bless Thee in return  
 As Thou dost bless it ; every age and orb  
 Utter to Thee the praise Thou dost inspire.  
 Let man, Lord, praise Thee most, as all redeemed,  
 As many in the saints, as one in Thee.  
 Oh may perpetual pleasure, peace, and joy,  
 And spiritual light inform our souls,  
 And grace and mercy in bliss thousand-fold  
 Enwrap the world of life. May all who dwell  
 On open earth, or in the hid abyss,  
 Howe'er they sin or suffer, in the end,  
 Receive, as beings born at first of Thee,  
 The mercy that is mightier than all ill.  
 May all souls love each other in all worlds,  
 And all conditions of existence ; even  
 As now these lower lives that dwell with man  
 In amity, rejoicing in the care  
 Of their superior, and in useful peace,  
 Upon the common earth, no more distained  
 With mutual slaughter—no more doomed to groan  
 At sights of woe, and cruelty, and crime,  
 Lo ! all things now rejoicing in the life  
 Thou art to each and givest, live to Thee ;  
 And knowing others' nature and their own  
 Live in serene delight, content with good,  
 Yet earnest for the last and best degree.  
 Their hands are full of kindness and their tongues  
 Are full of blessings, and their hearts of good,  
 All things are happy here. May kindness, truth,  
 Wisdom and knowledge, liberty and power,  
 Virtue and holiness, o'erspread all orbs  
 As this star now ; the world be bliss and love ;  
 And heaven alone be all things ; till at last  
 The music from all souls redeemed shall rise,  
 Like a perpetual fountain of pure sound  
 Upspringing, sparkling in the silvery blue ;  
 From round creation to Thy feet, O God !

The final scene is in Heaven; and, after a chorus sung by the spirits of men saved, Festus is heard exclaiming,—

“So, soul and song, begin and end in heaven,  
Your birthplace, and your everlasting home.”

To descend to some of the smaller criticism, the images and similes are of a singular and somewhat daring character. No book is more full of similes, more unhackneyed and untried. Sometimes a simile has to do so much service that its beauty goes threadbare, and one poet after another rides it to the death. But many of the similes in this book have never occurred before, and will never occur again, except they be borrowed and copied.

The purpose for which I selected these poems has probably now revealed itself. It was the desire to draw more attention to the inner life than is usual in this place, and in lectures here delivered. Everything is beautiful in its season,—the study of science, of art, and of literature; but they fade into insignificance before the study of the interior life. I have often regretted that it gains no more attention than it does from Institutions of this kind; but I believe the motive to have been a fear of intruding on the preacher's province. But if poets will preach, it becomes needful to interpret their poems. These poems are too great to be investigated in four or five short hours; but I am content to do for you the very humble service of finger-post or preface, merely to warn you of the broad land of mental wealth that is here.

With respect to the poems, I have told the truth, that some people will not like them; they will be exceedingly dry to many, who, having looked into them somewhat, will probably see in them neither end nor beginning. To such they do no harm. But for some, whose life has been, to a great degree, a struggle with doubt and difficulty, with solemn questionings and unanswerable problems, these books will give a lesson and a wisdom which will be well worth the seeking. Such will thank me for my labour, in having directed them to one who, having gone through the same phases of life, will show how he found light, and where he found it, and so direct them to turn their faces towards the same bright East, from whence comes the light of God into the spirit. I profess to have done nothing more than call your attention to

these books. I undertook no such Quixotic task as to indicate all the beauties and truths in these poems. If it be deemed worth while to read and study them for yourselves, good ; if not, you will take my advice, and let them alone. I thank you for your patient attention to these lectures, and trust that some of my auditors may find them of service in drawing them to that truest and most sacred altar and chapel, the soul of a man ; to that which the poet tells us is higher and deeper than all the outward life ; for in these matters, as it was said by the Master, “ If thou should lose thy own soul and gain the world, poor thy exchange !” “ What shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?” The truths being of spiritual history, they are of all worth ; and what outward science or art can compare to one solemn vigil, held in and with the soul, and for the soul’s advancement and good ?

## THINGS UNSEEN.

(Delivered in April 1849, at the Whittington Club.)

### I.

THE dominion which visible things exercise over us is so determined and so clear, that it seems needful that we give a more special consideration at times, to those invisible things of which I hope to show you visible things are but the appearance and the sign. For the dominion of the outward and the seen is one that continually increases, until at length, in man, it threatens to overcome the invisible and the unseen. You shall note in history, that men have always been divided into two great classes—those who mainly believe in invisible things, and those who chiefly regulate their lives by visible ones. This distinction has existed through every phase of human life, and in every age. We are all familiar with the distinction made between men in the Bible, where one, the higher class, is said to “walk by faith,” and the other to “walk by sight,” and those who walk by sight are again said to “walk in a vain show.” Throughout the whole of the Scriptures this distinction is kept up, and it is, I hope to show, a distinction which has run through all ages, and which appears in almost all the varied pursuits in which men have engaged. Human kind is everywhere divisible into two great classes; the greater class, in numbers, busying itself in externalities, dealing with the so-called tangibilities, believing only in things *seen*; the minority, though despising and condemning not the outward, has faith in great truths, believing in things *not* seen. In each division of mankind, there is a minority ruled by things unseen, and a majority by things seen.

These have been the two classes into which metaphysicians, men of science, poets, painters, artists, have always been divided. In social life you find manifestations of both. There are those who go, as they tell you, for the tangible, the visible, and the real.

Society has always been plagued with men who have a sublime contempt for everything they account unreal, intangible, and invisible. These are the men who look down upon poets, romancists, theologians, and dreamers ; who would persuade you, if they could, that religion and its verities are a curious invention of priestcraft ; and having uttered this, they think they have satisfactorily accounted for the only thing that has held perpetual and unbroken dominion over man. And yet, strange it is that many of these men acknowledge invisible things. You shall catch our republican friend full of sublime contempt for what he calls mysticism, religion, priesthood and priestcraft. You shall overtake him in the midst of one of his bitter jeremiads against governments as they are. You ask him, what's amiss ? He says, " I find in this State of ours a want of conformity to the primitive idea of the rights of man." He says, " The age is out of joint ;" and with what ? Certain invisible things in which he believes ! He would, if he had his way, regulate politics afresh, not by some curious balancing of visible things, but by a conformity to some invisible matter that he himself is obliged to call an idea. Thus, many men of the outward and material, as they are in most matters, do yet confess that there exists—under their ideal State, or under their ideal household, or their ideal social system—a certain principle to which they ought to be conformed.

Now, our office at present is to consider the various phenomena of life in the light of the seen and of the unseen ; to look for awhile at those classes of men who have undertaken in times past to interpret for you invisible things ; and to show that even in this day of ours, the class, though they may have varied in the apparatus they use, though they may no longer " conjure up spirits from the vasty deep," yet have a work as certain and as sure as the men of old had, when they strove, either as mystagogues or poets, to put clearly before the eyes of a generation sunk in sense, those invisible things by which the outward things of the world were regulated.

In every age men have had a clear sight of a certain distinction between what they call Mind and Matter, and after metaphysicians have talked much about it, you may come back to the dogmatism of an old catechism that says we must believe in mind as well as body—" Because in me I feel there is something which can

think and know, which can rejoice and be sorry, which my body cannot do." And this is the utterance, the simple utterance, to which metaphysicians in different ages have given various shapes; that there are in this world certain powers different from one another—certain powers essentially at variance. According as one reigns over the other, the religion, the government, the social life of a people is mainly determined. There have always been men who believed that the unseen and invisible things of life were determined realities, and that the things which do appear, the visible things, were but the shadows or results of the invisible or unseen. The early philosophers continually endeavoured to arrange the material phenomena of life in accordance with what some who misunderstood them called their "pre-conceived ideas." With regard to early times, we may translate many of those things which are usually put down as pure superstitions, pure results of the depravity of human nature, as a more or less distinct understanding of the connection that does exist between the visible and the invisible. Thus the old deification of Nature, with alchemy, witchcraft, magic, were all attempts to pry into the invisible. We men of to-day smile at these things, and treat them as so many gratuitous inventions of those who believed in them; but the idea that men could sit down and invent a false pantheon, as you would sit down and invent a pictorial symbol, has long, by all thoughtful men, been consigned to its native ignorance, and we are coming to see that men never did hold faith arbitrarily, and that no false faith was a mere artificial whim of the holders, but more or less an attempt to body forth the universe as they found it, and its laws as they thrust themselves upon their minds.

Let us see then, first, that every visible thing owes its birth and importance to its being a revelation of an invisible one. You note this in the body, for you say the body is the temple or habitation of the soul. You note it in outward life, when if some demon, as in the famous tale of old, should flit with us over a town and cause it to be unroofed, you would have a nearer and clearer view of its life, and of the causes of its outward life, than can possibly now appear. You note it, too, when you say that your words are only the signs of your thoughts, and when you say that all things are conformed to the ideal law or pattern underneath them. Money, you tell me, is a symbol; and language is

a symbol and a sign. Nature, we are told, is a garment, a hiding, or a revelation. Thus, everything we admit to be but an outward sign of an inward truth.

Again, I find that those who least like the doctrine, acknowledge it. You are angry with that friend of yours, because he has dropped your acquaintance, and you investigate the reason. You are poorer than you used to be, and he is richer, and you say, "He has forgotten me." He never knew you. He has forgotten your appearance; he has forgotten the accidents concerning you outwardly; but had he ever *known* you, your declension into poverty could have made no alteration in that knowledge. You are indignant at it. Why are you vexed and indignant? Because you feel conscious that the man has slighted *you*. You come at last to see that he worshipped your accidents; and you become impatient when you learn that his old reverence was a reverence for the thing which did appear, instead of that which abides for ever. Thus, in your vexation, in that pride which complains of pride, you show how possible it is to regard certain things as simply an appearance which passes in front of the reality.

In the ancient ages this truth was always kept before the people. In the Hebrew days there was a Holy of Holies, which no eye but the chief priest's ever beheld. The people were not suffered to enter into it, in order that it might symbolically teach them that the realities of life were invisible; that they were not seen by the eye, but were to be approached only by the initiated and the consecrated. In the priesthood of Egypt, the same lesson was kept before them. There were certain hidden mysteries of which the priests were the depositaries, and which the initiated alone could understand. Thus, it was taught to mankind symbolically that outward things were but a sign, a form, a symbol of something hidden behind them.

What is called the superstition of man is also a preaching, a revelation of his faith in the invisible.

Every generation interprets this invisible life for itself. We shall find that many things at which we smile now were simply the effort of a people to render into outward and visible sign, what the soul told them did really exist. For example it was believed that between man and God there was a certain blank, which was to be filled up. Hence came curious books upon angels, upon their



generation and their orders, upon their ranks and differences. This, you and I smile at, but not wisely, seeing that they were but attempts to render into things visible, to map down by the pen of the visible that which the soul said really had existence out of sight. So there pass before us certain interpreters of the unseen. These interpreters have of late extended their influence over all manifestations of life and thought. The new spirit has transformed our literature; the swelling sentences and rounded periods, which were the delight of Addison, have passed away before it, much to the disquiet of newspaper scribes, who, knowing nothing of literature, condemn the new spirit, which they style Pantheism and Germanism. Divines and divinity have felt the new spirit, and it is rampant among our poets. Many are ready to condemn what they call the intrusion of the mystical school into literature, who have never attempted to understand its truths; it would be wiser and better for them to endeavour to explain rather than to confute, to understand, instead of blindly condemning. The writings of Plato, Michel Angelo, Goethe, Thomas-à-Kempis, Swedenborg, Emerson, and Carlyle, tell of the faith in things unseen nourished by these men, but which are, in the eyes of the world, sheer inflation without meaning, and rank nonsense. Whether we know the meaning of these writings or not, we may at least get some good from an attempt to master their meaning. Historically, then, it is easy to distinguish the men who saw something unseen, from those whose vision was limited by the outward sense.

Leaving the priest and the poet for awhile, let us recall some of the more grotesque appearances of those men who sought in old times to enter into the unseen. First, then, comes the Magician, a man who veritably did believe that the invisible world that lies around us, was peopled, that it contained powers, and spirits, and forms; that the reason you could not behold them was some grossness, sensualism, lack of aptitude or skill in you: but that he had either purchased the power, or inherited it, of employing them. Hence the office of the magician was to lay bare to the eye of the body those invisible things which had long been clear to the eye of the soul. The witch was but another vulgar form of the same attempt. These were the lower forms.

Entering into science, you find a certain other class who attempted the same thing. There were the Alchemist and the

Astrologer, the men at whom people smile now-a-days. Every school-girl with her brain newly filled with terms of oxygen and hydrogen, azote and carbon and such like, undertakes to sniff contemptuously at the astrologer and alchemist of the olden time. Yet every wise student reverences those men. We may pity their mistakes, we may mourn over their seemingly wasted labour ; but the idea the men had, remains, and consecrates them as having been some of the truest sons of science.

For what was the notion of the alchemist? The old alchemist, who held no ideal theory, but who believed that all things must originally have come forth from Unity, must needfully have believed that if he could, from the various diverse points, go backward, follow them faithfully up to their origin, the time must come when he should arrive at that unitive point where they were no longer diverse, but where they first began to take their trembling divergence ; that if he could attain *that*, he had reached that origin in which all were One, and One became All ; that he would then obtain what he called the *menstruum universale*—that element in the which all other things become fluid, in which they become soluble, and out of which all things should be able to come. And, however much such ideas may be laughed at, the march of modern chemistry is towards the realisation, in another fashion, of the old dream of alchemy. So these men almost blindly strove to teach the great lesson of every age—Unity ; to show men that all the diverse appearances of Nature were not diverse in the sense of being separate in their *being*, but simply different forms, different phases put upon one universal essentially unitive thought.

So again with the old astrologer. Enlightened men smile at him now, and seem to think it absolutely incredible that the stars can have aught to do with man's fate, except to be pointed out by our telescopes, and become eloquent topics for divines and astronomers. We scout at the men who think the heavenly bodies can possibly rule and regulate human life. Yet it becomes us not. Here is an age debating to this moment whether the moon affects men in their madness or not. How are you to settle it? You call people *lunatics* to this day. It is a moot point whether lunacy is affected by states of the moon ; and yet this is a generation that sniffs contemptuously at the old astrologers. Those who cannot tell even yet the doctrine of tides, and lu-  
acities

and idiotcies with regard to the moon, will undertake to sneer at these ancient men. We may do it legitimately in some things which they attempted to do, but their ruling idea was true. What was it? That all Nature was so curiously interwoven together, that there was that unity between mind and matter, between man and God, between all parts of the universe, that while the heavenly fates decreed our life, and the earthly life was working out the decree, it was also written in the stars at one and the same time; and that it was veritably true that, under astral influences, a man was born and a man was ruled. The astrologer held that there was that intimate co-union between all parts of the universe, that it was absolutely impossible to say they were not related: hence he looked to the motions of the stars for some prophetic meaning touching the fate and the destiny of men. He did but make out this, that, somewhere or other, Nature and life are one, that there is a meeting-place where all influences are of one. They strove to find this, and perhaps owed their debasement simply to an application of a great, a holy, invisible law, to the guidance of the low material interests of mortal life. The believers in magic strove to translate their belief in the invisible into the dialect of the visible, and although they eminently failed in their attempts, yet they never failed in the primary theory on which those attempts were based. The thought that was in these men, was sublime and true.

So in the old times you find that men of science were always strivers after the invisible; for let us note at once, that the lives of great men have been the lives of those who have had a very firm faith that beyond the visible lay the real truth of life.

Let us take the case of the Saint. And remember by this I mean a saint in his highest aspect, not the saints as they are called to-day; not men careful to cut and clip their lives to a mathematical and theological pattern of righteousness; but those great men who did lift up in their days, in the evil days of a crooked generation, the standard of justice, truth, right, harmony, and spiritual music, to which they conformed their own lives, and to which they strove to make the lives of their brethren conformable.

How were these men's lives regulated and made so great as they were? Simply because they never rested in the things that

were visible. A great man has explained the lives of those saints of old, when he said: "They looked miracles to us." So they do to you and to me. You know that work presents itself to us, and we cannot do it—we are lazy. We say, "It is impossible, you cannot expect such things of us." We are fallen in petty days. The great work of life—heroic, sublime, hard, disagreeable, and difficult—lies waiting for us, but we cannot do it; we have a headache to-day, we are nervous to-morrow, dinner-hour comes next day, and some other little daily interest is always pulling us down. We read the lives of these men, and we find they accomplished all things; whatsoever they touched they glorified; all things were possible to them. They had faith that said to the mountain, "Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea." Consequently we are almost obliged to say, "These men were not of like passions with ourselves." Yet, that you and I should fall into no mistake, the Bible is careful to tell us, of one who bound the heavens that there should be no rain for years—that this mighty man was of like passions with ourselves. What was their secret then? They did believe in immortal and in invisible things as you and I believe in going to rest at night, and as you and I believe in the tangible and visible things of life. Hence the men rose above the ordinary life of men, and became in every sense transcendent men, nay, became altogether miraculous men; for the true miracle is always the overcoming of Matter by Spirit, and the determining of matter, not by its outward laws but the spiritual laws which originally gave it birth.

So the Saint has always been peculiar in the earth, because he walked by faith. Look at any of the Fathers. Take the life of Abraham, for instance. Translate it literally, or symbolically, as you please, the truth of the matter is one. Here is a man who regulates an earthly life by a heavenly pattern; who has no belief that morals, and justice, and right, and truth, are simply notions, but looks upon them as certain, great, awful, impersonal matters, to which he has to become obedient. So with the Saint in every age, and his conscience. He looked upon conscience—the most strange unseen thing about you and me—not as we may do with our modern logic, as a curious chemical result of "Conscientiousness well developed," of morals rightly taught, of honesty picked up properly out of a book, some *tertium quid* which rests in none

of the things which went to make it up, a curious result of a ledger well-balanced and totalized. No! To him conscience was the awful voice of God in the soul of him; in the making of its laws he had no part and no lot, for he remembered that strange thing about our consciences—that they sin not. A man turns his eye inwards, and he finds his conscience in him never was a sinner. Holy, impeccable, always pure, the conscience never took part in your guilt yet. You will sin, sense will have its way, lust will conceive and bring forth sin and death; but whensoever it is determined so to do, like a holy vestal the conscience goes to weep and be quiet. You never sinned yet, and your conscience was in at the sin; you never did wrong, and the inward thing consented; it withdraws into silence until *after* you have sinned, and it wakes up afterwards to do its *second* work. You would not hear it as a counsellor, you shall hear it as a judge; you would not have it as a friend, you shall have it as a foe. What you call remorse, is but the preaching of a law that has been broken. For there are *two* preachings of the law to every soul of us; one is before we sin, and the other is afterwards; the one is a holy warning, the other is an awful vengeance. For what a difference is there in the sound of the law the day before we have broken it, and the day after! How calm to me seem the laws of this land to-day; to-morrow, if I break them, how strange they sound! what new meaning there comes into them the moment they are broken!

Now these saints took this view of that great unseen matter, Conscience. It was to them a preaching of a Law that was impersonal; and here is its great office for us all. For what you and I mainly need in life is a deliverance from our personalism—a feeling that somewhere we are beaten. There is too much in modern life to make us conceited and fond of ourselves. We are all critics, and everybody preaches about individualism. You are of immense importance; the light of your countenance is courted, fished for, hunted for, until at last you almost come to think you create instead of being created. To keep this in check, there needs that before all of us there be sounded out *laws*, in the making of which we were never consulted, which were here before we came, which will remain long after we are gone, which are eternal and immutable. This these men acknowledged Conscience to be.

They heard the voice, and they worked accordingly. And with what consequence? He who always walks by the Law of Right, walks by the law that created the world; he who always does what is just, is one with the Spirit that works miracles, creates the body, moulded the sun, harmonized the stars, and carries out all life into continual being. You *must* be miraculous, if you are always just and true. Whosoever is always true, exercises a portion of the same power that was the Word which animated the life, and of which the earthly appearance is but the consequence and the result.

Hence I have ceased to wonder at the magnitude of these men's lives. The history of the Saint is simply that he becomes, through obedience to impersonal *laws*, one with the primitive forces of Nature; that what goes out into Nature and is *force* in it, goes out into the human soul, and is *spirit* in it; that holiness in the soul is like energy in the body; that, therefore, whosoever obeys always an impersonal law—who walks by the unseen laws that are written inwardly, and not upon Mosaic tablets outwardly—whoever does this, walks obediently. It is said of him, as it is said with a depth of meaning of Enoch of old, "And he walked with God." Then it follows as a consequence, that he was translated—that he escaped the power of that which is but the climax of disobedience, and the forgetfulness of impersonal laws; and it is said of him in that mystical formula: "And he was not, for God took him." Thus, whether you interpret the words literally or symbolically, they remain so—that the man had become so one with the primitive, vital, spiritual forces of life, that he could not die; he must be translated, and "he was not, because God took him."

Turn now to the Artist. Artists have always been divisible into two classes—those who held that true art was the attempt to body forth the inward verity, and those who simply painted upon canvas something which they copied. Our greatest men, both in art and science, have been distinguished by the clear understanding which they have had, that their art or science was but the outward rendering of invisible truths. It is the common opinion of art that it is something laid on the surface of society; whereas those who watch deeply, see that art is to society as the colour of the cheek is to the body—the result of full bloom and

health ; for art and all its appliances are the last sign of the full vitality of a people. If you have an unhealthy people or age, it is in vain that you, as it were, paint art upon it by Royal Academies or Schools of Design, and giving of prizes ; for art is not so much the product of construction and skill, as the appearance of full health in the body corporate. To the generation of true art, only one cause is final,—the raising up in a people of a true, living, strong, and rejoicing spirit ; give that, and art will follow. You shall see that the great artist is distinguished by his belief that art itself is but a pure form, in which dwells a certain invisible reality. Your little artist always works in the visible. He has got some paper patterns, and as long as he makes his picture accordant therewith, his work is done. He sits down as you do to your drawing-book. You have a drawing before you, and if you make your copy exactly like that, it is sufficient. But let your drawing-master come in, and he will tell you (what sounds arrant mysticism in your ears) that except you feel as a tree, you cannot draw a tree. “Arrant nonsense !” you say. “How can a man feel as a tree ?” But he is right. Except you do feel the strange mystic life that flows through a tree, and feel the conditions under which it grows, you will draw no *tree*. You will make a black and white blotch upon paper, *tree-like*, but not a tree. You will make some miserable, pitiful defilement of white, which, taking the outward edging and boundary of a tree, shall lie there unvitalised, and by compliment I will call it a tree ; but that there is any art in it, any soul in it, that any emotion is stirred within me by it—except that of profound regret—this I deny. The truth of these things is seen in their workings. You shall look at one man’s tree, and you shall pass it by directly, and it is done with. You shall look at another, and it shall be a *tree* ; you shall hear the spring winds sigh through its branches ; you shall tell, as it were, the time and the hour of it ; you shall see its history ; you shall feel its cool shade lie upon the soul.

To some of you this is all nonsense, and to some it must be so. To the unawakened eye, that looks upon art as upholstery work, pretty furniture, and pretty colouring ; to those who say, as we often hear them saying before the works of the great masters, “They are pretty !” to all these such teachings are idle and absurd. But listen to the great artist. What a strange speech,

for instance, a man of old made about music. He said, "If you were to change the relations of musical sounds, you must change the government of the State." That is a Platonic speech, and a deep one. He says you shall not make a change in music, without revolutionising the government of the country. Is there any meaning in this? or, is it arrant mysticism? This man finds a connection between musical tones and mathematical numbers; he goes further, and says that music is the type of the harmony by which God created the world. So these great artists speak; and they always look upon themselves as prophets and missionaries, preaching something Unseen.

The office of the artist (take the case of the Sculptor, for instance) is always to give something far better than Nature, though yet far inferior. The Apollo Belvidere!—you never saw any man like it, and you never will; no man of your acquaintance comes near to it, no *actual* man; no work of Nature, no *actual* work of Nature ever came up to it. How dared the artist make it so, then? Is it faithful to make an Apollo, so as an Apollo never was seen? It is faithful, and it is just; for if the artist paints a picture such as he sees it, it never can be a great picture. If a man shall paint even Nature itself as he finds it, it can never be true. These things sound idle at first. But look what the office of the artist is. Take the case of portrait painting. You demand from your painter your veritable likeness; the painter demands from you your *possibility*. He does not see what you are, but what you *could* be. What he has to paint is the inward idea of your being, as it develops itself in the greatest *possible*. You find fault with him. There is some favourite thing not done. "I never looked," you say, "like that." "Ay, but," says the painter, if he be a true man, "you ought to do." You say, "I never seemed so;" but he says, "you should seem so." Your neighbours come in, and say he has flattered you. No, he has not. The difference between the portrait and you is not the measure of his flattery, but the measure of your short-coming. If a great man were to paint your picture, you might learn to say with more meanings than one, "Verily, I have come short of the glory of God." If a great man paints your picture, and your friend says he has flattered you, what is meant? That you never looked as he has made it. Shall I, therefore, measure the unfaith-



fulness of *the artist* by it? or shall I measure your unfaithfulness by it? Yours. The difference between *you*, as you look, and you as he has painted you, is the difference between what is possible for you and what you have attained. Thus, the office of the artist is to see the unseen, to see what a glorious man you might become, if the idea that lies there in you were developed; not to paint you in your miserable appearance, but in your transfigured possibility. Every true man, therefore, looks in his neighbour for his possible. Every true painter sees what you might be, if you could be touched inwardly with the holy finger;—if the best things in you could be stirred up. If he could see you in those best hours of your life, when some heroic tale of olden time has made you on fire,—when some pitiful sorrow of modern time has made you weep; if he could see you in those rare moments, when you deserve for a minute or two the halo of saintliness around your head,—when, if you could be caught in that mood, you might be canonized safely, even by the Romish Church, if he paints you so, then the man has done his duty. Thus, the great artists justify themselves. Take the case of Michel Angelo. He acknowledges that he has come very far short of Nature; and yet he has done more than any specimen of Nature. The man who moulded the Apollo, said he had come short of the glory of God; yet, you and I see that he has transcended the glory of the actual. How is this? Simply because the artist's eye, beneath the actual, sees the real. He sees that standard from which you and I are pitiful deviations on one side or the other. He sees tokens that this actual life of man is a deviation from the unseen *possible* of it. He paints, as nearly as he can, his idea of the matter, and so appears to have rendered flatteringly that which he has been set to do.

It is thus with the life of the Musician. Now, music falls with us into low estate, simply because we do not consent to let the great musicians interpret their own aims. What enthusiastic things great men have said of music! and not only musicians but divines. Hear Luther talk! You would think, if it were not that you reverence him as the father of Protestantism, that it was sheer madness. He says that music is divine, and that the only person that does not love music is the Devil. Therein he uttered a great and solemn truth. He says, the devil hates music; not, as

many moderns say, that it is his prime minister, and right hand man. Luther says music is altogether antagonistic to the devil. That is not a mere phrase on Luther's lips ; it shows his earnest belief. And why so ? Music is orderly in its going. It is based upon stern mathematics ; and is, in fact, the visible sound of a divine harmony, of which Nature is but a manifestation. " God," says the Teacher of old times, " is not the author of confusion but of order." Music is order—order glorified ; music is mathematics made glorious : the fair sounds of music are, to the things that lie upon Euclid's page, but the glorification of colour, superadded to form. Hence, it must be orderly ; therefore anti-devilish, anti-chaotic ; and when rightly administered, and not diverted, as it has been, to the service of the sensual, it becomes spiritual. Extravagant things have been said of music by some of its greatest sons, and equally extravagant things have been said by some of the would-be musicians. Music in olden days had assigned to it a far higher vocation than we should now be prepared to allow to it ; and we should be startled if it were asserted that music was related to the very highest part of our nature,—to that which is above reason ; yet this was implied by men when they said that music raised up in them certain feelings. The Bible says, " The morning stars sang together." David, that great utterer of the human heart, says, " Sing unto the Lord, all the earth." Apocalyptic visions tell us of a day when we shall join and sing, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain !" Thus the Bible must conceive of a divine order musically. It was always musical with the Bible. The morning stars sing, and men sing ; the Lord sings, all things sing : " Yea, let all things clap their hands and rejoice." Thus was Luther right when, underneath music, he saw the divine unseen law of which it was but the outward form and show. The great musician joins with him, and becomes a priest.

The little musician we look upon as harmless. He fiddles to your dancing, he plays for your pleasure.

The great musicians—they are awful men. They are, some of them, as great as divines. They are not chaff-fiddlers, not chaff-buffoons for your pleasure ; they are great priests, who prophesy as much as prophets. Hear the great musicians of modern times. Hear them upon their own art—what extravagances they seem to

utter! How they tell you that their work is divine, holy, priest-like! And they are right; because, if music be but an audible order—if it be, as they teach us, but the outward and audible sign of invisible order and beauty—then are these men great that render it plain to us. Thus you will find that the great musician has always been a man who believed that he was here to make things according to a pattern that was invisible.

There is a great fact-mongering school busy with music, a school which holds music to be nothing more than so many notes put together in a certain manner. But it is not so; music does not consist of so many thumpings on the piano, or lifting of fingers; it is not a musical taste which leads people to listen to squallings and screeches they do not understand, and, may be, clap their hands in the wrong place. Music is good or bad according to the spirit it evokes in its hearers; but with the majority, execution is the aim—truly, an *execution*, like listening to a nigger melody with a bone accompaniment. It is a strange thing; the old Greeks called music the “divine art,” and we degrade it into the galley for unfortunate women, to the monotonous oar of which we chain them for life. Coleridge could not whistle an air, let him try how he might; but he detested Rossini, as well he might, and was moved to tears by a strain of Beethoven’s. The test of great works is their spiritual effect. Hence it is that the old ballads are so much superior to the things ground out of the modern piano. A woman to show her strength of lungs takes a trip from here to to-morrow; she had better put her head in a bucket of water, and hold her breath there in quietness. A great work has a noble origin, and will have a noble effect.

Now turn to the Men of Science. Here you will find two great classes. Certain of our men of science are mere cataloguers of facts. They do no more to the objects of Nature than an auctioneer does to a man’s furniture—catalogue them. They take up Nature as a *hortus siccus*—look upon its facts as so many actualities, book them down, and, having mapped them, they have done their work. They have no thought of connecting the inward and spiritual life of Nature with its outward manifestations. Nature thus lies unvital to us. Such has been the state of English science since the time of Bacon, who, however, though

he insisted upon the investigation of phenomena, never intended that Spirit should be altogether dissociated from Matter. The consequence of this misunderstanding has been to set Science against faith, to alienate it from spiritualism, to separate it from religion. This can only be overcome when men see that all natural appearances and phenomena are but a revelation of their true life, and of the true cause which is hidden and underneath.

By the last generation Bacon's name was perpetually being taken in vain; as Aristotle's was, till Bacon reformed the practice. Not that Aristotle was altogether wrong and worthless, far from it; for the man who puts forth a good bold hypothesis serves science much better than your pedlars of petty facts. But the followers of Aristotle distorted his truth, and sought to force every fact under some hypothesis. Nay, the fact, if it did not fit, must be altered to suit the hypothesis. Thus, Columbus was opposed and thwarted. Why? Because the map had no such place as America on its surface; so, as the map had no America, there could not be one, and there should not be one. When Galileo said that the sun was fixed, the map was referred to again, and *that* saying the sun moved round the earth, the infidel must be punished. Some even would not believe in strata and stone-embedded animals, because they were not in a map; and there were men who held that these remains were placed by God where they are found, to confound the nineteenth century philosophy. Rare egotism this! What an important race the present must be! It was a parallel assumption to that which made Isaiah prophesy, in order that Keith might write little treatises. Bacon, too, has been perverted in a like manner, till what is called science becomes a heap of dead dry bones, a string of empty names, as it was in the last century, when they had all things noted by laws, such as the law of *ex parsimoni*, or "nothing wasted," the doctrine of final causes, and Paley theologies.

One doctrine was that of sub-feeding, which saw in one class of being nothing but food for a superior class; then came Linnæus, who fixed the duty of each class to be the keeping down of the class below it. A perfect "House that Jack built" system, which brought men into existence to keep down the number of animals, and animals to keep down vegetables, and so on. It is pleasant

to notice Aristotelianism creeping into the scientific world again, in all its truth and beauty ; and to mark the effects of its intrusion in the displacement of unvitalised facts and thoughts without form. Science must be restored to its old office ; men must be taught that morals are the end of every science ; and that though it may be well for a time to follow sciences disconnected from morals, yet that they must always return to their home.

But the great man of science always tells you that the works of Nature are simply hieroglyphics, that is, they are a holy writing, comparatively unintelligible at first and separate, but owing their whole meaning to the Law which lies underneath them.

Turn to some of the old men of science, and see their interpretations. Pythagoras first. What strange and extravagant things that man says about numbers ! He tells you that arithmetic and geometry are sublime, divine sciences. They seem nothing of the kind to us. Of all undivine and unsublime matters "sums" seem the chief. Yet it was through these that he lifted the minds of his scholars to the contemplation of the divine. He says that numbers lie under Life,—that they were the determining principles by which life was made. Now, what did he teach there ? Simply the old intuition that Nature was all one,—that every science laid hold of every other science,—and that, before visible things appeared, there must have been invisible things of which they were the pattern. Pythagoras saw that the motion of the planets was so beautiful, so strict, so severe in its order, that he compared it to music ; or, rather, he saw that underneath even the apparent carelessness of music, there lay mathematics the most severe and strict. So he related music to common life ; and hence, as I said before, an old mystic tells you that if you were to alter the relation of the notes of music, you would overturn the government of the State. He must have had a vision into the underlying Unity, the determining necessity, which will not allow those notes of music to be other than they are ; and must have seen that if you could overturn them, you of necessity overturn those great constructive principles upon which politics are based and religion is built up.

Plato comes next. Discontented was Plato with the philosophy of Pythagoras. It appeared to him not exhaustive enough. Hence comes the sublime doctrine of the platonic Idea, which in

a few sentences may possibly be made clear. Plato believed, that the outward and visible things of life, being represented to us by and through the senses, cannot be reality and the truth; that all things are but obedient to an invisible idea of them; that this idea lay in the Divine mind, the scheme or plan by which they were contrived; that before they were, their order must have existed with God; that whosoever will know true being, must not take the particular phenomenon, but the transcending law which lies underneath it, and which is simply the rule by which you measure the departure of the actual case.

Thus, these men always taught, that under the appearance, the reality of life was to be seen; that there existed with God a certain scheme, pattern, form, with which the visible things were made accordant; and that it is not the phenomenon which is the real thing in life, but the determining Idea that lies underneath. Common speech and thought are full of words and phrases expressive of some dim apprehension in men's minds that the invisible things of life are the more real. You may find a man who is earnest against preachers, poets, mystics, and dreamers, and yet he shall tell you, in reality, that he is seeking to make visible things conform to unseen things. Everywhere you may hear people talking about their "ideas" of what things should be: it is the commonest phrase in society; and, however much misused, it shows that throughout society there is a belief that a law exists by which all visible things should be regulated.

## II.

Turn to the Politician. See also here that the great politician is the believer in the invisible and the unseen. There is one school of politicians that looks upon the life of a nation, as simply the careful putting together of so many visible quantities. They will teach you practically that they are unbelievers in the invisible. This is the bread-and-beef school of politicians, who, having given the people all they need,—a sufficiency to eat, and three bands of quadrille players per night to listen to,—cry out when the people are discontented: "What more can you want?" And, in one sense, what more *can* the people want? They are fed, clothed,

and fiddled to ; ought they not to be content ? “ No ! ” says the soul of man, “ not content. ” “ And why not content ? ” “ Because I have got an idea which is not fulfilled. ” “ An idea ! well, what of that ? that’s all fancy. ” No, it is not fancy ; for it revolutionises States. There come those strange things called “ ideas, ” and they altogether upset the political *régime*. So has it been latterly in Europe. Why were certain nations convulsed ? They were doing pretty well ; they stood as well, or better than we, in physical matters ; yet they were discontented. And why ? Because they saw some invisible matters which were not revealed upon the outer surface of society. These politicians get hold of strange notions. When one of these ideas comes, the whole world shakes. See how possible it is to convince ourselves that these invisible things want attention. Men get hold of certain opinions, and are discontented with their political state. They get hold of such a sentiment as this—“ Whatsoever thou wouldest that thy neighbour should do unto thee, do thou also unto him. ” They look at things visible in the light of it, and they are profoundly disgusted. This idea goes down deep, and revolution is the consequence. Here are kept in check the men of the visible ; men who believe that society consists of a certain number of factors, which, carefully put together, produce a given result.

Now see what a rebuke to those of you who believe in the visible only. You have a despisal of scholars, you do not know what these men have to do in the world. You say, if you are asked what moves the world, that it is the magnates, the railway kings, the outward potentates, votes, registrations, ballot-boxes, and such like. Nay, but it is the scholars, the thinkers—the “ dreamers, ” as you call them. Before the French Revolution, the world was trying to go by visible things, it had reduced politics to a system of visible matters, there was scarcely an idea underlying the whole thing. Then there came a certain set of philosophers, poor, nervous, dyspeptic folks, some of them ; some of them unknown. There is that strange Genevan boy, with his unheroic life, and nervous sensitive spirit ; with his continual self-love, and his ever wounded vanity ;—that man—Rousseau—writes an essay ; he puts a paradox forward, and Europe is shaken. This forgotten scholar, this strange neglected being, shook Europe. And what did he do it with ? Not by a scrip, not by a coupon, not

by a crown and sceptre, not by outward and visible things, but by making clear an invisible law of life ; he dived through all visible things, and came at an Idea. He was daring enough to go behind the forms of life, and see a part of its soul. He was one of those men who review the whole of you,—who see that the things which do appear are temporal, but that the things which are unseen are eternal. He got a strange idea of equality, and he worked it and preached it ; then he got hold of some strange paradoxical notions about fraternity ; he taught how all men were equal at first, and proposed a return to a state of nature. This, falling upon prepared minds, produced an effervescence. Thus the scholar ruled Europe.

So has it always been in society. Scholars and thinkers always rule, not because they are mere scholars, but because they are the men who go underneath the visible, and teach us the things which are not seen.

By his notion of who it is that rules society, a man may be truly known. Put some men through their facings, and ask who are the chief men of the country, and they point to palaces and potentates outward ; they show you sceptres and crowns, but they forget the prophet, the poet, the idealist, and the dreamer.

And yet again, the most outward and material man is obliged to confess what “pestilent people” these are. Your railway shares come down, because some scholars will utter their new doctrines about the social system. Why should a little diminutive man plague Europe with his nonsense, cause your respectable scrip to become almost worthless, dishonour your trade, shut your factory last winter, put two dishes on your table where before there were three or four, reduce your wine-bill, cause you to put down your carriage, and make one coat last far longer than of old it was wont to do ? Why are all these things ? Simply because a man has uttered something earlier than these appearances, something from which they were a mere divergence ; he has got behind them, and has got hold of a constructive thought.

Take it in another way. You say these dreamers you have little to do with ; yet listen, now. In modern life, by every way-side, you will find some man who claims to be a prophet and a priest, full of jeremiads and lamentations, exclaiming that the land is filled with scepticism, and “infidelity is coming in like a flood.” Warnings are given about latitudinarianism, and about quiet households being broken up, and respectable churches being



thinned in their members. Men begin to question these things, and ask, What is the matter? They tell you that it is these mystical Germans; they talk to you about Neology and mysticism; tell you that your young people have been reading some of those pestilent books, imported from abroad, and that now the old things no longer serve them; what their fathers believed they have actually dropt. What a rebuke to material folk dwelling in the visible! If these dreams are nothing, why is your life so shaken by them? What mean these jeremiads, if these are all fancies and whims? Here again, the truth is a man has come, who has looked a little into the unseen, rightly or wrongly, and has got hold of one of the constructive thoughts of life, and by the use of that, he has shaken you in your comfortable theology, made you to quake in your well-lined pew, put the rentals of your sect into disorder, and filled the land, from one end to the other, with the jeremiads of the righteous over the decline of the true faith, and the coming in of pestilent mystical heresies.

Everywhere, then, you find that this outward visible life of ours is shaken, moulded, marred, or altered or arranged by men who show us scarcely anything but Thought.

If these instances now are sufficient, they will convince us that we must never rest in the visible; that they are the wisest artists, scholars, poets, and divines, who, beneath every visible thing, search for a certain invisible order and Law.

Our man of science, then, if he be a true one, catalogues his facts simply that he may discover the law of the matter. Hence the beauty of modern science, which is restoring to us the old intuition. The first philosophers maintained that the world was one; they called it the NATURE or universe, and beyond this they only called it *cosmos*, or beauty; they believed Nature was Beauty, that it was orderly in its going, intuitive in its laws. For a time men forgot these principles, but now every great philosopher amongst us is distinguished by his desire to make science minister to something loftier than science,—his desire to show that all Nature is related to some invisible law by which it acts. Thus you have to find between mathematics, and botany, geology, chemistry, unity; and the great sign of this generation is the restoration of that unity out of which we have departed.

The laws of Nature, then, are simply the laws of mind, the

rules by which visible things take the form determined for them by the invisible. Who, then, is the wisest man of science? He who is most divine; he who teaches you that the motion of the stars is one with the chords of music, one with holiness of life, one with righteousness; for the formula for this generation is laid down by the mystic when he says, "Deity is one with Beauty and with Truth."

Here we minister to the unseen through the seen. What we sigh for in this day, I say, is unity—to bring all our sciences into order, to make our church roof once more cover the whole of life, to make the inward life of man no longer negated by the outward, to make the creed expand as the soul grows, to make the Visible become clearly a dwelling-place for the Invisible.

How is it to be done? By going behind, to make out the laws of life.

Beginning with Nature: I understand the office of Nature for me, that it is a method, determining as much the method of my life as any Ten Commandments that ever were given. If I can find how God works in Nature, I can find how my soul should work in life. I look at Nature then, and it becomes to me a preacher. I watch all its details, and I find written upon every one—Truthfulness. The glory of the microscope is that it approaches spirit. It is of no particular advantage to me that my microscope shall show me the actual forms of life—they are all very fair and very beautiful;—but it must show me what is the invisible rule, even in the very smallest of created things—exceeding Faithfulness and Truth. Every part of the very minutest thing created is done in the very best way; the great whole is made up of faithful unitive atoms. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom." Learn in this the great lesson of moral life. When is your life disfigured? When you are studious that the outward shall look fair, but are careless whether the unseen parts are perfectly orderly. What is a glorious life? A life that is microscopically true; every part of which is done in the best possible way; each unit of which is wholly complete.

Poets, and mystical interpreters of the Bible, continually relate invisible things to visible; and the question remains with us, whether, in the similes they adopt, they do but give to them an

arbitrary mystical form, or whether they make it a determining necessity—an absolute relation between the thought, and the figure in Nature which they select to express it. The mystics believed that these things were actually related to one another, and they therefore interpreted Nature, and much of Scripture itself, by laws drawn from within—by the spiritual principles of which they did but regard it as the outward and necessary expression. It has been the fashion to call these things “fanciful;” and yet in every age there has been some man or men who, spite of the many castigations cast upon mysticism, continually reproduced it. Swedenborg taught that duty was one with beauty and truth; that the tones of music and colours were related to spirit and to soul; and this, men have repeated in every generation.

That outward Nature, in some sense or fashion, embodies certain thoughts or ideas, of which it is the symbol, has long been a currently-received opinion; but what seems to be needful is, that the arbitrariness of the connection between the outward and inward should be finally dissolved, and it be seen that every outward and visible appearance is not arbitrarily connected with the interior and spiritual thought, but necessarily so. And this would be seen if men could persuade themselves that the world is not so much *made*, as *thought* out; then would they no longer look at the poet's connection of the spiritual with the material as an arbitrary symbolising, but as a real following out of the true sense of creation. I would, therefore, if called upon to define Nature and matter, prefer to say that they are the products of thought and of spirit, rather than to regard them as something made arbitrarily and exclusively, as some men of science phrase it, “out of nothing.” Were this clearly seen, that which the greatest men have laboured for, the unity of science, would become more apparent to us. Science would become more divine, and as the Egyptian priest of old was at once the priest, the anatomist, the physician, and the consoler, so one day men will see the truth once more, that whoever proclaims the truths of science proclaims the Divinity, as much as a preacher; that he who can make out successfully God's method in the human body, may be as much a priest of the Infinite, the Hidden, and the Unseen, as he who explains Moses's Ten Commandments, or the ethical laws of the Fathers of the Christian Church; that knowing that all visible

things have their origin in the mind and will of God, we shall close for ever the weary debates and discussions between the men of Faith and the men of Science. Though we may mourn that occasionally the man of science divorces the objects of Nature from faith, yet we shall learn to be thankful for the degree of accuracy and correctness with which he states facts, and the time will come when the Christian temple will be wide enough to unite under one roof, the poet, the prophet, the painter, musician, and preacher,—knowing that whoever faithfully explains one of the things that do appear, assists to explain to mankind the laws of the hidden and invisible which are not eye-seen.

But the world has divided and separated truth into petty sciences, so that each man may have his separate world ; and if he wishes to know anything of another, a voyage must be taken,—just as some of you make a voyage on the Sabbath from the business world to your places of worship. It is a great mistake to think that truth can be parted and boxed up in pigeon holes thus ; such a course is radically opposed to the unity of Nature, which makes all sciences in reality one ; learn any one partly, and you will find that you must learn others before you can fully comprehend it ; so linked are they together, that it is impossible to separate them and preserve their intactness. This it is which is meant by the mystical saying that “Nature is a vortex,” and thus all such sayings should be read, and then their obscurity would vanish, and leave a valuable residue of truth to repay the trouble. Nature *is* a vortex ; once on the brim, you must go on to the centre. Life is a wheel, ever revolving, with its golden buckets alternately filling and emptying. Man has been styled a microcosm, or world within himself ; to the astonishment and horror of the men of beef, who oppose the saying tooth-and-nail. Yet it would be no difficult task to show its truth. There is not a principle in art or science but has been stolen originally from man. The science of mechanics is but a reiteration of bodily powers and motions ; in man, all animal forms are concentrated ; ventilation is but the carrying out of the lungs, and drainage nothing more than secretion extended. And there are men living who will not stop in their course till this principle is carried out still further—men who hold that the house should be a project of the creature who inhabits it, and society the counterpart of the social man.

Though the Inductive Philosophers declared that science should be carried out on their own principles, yet very speedily the invisible was back upon them again. Men made out certain laws of Nature even underneath the inductive philosophy. Swedenborg, Jacob Bœhman, and others, have been translators of much of the Scripture according to the mystical interpretation, believing that they found in the soul, reason or efficient cause for the appearances of life. Many parts of the Old Testament are not answerable to any literal law, and the mystics tried to interpret them according to a spiritual law. All things in Nature were held by them to be related to certain mystical things;—flesh, to colour; form, to intellect; sound, to spirit. And there are many things in life which seem to warrant these mystical interpretations. The mystic tells you that when it was said there were seven spirits around the throne of God, it was a positive necessity which was laid down, and not a mere arbitrary choice. There were also certain cases of apparent arbitrary selection which were really not so. St John said he “saw a great white throne”; and the mystic will tell you that he said “white” by necessity. All things, he will say, meet in God; and as the symbol of Unity expresses God, so the throne of God cannot be other than white, because that colour is the point forth from which all diversity goes. This explains the famous doctrine of Swedenborg, of “Correspondencies.”

There has been too much of war between philosophy and religion; but at present, men of a new and better school of science are endeavouring to bring them more closely together; and hence strange sciences and great superstitions become clear to us. The great desire at the present time is that this warfare shall be closed. We no longer want the asceticism of the middle ages, which snubbed this world; men are impatient that, as Swedenborg describes it, “the New Jerusalem shall come down to the earth.” In this day, people will not admit that there is one order of men exclusively dealing in the spiritual, and another exclusively in the material; the man of science has taught us to look for a union between them. Wherever I look, I hear the impatient cry of man for Unity—to have got done with this war between Church and State—this continual rising up of the one to domineer over the other. This can only be successfully met if

men of science will help to solve the problem of the relation of the things unseen to those seen, and thus to show that matter is not to be looked upon as at warfare with the soul, or the soul as holding matter in contempt ; but that we are to take them as one solemn unit, or rather to look upon matter as the continual outward revelation of the spirit and soul that lies underneath. It has now become a truth which no man is ashamed to utter, that between divinity and science there can be no discrepancy in reality : and that if we think there is, it is only because we cannot see clearly the laws affecting them.

When the warfare between the body and the spirit, the flesh and the sense, shall be over, men will learn to interpret the visible by the invisible, and understand that if a man can but go down deep enough into spirit, he holds not only the explanatory, but the constructive, laws of life. I confess to have that belief in the discoveries that men will one day make respecting the constructive force which spirit exercises over matter, to believe that it may be possible to realise the alchemist's dream, and to see almost a literal fulfilment of the old saying, that "if a man has but faith, he may say to a mountain, 'Be thou removed,' and it shall be removed." We see sufficient testimony in history to make us understand, that it is not dreaming to say that he who holds spiritual forces with sufficient intensity, does absolutely mould the actualities of life. Certain it is that spirit has a transcendent power over matter, and that if we can once lay hold of spiritual force, we lay hold of creative force. We are apt to smile at the idea of Fourier, that bye and bye a spiritual nation will get a better climate ; but who can say it is impossible ? I have come to believe that nothing in this sense is impossible : that if a man will but sufficiently become master of the spiritual forces of life, matter is no longer an obstacle, but becomes plastic in his hands. Every mechanic will tell you that if you can get hold of an invisible force, you get hold of the most powerful one. When men see this,—that invisibility always accompanies the mightiest power,—they will see, too, that the mystic is right when he makes the most powerful things of life to be the invisible and the unheard.

## III.

One of the great attempts of the philosophers of the last century was to get rid of the invisible ; they would interpret Nature by no spiritual precedents ; but very speedily they had the doctrine of "ends" come back again upon them. This shows how utterly impossible it is that material or physical science shall in the long run go on divorced from principle, idea, constructive thought. These principles in their duplex influence will enable us to explain many phenomena ; knowing the thought, we shall learn to expect its form ; knowing its form, we shall learn to know more thoroughly than could otherwise be done, the thought that led to it ; for God's works are always true in this matter. If we want, for instance, to get rid of these tedious debates as to the relative merits of the sexes, let us follow Nature's method, and see that the body tells of the soul, and the soul of the body ; see the brave passivity of the one sex, and the fitful, fidgetty activity of the other ; see how one lies calmly passive, the source of life physical and mental,—how the office of the other sex is to put this rare passive life into fruitful action, to experiment with it, to try it, so that it shall become energised, and yet always go home again to its primal and passive source. We can construct the outward of society ; we can construct spiritually the genesis of house and home. We can correct much socialistic nonsense by showing how deep in thought lies the sanctity of the household, the peculiarity of home, the alternating of passivity, energy, and force, which always keep a woman the true centre of social gatherings ; and justify men (in spite of what all strong-headed, enlightened, and chilly men may have said) in circulating, moth-like, round women, as the true social centre of all life, because they have within them the calm passiveness on which a man's life is but the active succession of experimentings.

This doctrine, too, gets rid of so many of the difficulties of life ; we learn to sit down and watch the phenomena of life, hoping to penetrate into their thought ; recollecting that though this is a speculation, a man may reduce it to practice. As Emerson has said, the method of Nature is as much a guide for a man's conduct, as any parchment laws of this land are ; for wherever we

can see the operations of Nature, there we see the operations of civil and social life.

There is a poem entitled "Man," by George Herbert, which seems to contain almost all the principles of the mystical doctrine. I will read it to you.

My God, I heard this day  
That none doth build a stately habitation  
But he that means to dwell therein.  
What house more stately hath there been,  
Or can be, than is Man? to whose creation  
All things are in decay.

For Man is everything,  
And more : he is a tree, yet bears no fruit ;  
A beast, yet is or should be more :  
Reason and speech we only bring.  
Parrots may thank us, if they are not mute,  
They go upon the score.

Man is all symmetry,  
Full of proportions, one limb to another,  
And all to all the world besides :  
Each part may call the farthest brother ;  
For head with foot hath private amity,  
And both with moons and tides.

Nothing hath got so far,  
But Man hath caught and kept it as his prey.  
His eyes dismount the highest star ;  
He is in little all the sphere.  
Herbs gladly cure his flesh, because that they  
Find their acquaintance there.

For us the winds do blow ;  
The earth doth rest, heaven move, and fountains flow.  
Nothing we see but means our good,  
As our delight or as our treasure :  
The whole is either our cupboard of food,  
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The stars have us to bed ;  
Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws :  
Music and light attend our head.



All things unto our flesh are kind  
In their descent and being ; to our mind  
In their ascent and cause.

Each thing is full of duty :  
Waters united are our navigation ;  
Distinguishèd our habitation ;  
Below, our drink ; above, our meat ;  
Both are our cleanliness. Hath one such beauty ?  
Then how are all things neat !

More servants wait on Man  
Than he'll take notice of : in every path  
He treads down that which doth befriend him  
When sickness makes him pale and wan.  
O mighty love ! Man is one world, and hath  
Another to attend him.

Since then, my God, Thou hast  
So brave a palace built, O dwell in it,  
That it may dwell with thee at last !  
Till then, afford us so much wit,  
That as the world serves us, we may serve Thee,  
And both Thy servants be.

Men of science teach me that every form is made up of particles, each of which bears the true form of the whole. It is either a dream of a coming science, or it is true, that wherever you see a particle, it hath in it minor particles, each bearing the form of the ultimate one. There I learn a law of life. The great man's life is made up of moments, each faithfully representative of the whole. It is in life as in Nature : wherever truth comes, there is faithfulness. The flower in the desert is no more carelessly formed than the flower planted for your pleasure. There is no show, no "appearance," no "getting-up," as there is in many of our lives ; no painting from the outside, no preparing for state occasions ; but always minute faithfulness—every part polished but the outside, every flower true, every grain of sand faithful to the form, all the crystals realising the primitive crystal form. So runs the rule of a great man's life—always true and faithful in little things. Hence comes the spiritual law of our life, which our Saviour uttered : "If ye be not faithful in little things, how shall ye be faithful in great ones? If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon,

how shall they give unto you the true riches?" Here is an unseen law thus teaching us faithfulness and truth.

But why is Nature truthful? Not because it is viewed from without; but because it springs from a truthful origin and source. Truth in the Divine mind must give itself off truthfully in all its forms. Every flower that God makes is fair, not because you may discover it, but because it must be so by an original law. We see what the poet means when he tells us that beauty, duty, goodness, fairness, are always one and alike. We come at Plato's old saying, teaching us that only goodness can be beautiful—only that which is true can be fair. Many men have no faith in it; they have lost belief. They believe beauty can be painted from without: they believe a white board can be made beautiful by the paint-pot and brush. So we deceive ourselves even in life, that it is only needful to put on the saint's garb, utter a saint's phrases, and paint accordingly, and you and I become beautiful. Not, however, to the attuned ear and the accustomed eye. They understand that only from within can the beautiful be built up. They see what Michel Angelo saw in his sculpture. First, he must have the skeleton; then the muscles; then the fair and rounded form; and, ultimately, the drapery. Your great artist acknowledges that there is no possibility of beginning from without, and working inward. We try to do it; but we are always deceived; for the soul looks out from the body.

Take a case. You, by careful dandyism, shall strive to effect that most egregious folly of making an old person look like a young one. Of all the hideous things that pass before the spiritual eye of man, is the attempt of people to conceal their passage out of life toward death. Of all sad phenomena, the saddest to me are the pitiful tricks to which people resort to keep their age a secret. It is laughable in one sense,—highly laughable,—but how solemn in another! If you and I believed what every church-day we say we believe; if you and I had our creed in our soul instead of on our tongue's end, could such follies be? If you believe what you tell me, when I question you theologic-wise, that heaven is much better than earth; that to be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord;" that life is but a weary morning, leading to a better rest; will you be ashamed that you are near it? Will you be guilty of any of this hypocrisy to make it seem that

you are younger than you are? You and I know well that every day that is gone is a joy over and a grief come. Hence we are always full of impostures about the matter. You are sixty, and you would like me to believe you are forty. Yet, on Sunday, you tell me you believe in immortality. You will say, when your preacher questions you, "I thank God I am twenty years nearer to my rest." What means, then, all this sham, all this pretence? How wicked and deceptive is it! You go down the street well draped, well clothed and becloaked, and stuff-padded and hidden, and you think that to our undiscerning eyes you will be mistaken, and that we shall suppose for a moment that you are young. Never! Out through all possible drapery the truth of life writes itself. You are detected half a mile off. There is some mystical thing about you: you can never look as you did of old. We have watched the process more than once, and have rejoiced in the failure. I do not know how it is—it is scarcely possible to tell—but it is a strange thing, that if you view a man from behind you can determine his age therefrom (though there are little temporary violations). And why so? Simply because the unseen is always not only looking out through the seen, but is forming the seen.

You can never ultimately coerce Nature. Nature lie? Nature never does lie. It is only man that lies; and in proportion as man lies, he departs from Nature. See whether you can get Nature to lie. Put paint upon your cheek to make you look young; you cannot put smoothness upon your brow to correspond. Nature is a continual protest against lying. What are those wrinkles coming upon some of us? The retreat of physical reality before the life. What is a wrinkle? The mark of the ribbed sea-sand, that tells me where yesterday's tide of life was, but where it is no longer, to-day. What are those gray hairs of mine, coming so fast? The retreat of juvenility before, if I be a holy man, a coming spiritualism; and, if I be an unholy man, a decaying sensualism. You are gray-headed now; what does it teach? That sense is an ebbing tide with you, and that that physical reality and that lustfulness are ebbing with it. A hoary head, if in ways of righteousness, is a glory; because then, as colour is gone, and sensualism faded out, spiritualism, of which beauty of form is the emblem, has taken its place. Hence we learn in the old head and the old face rather to look for beauty of form than

of colouring ; for colour is the sign of sensualism : colour is the sign of the body ; form, the sign of the soul. Put a person through his education, and you will see this ; give him the æsthetics of costume, and you will detect it. See the country girl, with her cheeks like the peony—her dress is sure to correspond ; the whole life lets itself out there. Put her through a system of æsthetics, and see the alteration that comes over her. Where we see no taste in dressing, we have loudness in colour. It is a legitimate phrase that a loud noise and bright colouring harmonise together. It is a popular thing with the Yankees to talk of a “tall smell,” and a “loud colour.” We call this barbaric jargon ; but, unknown to themselves, they utter a deep mystical truth. The relation is apparent and visible. As colour declines, form takes its place, and quietness becomes the rule. You say of a man who dresses well, that he dresses “quietly.” You say, again, that a man has a “loud, noisy taste.” These relations you seem to utter in common speech. You say a “quiet pattern,” a “quiet style.” What are these but the true harmonies of Nature? These common street phrases always did preach a holy mysticism. When you have said “That quiet-dressing man,” you have intimated that quietness of colour and beauty of form are one and akin to quietness in sound or to lowness of tone.

Thus Nature, it seems to me, is always preaching truth, always exhibiting itself in its method and its form. We see this even in painting. If you were to paint a saint, you dare not paint him stout, you dare not paint him high-coloured. If a man should give us a St Jerome, for instance, corpulent—evidently a lover of the good things of life—that man’s picture would be hooted by universal criticism. Why? He must not give us a St Jerome stout, because we are all conversant with certain laws which determine the seen things by the unseen. The asceticism which was in the man, being a continual war and strife towards unity, writes the signs of war and strife upon the outward life. He who flagellates the body, has done it because of the inharmony there is in the soul ; asceticism in the outward life, being a product of discord, trouble, sadness, inwardly, writes itself in accordant outward forms.

Begin, therefore, where you will, it seems to me that visible things are always preaching the invisible laws upon which they

are formed; and that he, therefore, becomes the wisest who interprets outward things by the unseen, that he may come thus to a practical rule in life. The office, it seems to me, of every teaching is to arrive at something loftier than ourselves. The office of religion, if we were taught aright, would be to subordinate every one of us to a law that was impersonal, in the making of which we had no part, to which, therefore, we might righteously bow down. What you and I sigh for in these days is for an absolute ruling. You are a Radical, you tell me, and do not like absolutism. In the heart of you, you do sigh for it. You admit if you could get Archangel Michael to undertake the work, despotism were best. Absolute authority is sighed for. One man says, "I have an absolute authority in the Church;" another says, "I have an absolute authority in the Bible;" a third says, "I have an absolute authority, it rests in the soul." These signs do betoken the desire of the human heart to get an infallible guidance and an unvarying law. Hence the office of the Teacher. The religious teacher is to supply an unseen law in the soul of a man, to which his life may become accordant; to lay down within us something to which we listen and bow down; to give us in place of our own wills an absolute and true will. The office of the poet is the same—to teach us in Nature not to see a parterre containing a handful of flowers for our pleasure, but a divine method—to see in it a place where we can study how to live; to show us that the works of God are simple utterances of how He would have an harmonic human life to be.

In politics, the true politician has to teach us the laws of God; and this is the best and fairest sign of this our age, that there is coming over men this belief—that nothing can go well in this life that is not a seen preacher of the great unseen laws, of which music and true divinity, true art, and true politics, are but the manifestations. Here we interpret, then, the signs of our day. You and I, say we, are discontented with things as they are. How are we to become contented with them? Simply by diving under the appearance, and making out the laws which were in the mind of God when He created the world. There has been a school of politicians in the world, who strove at it once—those Puritan men of old—without doubt, whatever our prejudices, the strangest and most eccentric set of politicians that ever were.

What was their effort? They tried devoutly whether or no this world could be constituted upon divine principles. The office of these men was to try whether a Genevan city, or an English land; a Scotch presbytery, or a Scotch civil government; could be ruled by unseen principles. They said God had given laws to the soul; that these laws being his mind and will, must be true laws in politics; hence they strove to make politics a divine matter. What were the results? Confessedly they did the greatest work in the earth, and confessedly they failed. But why did they fail? Because they had to give a crooked and perverse generation the *seen* things into the unseen things of which they had no insight. John Calvin could see very well what were the laws of God, but his Genevan folk could not. John Calvin would clip the seen things by the unseen, but the Genevans, not having worked inwardly, outwardly give up Puritanism. Such is the history of their mistake. Their life was beautiful, because they had made out divine order, and tried to make the State look like it. The State collapsed and fell, because it was but a form, the reality of which did not exist.

So I interpret the signs of this age. You tell me you want human society constructed by ideas. What are ideas but, as Plato tells us of old, the scheme of the Divine mind by which the world was created? Hence the idealist in politics is truly the divine in politics; and the reforms of all politics, and of all social life come through these ideas. You speak righteously, then, when you refuse to listen to men's utilities and expediences. You say to the man of human politics, "I dare not be governed by utilities." The man of to-day says you must. The party man, the man of the temporary hour comes and says, "You must regulate the State, not by ideas, but by possibilities, expediences, and shifts." The true politician says, "I dare not. Nature was not made by a shift, an expediency; Nature is true, beautiful, harmonious, because it always fulfils the law by which it was created." Society can only become divine, beautiful, harmonious, when it is in every part the outward and seen realization of the unseen and invisible. Hence it is that religious men have often been, unconsciously to themselves, some of the truest politicians. When I say religious, I do not mean theologically so. I call that man a religious man in politics, in whom this faith is,—that it can

never be safe, and never just, to do an unjust thing ; that injustice, not being a law, can never produce beauty ; that injustice, being inharmonic, must always produce discord. You may interpret musically. You may say of a man's music, "It is ungrammatical ; I am sure it cannot sound well. I see your manuscript score ; I do not want to hear you sing. *You* say it sounds well ; *I* say it cannot." You summon a jury of musicians, and play the piece over. The men say, "There is a mistake in the grammar, and there must be a mistake in the sound." And so it proves. Thus, always the seen interprets the unseen, and the unseen interprets the seen. You are wrong in your theory, therefore you *shall not* be right in practice. What is our life, then ? A curious attempt to see whether, by shiftings, trimmings, cuttings, and squareings, we can make that right in practice which is not right in theory. What is our social life ? One continued attempt to see whether what is ungrammatical and false, can be by practice rendered true. You say, "It is an unjust thing, but we can make shift with it." You cannot. It is as if you should attempt to walk upon a broken bone. If the bone be broken, there shall be no harmonic going by it. Every step shall make pain run up to the fracture. So goes it in politics and social life. I say it will not work well. And why ? It is unjust. "What do you mean by its being unjust ?" It is not in accordance with the awful impersonal laws by which life is regulated. What are these awful laws ? The ideas in the Divine mind, by which Nature was formed. Hence, I say, wherever there is injustice, there must be deformity and unsafeness, a fracture in the bone, pain, and ultimately punishment and ruin.

Hence, I have come to respect and honour those men who are stern in these matters, who say to me, "I do not care, I will not hear your theory ; it is wrong, I will have nothing to do with it." You pronounce them obstinate. One man says, "I go for the 'golden rule' in politics." "Sir," says another man, "you cannot carry it out ; it was never intended." "But you must obey Christ, and love your enemies." "It cannot be done," says the other ; "it is all nonsense ; it is impossible and impracticable." "Then," you say, "if it is impracticable, I refuse to be the example of its impracticability ; I must go beneath the seen, and root myself in invisible laws, and there I must stand ; I can do nothing, if I do

not do that." So, in all times, Martin Luther's old formula comes true : " It is not safe for man to do anything contrary to his conscience."

Now, then, what I wish to show you is : first, the relation of all seen things in one unit ; that that unit is a conformity to the laws that lie underneath ; that music and mathematics are akin to one another ; that tones, sound and righteousness are the same thing ; that a beautiful moral life is like a picture or a fair scene in Nature ; the eye reposes on it with satisfaction, and it calls up in life the same emotions. That all these are one. And why ? Because they are all preachers of a common invisible origin ; they all show how the Divine mind would have life look ; that who will lead a faithful life must be a believer in the unseen ; must listen never to visible things, must always endeavour to shut his eyes to them for a while, and as you do when you fall into a trance, must strive to be vacant to all appearances, and become master of the eternal law ; that, in proportion as you can do this, your life rises into a miracle—in proportion as you stand upon justice, you transcend the men of your day ; that if you will go through the Pantheon of history, and select all the great men, you shall find that they will be men who rooted themselves into eternal laws, and refused to violate them. The great musician was the one who said, " Because the planets move harmoniously, I will try to sound the divine old harmony here." It was a great man who said, " Just things are like beautiful things." Your true politician is the same—he who says, " God has given some awful laws ; they are the foundation upon which life is to be built up. Be untrue there, and all goes untruly."

Hereafter we shall examine some of those attempts which are made to render the unseen visible ; for you must not think that every unseen thing is an unseeable matter.

#### IV.

One office of science is to enlarge the dominion of the visible, yet not therefore to limit the dominion of the invisible ; for if I see planets which my ancestors saw not, or though I see by the microscope things that were hidden to them, we only push, as it were, a little, the boundaries of the invisible. Then we have to



examine those who offer by dream, by trance, by prophecy, by mesmeric or other forces, to make us seers of the unseen, for none of these things are to be neglected. Prophecy professes that it sees the unseen, Trance declares that it has done so ; and the day is coming when, instead of sneering at these things, we must examine them. We must take the Apostle Paul's trance, and ask what is meant by it ; we must look at the seers of the middle ages and see what is meant. The mystics must be interpreted in a new light, that it may be seen that the invisible is simply invisible to us because we have thickened the outward veil of sense, because we have become dealers in the visible and have lost the open eye and faculty for the unseen.

Let us take one practical form by which men of olden time strove to see the unseen,—Asceticism. Now, in the middle ages, men separated themselves into two companies—those who contemplated the invisible, and those who looked at the visible. To see the invisible, they said, you must flagellate the body, you must deny the senses, you must go into holy contemplation, you must be monastic, an anchorite. Were they right, or were they not right? Partly right, and partly in error. Still we glory in those men, because they maintained that many things that were invisible might be made visible. Education tells me the same lesson. Many unseen things in Nature I rise into now. The doctrine of these great men was, that if you would keep the senses down, the invisible things of life would rise and become clear, if you would deny the body, the bright light from heaven would shine out.

But you say, "I have experienced nothing of the kind." You have fasted,—you tried the experiment once—and nothing came of it ; you tried asceticism, and what was the result? Simply nothing, because you expected that by fasting, some visible outward thing would become clear to you, whereas the fasting was to make the invisible inwardly apparent. What does fasting do, then? Make real to you invisible things. That is, denials of every kind make the law clear to you. I have no liking for honesty, perhaps ; but I practise honesty until it rises in me as a reality. You have no belief, perhaps, in what men call faith ; but you deny sight until faith becomes real to you. There is the law of duty ; you practise it, and it rises into importance. The doing

of righteousness always renders righteousness real. You may utter to me a new law. I do not believe it, but I say, "I will go and try it," and in the trying of it, it rises into awful actual reality. So, by keeping the body down, the spirit rises. The reality of the inward life is often made apparent by the outward.

Ask some persons whether it be not so. If by crime or by mistake they have been shut up in such a place that the outward world has been shut out, and they no longer could see the fair face of Nature, the sunshine, or the busy march of man,—ask what became true to them. Ask the men of outward carnal weapons what they learned by being shut out from their carnal life. Many of them will tell you with joy and rejoicing that they learned that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. Ask the Chartist, physical force man who has been shut up in prison, why he has changed his belief. He will say, "It seemed clear to me, by that forced asceticism, what power there was in the soul." Ask him what he has gained by being immured in those stone walls. He will say, "The walls have prevented my walking ten miles a day." "What more did they prevent?" "They prevented my having so good a colour and appetite." "What did iron bars do more?" "They shut out the visible, and thus the invisible rose into strength. I found I could transcend the visible things of time. I found I was free in my soul. I found it true what the poet says :

‘ My mind to me a kingdom is.’

Here is a man shut in by the laws of society from the visible, and the invisible rises into importance.

So goes it sometimes with the holy minister of death. You have not much faith in immortality, when all goes well with you, and your purse is full of wealth. You do not want any other world at all. Men say at such times, "Why a new world? this is good enough." Then God, who loves you, comes and makes a blank in the circle. Then, immediately, the invisible becomes bright. You have read of a painter who, after he had finished his work, drew back to admire it. He was at the edge of a fearful precipice; but a friend rushed forward, and over the head of St. Peter put a brush which spoiled it all. What was done there?

The visible was marred, a blank was made ; but the painter rushed forward and was saved. Such, to the seeing eye, is the interpretation of many troubles. There is that visible thing you glory in so—that achievement or acquirement—but God comes, and, like the painter's friend, dashes over the visible thing, in order that through the blank you may have an insight into the invisible. There is that child of yours, dropt out of the circle at your fire-side ; and what was done for your soul ? The visible—the light of your eyes and of your life—was hidden, gone, a blank ; and over the blank place, as it were, in your life, there came at last such visible teachings of the invisible world ! The blanks of life are often handwritings upon the wall. They become places through which the eternal glory streams. For as long as the visible is apparent, we look to no invisible thing ; so God makes blank the visible, in order that through it there may come the glories of the heavens.

It is in life sometimes as it is with those old manuscripts and paintings. Some inferior hand has put some paltry picture over an old and glorious one. There comes a blank, a scratching ; the appearance of the picture is disfigured. I look through the blank, and I see I have got a real picture underneath, and that I may, by care and trouble, disclose a great divine work. Or, they have written some trumpery messes over a glorious old classic page. A blot comes, an erasion happens, the fair manuscript is spoiled, and I gain an insight into a beautiful palace, into the invisible things beneath. So goes it with life. You have got some poor trumpery shares marked on your soul—some visible matter of life. There come losses, railway crises, falls of railway kings, disasters ; they scratch the manuscript, and, if you are a wise man, you come to thank God, who has caused such painful scratches in the visible, for it shows you the invisible things that are underneath. As a man becomes acquainted with unseen realities, he rises as a servant of God, and says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for before it I went astray." Blanks in the social circle, the falling away of all the outward things of life, the spoiling of our pictures, the blotting out of our manuscripts—all these are blanks sent that we may see what glorious writing there is underneath. Confined, as it were, within prison walls, the troubles of life awake us for the first time, to know how

the soul of man lies open to the invisible powers, and we come to say with the great poet :

“ Who ne'er his bread in sorrow ate,  
 Who ne'er the mournful midnight hours  
 Upon his bed in grief hath sat,  
 He knows you not, ye heavenly powers ! ”

Thus we learn by the visible to go beneath to the invisible. We come to see that, unless we do this, the sad words of the Bible are true in our case, “ we walk in a vain show ; ” and we utter in full belief, “ The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal. ”

We may, then, briefly sum up the whole matter thus ; that we are to look rather with honour than contempt on those men who in every age have endeavoured to extract from Nature its true thought, its inward meaning, to explain and glorify its phenomena by setting them in the light of the spiritual thought which they embody and entomb ; that science, to be beautiful, catholic, complete, must no longer be divorced from theology, politics, or social life ; that things become only beautiful in this world as they lay their hands on humanity ; that whatever professes to be greater than humanity—to be fleshless, bodiless, soulless, impersonal—can never be received into the circle of the true sciences ; that as soon as you talk about “ pure spirit ” you talk about a spectre, and as soon as you talk about “ pure matter, ” you talk about a corpse ;—that it is when one becomes the informing and vital spirit of the other, that you have a divine and vital science, the right interpretation of life, and that its principles will explain most of the phenomena of life, and interpret its troubles and losses. There comes sometimes into a man's household the hand of death, and takes a member out of it. What is the spiritual meaning of it ? It is, that through the gap thus made in the visible, we should gain a vision into the invisible awful life, of which it was but for a moment the appearance : that we should come to see that the life we lead in the flesh is the show, and the hidden life is the reality ; that we should be cured of walking “ in a vain show. ” For I count that man to walk “ in a vain show ” who walks in matter and material things, without continually hearing the message of the hidden, the real and the invisible. Shut up a saintly noble soul in a prison ; it shall review all politics,

all faith, all science, and all life, without experiment, retort, book, *hortus siccus*, or specimen, by the pure spiritual force of the inward reality. I believe that we shall one day stand so at home among the forces of Nature, that what the ancients were said to do by faith and intuition, we shall do as the result of demonstration; that we shall go to the forces of Nature and play with them. Many a thing that this sceptical age has come to reject utterly, because it cannot see how they can be true on the evidence that pleased our fathers, a future age shall receive on a different line of evidence, and shall see that the many mighty deeds of the olden men were possible to them, because they held the interior forces so mightily, and that they shall be possible once more to us, by faithfully watching the phenomena and appearances of Nature.

Hence, many a difficulty of my earlier days has vanished. All those weary questions about miracles lie now clear and plain. Given the spiritual forces of life, and I can construct it. Granted that a man can lay hold of the occult and spiritual forces, and he holds in his power the modification, almost the creation, of material things. What people whiff away as mere ordinary phenomena, I take as real spiritual solemnities. He who can touch a man's inward life, can alter and glorify his outward life; he who puts a man through a glorious spiritual education, plays with his face, alters its expression, brightens his eyes—tones down his sensual-looking face, makes him, moulds him afresh, as much puts the chisel of the spirit over those misshapen features, as the sculptor, when he wishes to turn a Bacchus into an Apollo Belvidere, chips and moulds away the marble. Get a man to think a great thought, and you engage a great life for him; wherever you would effect great things, do it by invisible agency. All who have done great works had got vitality inwardly; and know you this, that all those outward products which come of inward vitality and force—which are not like colour, painted on, can never be discharged by external and arbitrary accidents.

## MUSIC.

TO one so well seasoned as myself, it does not often happen that I have to address an audience on a subject at once so entirely admirable, gracious, agreeable, harmonious and delightful as that of music. I think I can answer for it that if a man loves music he generally loves charity. I have found very few men who loved gardening and were drunken—very few men who loved a song and were churlish. I need scarcely refer to the words in which William Shakespeare, God's prophet to this nation, sets forth what may be expected from a man with no music in his soul; for no man possessing it can, by any possibility, be a skinflint, or churlish, or uncharitable, or ungraceful, or ungrateful. Thus, Martin Luther has said:—

“He who loves not wine, woman, and song,  
Will be a fool all his life long.”

And I need not tell you that Martin Luther was a man like all of us—able to exercise a wise temperance, a just moderation, and a true sense of duty to God and man. Music *should* make us charitable. If there is a sweet song set to good music, it is when a musical man takes to charity; it is like a song of Shakespeare set to music by Mendelssohn, and what could we have better?

With the profoundest respect for instrumental music, I love vocal music best, for it is the music which accompanies us from the cradle to the grave. Restless hours, before we can remember them, were soothed by the sweet song of the mother, or the little ditty of the nurse. The best games of the boy, and the sweetest games of the girl, are usually rendered pleasant by vocal music. In the time of youth, “the sighing time of lovers,” and when going to war,—vocal music cheers them all on; indeed, there are none of the seven stages of man which are not cheered by song.

The gift of song is one of the noblest gifts a man can have, enabling the possessor of it to interpret to the multitude the thoughts of the noblest and best men. King David without his

harp would not have been the sweet singer of Israel. His psalms would have been what they are, but they would not have moved the heart of a nation as they did when interpreted by the musician. Perhaps few men, except those great geniuses to the small ranks of whom no one here ventures to aspire, have a more honourable office, than those who take the words of great poets and the thoughts of great musicians, and make them by their sweet voices dwell in the hearts of the multitude. I never heard a thorough good singer without a little touch of envy. My voice was never good. It was cracked by being used too early—spoiled by excess, intemperance, and riot—I mean in the use of the voice, of course. Very wise, or very would-be wise people are sometimes very angry with the public for going to hear a song and not a sermon. I think that reproach is rather a sign of the shallowness of those who bring it than of those against whom it is brought. A good sermon requires a wiseish sort of person to understand it; but a song pleases the young and the old, the wise man and the fool. To the child just emerging from the cradle, a song is delightful; to the old man or woman just verging on the grave, a song is a charm. He who can sing a good song may be sure of this—that he has got all the audience the world can supply. Old and young, wise and simple, grave and gay—all are enchanted by a well-sung song. It is no reproach, therefore, to the public that they crowd to hear a singer rather than a prophet, because song touches all ages, belongs to all nations, is a part of all languages, and is of no creed, no sect, no clime, no tongue. I have seen empty benches when I was going to harangue, and knew that they would have been full if a singer had promised to sing; but, instead of being vexed, I reflected that music was a more universal language than speech. Let a good piece of music be sung, and not only the Frenchman and the German, but all nations, can see the beauty of the music, even though they know not the significance of the words. Music is a more universal language than words, therefore, and I always envy those who have that admirable gift, and my heart's desire is that you may know the nobleness of the gift, and be careful that in your use of it, or in your way of living, you may not prove unworthy ministers of that most noble office—the interpreting of God's goodness through the sweet gift of song.

There are very few ways in which the goodness of God comes

so clear to all hearts as in that noble gift. No man worth anything can listen to the song of a bird but with delight: even if he is inclined to think this world all gloom and misery, and darkness and doubt, the song of the nightingale, or better still, the song of the blackbird or thrush heard in the summer's eve, or of the lark in the morning, seems to teach that God is a God of joy, and that if there are clouds between us and Him, they must be clouds of our own making.

I commend the use of music of the highest order in the public services of Christian churches. The office of music is to provide man with a high excitement, leaving no weakness behind, as many other excitements do. Its use is justified by the examples of all the greatest men of old, and all the services of the great Churches of the world. The Old Testament is full of its use, its influence, its effects; and the comparative silence of the New Testament is not a condemnation of music, for the books of which the New Testament is composed were written by a few men, for a special purpose, and in a short period compared with that over which the Old Testament extends—the history of the long ages of the early world. It is a common argument that excellent music in our church services diverts the attention of the worshipper from higher and holier spiritual worship. But is such really the case? Does a stammering speaker really add to the meaning of the message? Can he whose ears are offended by the bad singing so common amongst us, rise above his humanity and praise his God as if no discords fell upon his ear? The musical services are those in which the “common people” can “gladly” join. Like the glorious Liturgy of the English Church, they can become the expression of the “common” praise and prayer, leaving the special sorrows and aspirations for the quiet closet at home. The book of “Common Prayer,” formed from the long experience of the great and good of ages past, the prayers which Elizabeth joined in, and the little lips of Edward first learned to form; the prayers which our fathers have prayed, from generation to generation, and which have risen from thousands of lips on the eve of some great battle, or the morn of some great fight, are not to be superseded by the extempore utterances so common in these modern days. Public prayer-meetings should be those of “common prayer,” and not left to the vagaries and caprices of



those who choose to lead. The prayers of the English Church are perhaps the best adapted for all "common" use, and private prayers should go up from the closet, from the individual heart, for we are told to be "not as the hypocrites, who pray at the corners of the streets," but to "enter into our closets," and to "close the door." From this argument for the "common" services, one may readily advance to the defence of the use of music of the highest possible order even in the Protestant Church.

The fault too common now-a-days is to suppose that prayer and preaching will convert the world, and it is too much forgotten that many whom a prayer will not move and a sermon will not rouse, are charmed and softened by the sweet, yet simple, music of the Church, often the echo of that of happy childhood's days. The Scotch Church repudiates the organ, but happily the English Church adopts and welcomes in its services the noblest product of human genius and skill—that marvellous instrument which catches up the air which might have floated away as a draught, imprisoning it in strange fashion, and making it pour forth sweet sounds to help the worshippers in the service of the Lord of all. Strange indeed is it that men cannot see how greatly services are aided by the proper performance of the old music of the Church, and how pleasantly its praises and thanksgivings rise from a worshipping people, led by an efficient choir.

There is, indeed, another, if not a stronger, reason for good music in a church. Many are the men, in a large town like this, who have tastes above the tavern standard, and are yet too poor to enjoy the pleasure which our costly concerts give. For such a class,—and it is ever large,—the old Church ever provided its noblest works of art, its greatest gems of music, to gladden and to raise; and if modern men were wiser than they often are, and felt more of the true charity which gives to those who cannot reach them the blessings which itself enjoys, our musical services of God would be worthier than they are, and many a humble soul would be led by slow, yet sure, gradations, from the lower pleasures of the world.

When I go, as I often do, to some of our cathedrals to listen to those glorious anthems, or when in a humble way those glorious anthems of great Anglican or Catholic music are attempted elsewhere, I cannot help reflecting that He who made voices so sweet

must be a God of joy, and a God of justice and mercy to all his creatures—that He must have in his heart some deep tenderness, some mighty desire for harmony ; and I have sometimes thought that a great anthem is a pledge—and I think all pure music must be a pledge—that sins, sorrows, doubts, and darkness over, we may come safe home to that blessed land of which the great prophet could say nothing better than this—that he “heard a song,” and he said it was “like the sound of the sea for the multitude of those that sung it.” That I and all of you may take part in that last great, grand, and unending strain, is my great desire.

## MENDELSSOHN AND HIS WORKS.

AN ADDRESS GIVEN AS PRESIDENT OF THE BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC UNION.

WE are here to-night to try whether it will be possible to connect together what may be called the learning of music and its practice, a desirable experiment—to link closely together the biography of musicians, the criticism of music, the explanation of its art or the explanation of its poetry, and the actual performance of the music itself. I have been requested to give an address on the life and works of Mendelssohn. I will take a sentence of Rousseau's, which if it has aforesaid sounded rude, I hope it will do so no longer: "If you are calm and tranquil amongst the ecstasies of this great art—if you feel no delirium, no transport—then profane not the sacred shrine of genius with your presence. What can it avail you to hear what you cannot feel?" That is a very severe sentence, but it is possible for people to grow in feeling. To-night we will take one or two questions only. If any of you were asked to meditate with success on the fact that all the supreme music of the world is included within the last two centuries, how would you explain it? As to the music of the Greeks and Romans, I fear it was thin and unsatisfactory. All the great music and all the great musicians lie within two centuries. The great painters came long before, and the great poets too, but not the great musicians. Why is it that music came so late? There is a hazy notion that great men come before they are wanted, and because they are here they create a people that want them. If you read history you will find it otherwise. What was the use of sending Moses if there were no Hebrews to be delivered? What was the use of a lawgiver if there were no people in want of laws? Why should a great painter come, if there are no people sufficiently religious to enter into the merits of his work, or to be

taught by him? Why should musicians come if people have not culture enough, or refinement enough, or sense enough to understand their strain? What was the use of the sonata that has been played, for instance, to the people who talked during its performance, or came in late and disturbed everybody?

You will find that it was only in comparatively modern times it was possible for a great musician to arise. In the middle ages it was out of the question. The palaces of kings could never make art as noble as the homes of the people. The middle ages, of which some of you dream, were days of darkness, tyranny, and oppression. There was no room for the musician except in the Church, or occasionally in the precincts of the Court. The Church music, fettered and restrained by the necessity of the subject, did its best, and then the art of music seemed for a while to expire. In Italy at one time the art of music had reached a most noble height. There is no music in Italy of late years worth any man's hearing; every Italian flies the country and goes elsewhere. Twenty-five years ago, and Mendelssohn's account of music in Italy was that the passages he heard played in the churches filled him with lively horror; and why? Because people had lost all power to feel. Despotism, darkness, tyranny, disorder, multitudes of little kings and princes all at war with one another; bloodshed, rapine,—all these things were fatal, and music fled. And thus was it in the middle ages. But by degrees, as the world grew rich and peaceable, the people grew in importance, and then the great musicians began to arrive.

And we can guess exactly in which nation it is likely that the consummate musicians would be. Of course I should be glad if they had been Englishmen; but they were not. We did our part, which is even the greater part of music, when England gave to the world Shakespeare; but Puritanism followed, and had we been a musical nation, Puritanism would have been a bar to its expression. Germany was just the nation, and the Germans possess every characteristic of being the greatest musical nation—patient, laborious, learned, mystical, tender, loving, true-hearted—these are the people to make great musicians. With them it is neither an exercise nor an accomplishment; but it is a necessary feeling, a holy expression of part of their life. Look at Mendelssohn,

perhaps the most consummate musician that the world ever had. He was the happiest man, perhaps, of our time, the most perfectly cultured man, and that is the reason why he was the most consummate musician. One of the happiest things in history is to read of low-born men reaching to this height of things,—poverty-stricken men mastering learning; tinkers and weavers becoming the lords of light and truth. But the charm lies in the struggle. Music is the struggle of emotions in their fullest bloom; in their utmost glory. If we look at the lives of these great men, we shall see that to make a consummate musician we must have a rare combination.

Mendelssohn came of a good stock. There was the Oriental blood within him; he had the best pedigree the world can show,—the pedigree of the Hebrews, which had been carried into Germany and much mended. It had been taken into that land, pious without being Puritan, religious without being gloomy, playful without being frivolous, learned without being dry,—a people full of home life, and one of the great secrets of music lies in that. The Germans are linked with the English in their conception of home life. Their poetry and ways are full of playful tenderness; there is no country in which children are more dearly loved,—and nothing can be said of a nation better than that *they* have the sweetest souls who love little children most. Give them a touch of the Hebrew blood, carry it to Germany, take it there in days of wealth, when there is a class sufficiently rich, and with leisure to enjoy music, and probably we shall have the best conditions for the musician. Mendelssohn's father was wealthy, therefore there was leisure. The lad was born a musician, therefore there was inspiration and genius. He was trained in severity always necessary, for the notion that genius saves labour has now been pretty nearly exploded. The great painter, Da Vinci, would go across to Florence to make an alteration of a single hair in his "Last Supper," and when he got to the picture and found the idea was gone, he touched not the picture, but came back to it another day. Such wealth of work means the great triumph of art.

Mendelssohn, then, had genius, labour, discipline, and culture. He was born a musician, made a musician, trained a musician.

He had a memory so admirable that once hearing an air he could reproduce it, vary it, play with it, toss it, return to it, do anything with it. The mathematics of music he mastered, the science of it he thoroughly understood. He was the man that brought Bach into life, whose music had been put aside as unintelligible because the public were not up to the intelligence of it. Through the efforts of Handel, Mozart, Hadyn, and the Germans in general, all the people grew up to the understanding of Sebastian Bach. Tender-hearted, gentle, kindly, thoughtful, pious, reverent, beautiful, gracious, Mendelssohn's music is the perfection of the art, because the man was almost the perfection of humanity. He paid the penalty of this,—he died early; but he lives long. His was a short, but a glorious life. He died at last very much broken-hearted; for when his sister died it was over. Growing feeble before that time, that touch went down to the deep springs of the man. Wealth and largeness of joy, and mastery of music in all its modes, understanding of the genius of the Hebrew and Christian religions, were joined in that admirable master.

Some of the music put down on the paper for to-night is from "St Paul." "St Paul" has not been played in Birmingham as often as it ought to be; but probably some persons would stake Mendelssohn's reputation upon it. Then we shall have a specimen of these German compositions, "Songs, without words." In these *lieder* there is an entire absence of that style of music which consists of the display of the possibilities of the human voice rather than the expression of the emotion of the human heart. On this platform I have heard squalling matches between two operatic singers. If these ladies had had their heads dipped into a bucket, to see how long they could hold breath, it would have been much more satisfactory, because our ears would not have been pierced with the noise. Mendelssohn set his face against mountebanking in music altogether.

Before the address, Mr Stimpson played one of the organ sonatas, and after the address the following selection from Mendelssohn's compositions was given by the choir of the Birmingham Philharmonic Union:—

- CHORUS, . . . "Sleepers, wake." . . .  
 CHORUS, . . . "Happy and blest are they." . . .  
 SOLO, BASS, . . . "O God, have mercy upon me." . . .  
 CHORUS, . . . "How lovely are the messengers." . . .  
 PIANOFORTE SOLO, Andante and Rondo Capriccioso in E.  
 DUET, . . . "What have I to do with thee." . . .  
 CHORUS, . . . "Blessed are the men." . . .  
 RECIT. AIR AND CHORUS, "O Lord, thou hast overthrown." } *Elijah.*  
 CHORUS, . . . "Thanks be to God." . . .  
 ORGAN SOLO, "Notturmo" (*Midsummer Night's Dream* Music).  
 HYMN, . . . "Hear my prayer, O God."  
 PIANOFORTE SOLO, Songs without words, Nos. 1 and 30.  
 PART SONGS, . . . { The First Spring Day.  
 . . . { The Lark.  
 ORGAN SOLO, . . . The Wedding March.

## THE LIFE AND WORKS OF HANDEL.

AN ADDRESS TO THE BIRMINGHAM PHILHARMONIC UNION.

THIS is the second time on which our young Society has taken up the works of one musician, hoping to give pleasure and enlarge the love and knowledge of music by confining each concert to the works of one man, prefacing the concert by a very brief outline of the composer's life, method, and success. Last year we dealt with Mendelssohn, and to-night we have chosen the great and almost unapproachable manhood and music of Handel for our subject. Sometimes we speculate whether music is not doomed to be the next, chiefest, and perhaps the greatest manifestation of art of which mankind is capable. I do not think it likely that the world will ever outdo in sculpture the great men of Greece; nor do I see the probability of excelling the masters of Italy for painting; nor the dimmest probability—especially if this town were to give the data—of excelling the stones of Venice and the beauty of her architecture. It seems to me that these arts are still open, but the supremacy in them appears to be barred. Greece has done all that can be done to sculpture; Italy all that can be done to painting; England all that can be done in the drama and in poetry; and now comes the question whether Germany has not to come and supply the next great development of art—music. The Greek excelled in sculpture because he excelled in beauty; the Christian religion and the climate of Italy produced the glorious paintings of Leonardo da Vinci, Raffaele, and the great Italian masters; the strength, vigour, and manhood of England produced Shakespeare, Dryden, Byron, and Pope; and Germany, by its love of music, received the gift of being the master of the sublime art of music.

There are many reasons why Germany should excel in music. Music in Germany is not what it is in England—an “extra,” an accomplishment, a mode of getting a living; but is one of the conditions of life. As the old song says—



“ There the tailor plays the flute,  
And the tinker blows the horn.”

To a thorough-going German, music is as essential as the cold tub and fresh air is to an Englishman. It would be wrong, therefore, if the Germans were not great musicians.

The man I am going to speak of was a German by birth, though happily he was an Englishman by adoption. Here he chiefly lived, here he gained his greatest glory, here he had his burial; and here he lived the darling of the nation.

Handel was born in Saxony in 1684. His father, being a Dry-as-dust lawyer, who married a second time at the age of sixty—of which marriage George Frederic Handel was the offspring—every obstacle was put in the way of his cultivating music. But, though his father did all he could to discourage and keep him from it, Handel's musical education progressed. His genius was too strong, his mother too kind, and he became a musician in spite of his father. What a large part of the world's joy, and what an amazing amount of the world's charitable resources, would have been lost if Handel had been made a lawyer! We have lawyers enough and to spare; but musicians like him are few and far between.

After the death of his father, Handel got an engagement at the Hanover Opera House, which led him into a duel. He played the violin there; but one night the harpsichord player was ill, and Handel took his place. His playing was perfection; and the other members of the orchestra were envious. For, with all due regard to musicians, they are about as envious, fussy, and feeble a race in their petty egotisms, as almost any people the world contains. If people knew what I do about the quarrels as to whether a lady's name should appear first or last, and whether it should be in big capitals or small capitals, they would agree heartily with me in the law I am going to lay down to-night, that there shall be no *encores*, for one of the things we aim at in this Society is to put an end to vulgarity and quantity. The result of Handel's success at Hanover was that he fought a duel, but his life was saved by having his score under his coat. He then travelled to Italy, and taught the use of wind instruments to the people of the sunny south. Then he came back to Hanover; but in 1710 we find him in England.

Coming to Handel's works, there is the famous *Te Deum* and the *Jubilate*, written to celebrate the peace of Utrecht, which brought him a pension of £200 a year from Queen Anne. But, unfortunately, Queen Anne died, and George I., whom, while yet Elector of Hanover, Handel had snubbed, became King of England.

Handel then wrote his water music: he went down the river and played it; the King was charmed;—and it may be said in justice to the Georges that they loved music, and did justice to musicians, which covers a multitude of sins. The King forgave his run-away master of the chapel, doubled his pension, and bye and bye, when Handel was appointed tutor to the Princesses, his pension was raised to £600 a year.

Handel had a pleasant time when he lived with the Earl of Burlington and wrote the *Passion* music—music which I hope will be revived in Birmingham shortly. Then came a glorious time for Handel with the Duke of Chandos. He was the most magnificent man of modern times, and in his chapel Handel played the organ. The organ is there to the present day in the chapel at Whitechurch, about seven miles from London, and in the graveyard there lies the Harmonious Blacksmith. The Duke of Chandos was a splendid man, and, as the old chronicle says, he used to go to church with Christian humility every day, attended by his Swiss Guards. This Duke of Chandos was great with Handel as his musician, Pope and Arbuthnot as his companions, Gay as his friend, and Addison as his intimate companion. There, Handel wrote "*Esther*," and many of his great works.

After that came a stormy time; for Handel undertook *opera*. Very few people undertake that without getting into trouble. Handel's old rivals came to trouble him, and London was divided into feuds. The fashionable world took sides; one took the part of Bononcini and another that of Handel; and Swift, in writing his immortal epigram on the squabbles, divisions, and parties of high life, about these musicians, wrote—

"Some say, compared to Bononcini,  
That Mynheer Handel's but a ninny;  
Others aver that he to Handel  
Is scarcely fit to hold a candle.  
Strange, all this difference should be,  
'Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee."

Music has ever been one of the most fertile sources of petty rivalry and cabals. The result of his opera writing was that Handel was £10,000 out of pocket, peace out of soul, quiet out of his heart, vexation in his temper, and a slight touch of paralysis in his body. Handel brought out "Acis and Galatea," and afterwards "Alexander's feast"—music to the masterpiece of Dryden. He went to Oxford, and there his "Athalic" was performed with success. Oxford offered to confer on Handel the degree of Doctor of Music, and he rejected the offer.

His operatic efforts probably helped to drive him to his supreme work, that in which he has no equal, and in which he remains the supreme master still—his *Oratorio*. Though some hold that Beethoven was the greatest master, nevertheless, Handel still reigns the king in this, unapproached and perhaps unapproachable. He was in Oratorio, what Mozart was in Opera and Beethoven in Symphony. For in his Oratorios, who shall surpass him in ingenuity? whose skill is subtler? whose simplicities more lovely? whose intricacies more orderly? Of the sweetest melody, and of the most intricate harmony, this man was master through and through. The "Pastoral Symphony" would have touched the hearts of the shepherds who are supposed to have heard it. There are choruses in the "Messiah" which Beethoven himself would have been glad to have tied, to unravel again. And the "Israel in Egypt," how can it be surpassed? Then there is the "Saul," which people here only know by the "Dead March." "Saul" is the work of a mighty master. When you have heard how Handel took that interview of Saul with the Witch of Endor, and put it into music, you will have heard about the greatest masterpiece of art that music has yet accomplished in dramatic power since Shakespeare gave us the Witches of Macbeth.

Handel's "Israel in Egypt" was a failure. The public did not think much of it; whereupon he thought little of the public. The present generation thinks much of "Israel in Egypt," which shows that in musical matters we are wiser than our fore-fathers. Its stupendous choruses, its music pushed to the very edge of legitimacy, until one trembles lest it should turn to buffoonery; and the hailstone chorus in which we are frightened that Handel will turn fantastic with his effort to be realistic, make this an extraordinary work. Dryden, Milton, and the unspeakable

Scriptures—these are the sources from which Handel took his words, and he was not like most musicians, dependent on the feeblest of *librettos*. However, the public of that time thought little of it; and what had to be done? Poor musicians had to live, and “Israel in Egypt” was announced thus—“The Oratorio will be shortened and mixed with Songs.” Fancy little bits of the Oratorio being screamed out and intermixed with songs! “Israel in Egypt” has been produced in this town without “songs,” for which we are grateful.

Handel flew from London squabbles to Dublin. He was received with enthusiasm, and there he produced his “Messiah.” He devoted it to charity, and it has served the lowly and neglected, the snubbed and disgraced, ever since. He laid hold of the worthiest and greatest theme, and following the leading idea of Christ’s life, consecrated his great masterpiece to the service of the lowly. It brought in £10,000 for the Foundling Hospital in London. Handel loved the Foundling Hospital. He played the organ there, and he put his greatest work at the service of the most unfortunate poor little ones, snubbed at their birth and all their career through. This man was a poet and preacher. What Bishop has ever pleaded for the poor with greater success than the little German has? What Archbishop has with equal power shown the life of Christ with this high-feeding coarse-looking German when he wrote the “Messiah”? There seems almost enough spirit in that one Oratorio to have built a world or reduced chaos to order. Hospitals live upon it, and charities flourish through it. The Messiah himself, what did he do? He fed the hungry, opened the eyes of the blind, cared for the harlot, loved the publican: and this immortal music, worthy almost of the Master after whom it is named, has done the same work. Wherever Handel’s “Messiah” goes, the spirit of the Messiah goes; its charity, its inspiration, its joy, its heavenly peace.

“Jephthah” was the last great work of Handel’s and if you could see the last few pages of the manuscript of that, you would see the beginning of the tragedy. Another effort to finish it, and then blindness came. Yes, blindness came at last, and it was a touching sight to see him go on playing at the Foundling the “Total Eclipse” of “Samson,” and turn pale when he was led out to receive the acknowledgements of the people.

This little German, with his large appetite, and his bad habit of swearing in five languages when annoyed, was yet a God-fearing and religious man. For a few years he lingered on in perfect peace, and he uttered his prayer that he might breathe his last on Good Friday, and meet his Lord and Saviour on the day of his resurrection. He had his prayer realized; he died on Good Friday, and he was buried in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey—appropriate place—for of all the poets he was one of the chiefest. He set the loftiest words to the loftiest music, and was undoubtedly a great poet.

There is no range of music that he has not touched, and in which he has not excelled. Handel upset the pet theories as to genius, inasmuch as he wrote his chief works when he was between fifty-four and seventy-seven years of age, and was not pale and slim and interesting-looking, as geniuses are always supposed to be. The explanation is, "The wind bloweth where it listeth." Men may be coarse, wild, and erratic—anything but geniuses in look—but yet it is given to them; and all we can do is to wonder and be thankful that by means unknown to us, every now and then comes some supreme being, to whom it is given to do what Handel did—charm the world for ever and ever. Handel was a true preacher, and many a man who has "sat under" a sermon stony, has wept under the "Messiah" in this very hall, and gone away with a deeper sense of how "He was despised and rejected of men" than ever he got from the preacher. And as to sickly ministers railing against the "Messiah," and discharging their little pop-guns against such a work as this, I venture to say that more men have been touched with the lesson of the Gospel, and more men have watched the sublime history of Christ born in lowliness, risen, ascended, and proclaiming the resurrection and the life to come, under the masterful guidance of this glorious musician, than has ever been done under the whole army of modern preachers, be they whom they may. Handel was a musician, poet, priest, bishop, archbishop, god, comforter, evangelist, and apostle, in that he set to the divinest music the sweetest story, the divinest words, and the most lasting subject of interest which the human soul is capable of comprehending.

## “THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.”

(MR HOLMAN HUNT'S PICTURE.)

I REGARD “The Light of the World” as the finest picture ever painted by an Englishman, and agree with the admirable notice of it which has appeared in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, that the fact of our being amateurs in painting has very little to do with the understanding of such a work. It is really a painted text, a sermon on canvas. One of the sweetest allegories in the Bible has been taken out of mere words, and put into that which is even better—a form which appeals to the eye, to the senses, and goes right through what John Bunyan calls “the gate of man’s soul” to the soul itself. Such a picture explains the true uses which art had in the middle ages. With many people, now-a-days, paintings are only the last touch of ornament given to their houses; but in the middle ages the painter occupied the place that, if there were preachers worthy of such painters, the preachers would occupy now. When people read little, and were preached to little, the great artists were the great preachers of the world. Anybody could understand a painting, but few could read books. Hence on some of the walls of the old German towns, remnants of Bible history are still visible. Those who have been at Rothenburg will remember seeing the encounter of David and Goliath thus painted, so that poor country market folks, as they passed, were reminded of this great passage in history. In those times, art was held in high honour. Painters were then great servants of the Church; some of them were great churchmen. At last, however, English or other sorts of Puritanism came with their hideous divorce between truth and beauty, and the consequence is, that while in some countries the Church is the only refuge for great pictures, in others even this refuge is denied them.

“The Light of the World” belongs to a far better age than the present. It is a picture that might have been painted in the

middle ages, and if painted then, would have received the very highest honours that could have been bestowed upon it. It will help to show what the function of the mediæval painter was, and probably those who see this will not join in the silly stuff talked about the “dark” ages, but will see that God’s truth can be taught by the brush and the canvas, as well as by a sermon or book, and that there is more than one method of development for holiness.

The allegory chosen for illustration is that beautiful one in the Revelation, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock ; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” As Christ is not personally symbolised in this allegory, the representation of him is not difficult. There would be exceeding difficulty, for instance, in giving a literal rendering of the words, “I am the vine.” If there were difficulty, therefore, it would be in rendering well the door of the human heart. If old Quarles had introduced it in his quaint suggestive “Emblems,” he would have represented a human heart with a door to it. Here, however, the painter takes a far better method ; he leaves the door of the soul, of the conscience, to speak for itself, and is only careful about rendering worthily the figure of Christ, and having the details in exact keeping with the beauty of the symbol.

One advantage of having the picture here this evening is that we are saved listening to the infinite nonsense talked about it elsewhere. It is absolutely miserable to see some people walk in, utter the word “Pre-Raphaelite,” make use of the usual stereotyped objections to the school, turn on their heel, and walk away. Why, if this were merely a Pre-Raphaelite picture, a better thing could not be said of it. There have been few pictures painted in England since these Pre-Raphaelites began their work, in which I could not show the trace of their influence. Painters dare not be so slovenly now as they were a few years ago. Faces are no longer the egg-shaped, pretty, meaningless repetitions which they once were in all but the very highest English pictures. They have now a distinctiveness about them. Millais’ “Ophelia” is very different from the Highland woman in the “Order of Release,” very different from the lady in the “Proscribed Royalist,” very different from the wondrous face in the “Huguenots.”

People find fault with the Millais' faces because they are not beautiful. Is a painter called on to paint every woman pretty, knowing very well that few are so? The object of painting is not to idealise life, but to render life as it is.

Therefore, though there may be oddities, angularities, even ugliness, in some of the Pre-Raphaelites' pictures, their efforts at individuality have done good service. There is the famous "Carpenter's Shop," for instance, one of the earliest exhibited. There may be extravagances in it, but it is a noble protest against the tendency of sacred painting in England. If it had been painted by any other artist, it would have been a companion for the "Peter the Great" exhibited in Birmingham not long since, where we have Peter hard at work in a dock-yard, arrayed in clothes and linen that look as if they had just come home from tailor and laundress, with not a speck of sawdust or shaving within a mile of them. The whole is a collection of lay figures and stage costume. It is the same with sacred subjects. Look at the greater part of the figures of Christ. Most of them are beneath contempt. Painters have kept on idealising him until the "Man of sorrows" is no more seen. If they had said it was the transfigured or the risen Christ they wished to represent, then they could be understood; but professing to represent the manhood of him who was "acquainted with grief," what comfort, or consolation, or instruction could sick heart or troubled conscience gain from such a work? The "Carpenter's Shop" came as a protest for the manliness—for even the lowliness of the manliness—of Christ. Critics said that Joseph was ugly; and Joseph may have been uglier than I should have drawn him. Critics also found fault with his feet; they said they were cramped and chilled. Well, poor men's feet are sometimes cramped and chilled; and it is better to see them chilled than as some artists would have treated them. A Royal Academician would have gone out and bought a foot—would have gone, Pagan-like, to worship an old Greek statue—and would have given Joseph, not the two feet of a carpenter, but two classic feet, two model feet, feet to which Joseph had no pretensions whatever. The picture, therefore, though extravagant in some parts, was yet a wholesome protest against the absurd practice of idealisation, which makes a painter choose a subject as anyone might choose a waistcoat



pattern, not because his soul tells him it is one he loves and can do tolerable justice to, but because the connoisseur tells him it is one that will sell. Forthwith he coaches himself up in facts about it, and copies irreproachable feet, *à la mode* robes, and classic postures—the result being like the famous figure in “Frankenstein,” a man made by man, a hideous aping of true life.

Pre-Raphaelitism, then, in rendering things according to the truth of them, has done good service. The painting of details in these pictures is marvellous, almost faultless; and the next time anyone hears fault found, ask the fault-finder to point it out. If they say it is in the perspective, let it be measured; for I scarcely know one picture by the great men of the school, in which perspective is violated, or which would be found a line out if the strictest analysis afforded by mathematics were applied. Some say they are hard. The famous wall in the “Huguenots” is found fault with on this score. What would you have? True, Millais need not have had a wall; most painters would have shirked it; but having it, what could he do? It has been a subject of great discussion whether the nasturtium could have been in flower at the time the incident of that picture happened. All I will say on this knotty point is that when we are compelled to borrow the “Shepherd’s Calendar” to settle a question of criticism, there must be something in a work the fringes of the garment of which excite so much controversy. It is the old story. Things are wrong because things are not as they were. When we look at these pictures, at their realism, their individuality, at the soul that looks out of them, it is easy understanding how the owners of galleries are afraid of them. Take the girl’s face in the “Huguenots.” Did man ever before put into so small a compass such life and meaning, so wonderful a story of a beating, bursting human heart? Or take the much abused face in the “Order of Release.” Critics say the cheek-bones are high, and the outlines unnecessarily angular. Well, the cheek-bones of such a man’s wife ought to be high, especially if she has luxuriated on oatmeal all her life. It would have been a lie on canvas to have painted her otherwise; and what a protest it is against the silliness of mere prettiness. Millais knew that there was no beauty in prettiness, that all beauty comes from within. He knew that if a man or a woman has no brains, beauty is absent—that if they have no

heart, no goodness, it is impossible they can look beautiful. They may look handsome, or even pretty, but that is all. To me, this Highland woman's much-abused face is one of the finest things I have seen. How she triumphs over the gaoler, obliged to let her husband go—how her care is to get him outside that gate before she attempts to comfort him—how careless she is even of her child at this moment—how her rude Highland features beam with exulting joy—all these make it a beautiful face. Pre-Raphaelitism, therefore, has done much during the few years which have elapsed since a few men, in the little book called "*The Germ*," laid down what they considered the true principles of art. Landscape is getting faithful, portraits are getting truer, and everywhere the influence of the school is perceptible.

"*The Light of the World*" is not, in the strict sense of the word, a Pre-Raphaelite picture, though painted by a chief teacher of the school. The whole is emblematic, and upon the nice understanding of the emblems used depends one's appreciation of the success with which the painter has fulfilled his task. On the head of Christ are two crowns, and one person has been heard to wonder "why one crown was not taken off before the other was put on." It should be remembered that this is not a representation of Christ as he appeared at any moment. It is not Christ as he appeared with the thorny crown; it is Christ with all his attributes, earthly and heavenly—with the earthly crown of his shame as well as his heavenly crown of glory. And the artist, with a fine poetry of feeling, has made the thorny crown begin to bud and blossom, thereby symbolising that that crown which was thorny to Christ, put upon his head and spiritually used by him, for comfort to his disciples, did begin to blossom; and showing, also, that there is no thorn but God can make blossom, no rod of chastisement that he cannot cause to bud like that of Moses. I have heard fault found with the complexion which the painter has given Christ. There is an ecclesiastical reason for this, if there were no other. Tradition says that Christ had that complexion, and every artist, if he is not an irreverent dissenter trying to shake himself free from every bygone thing—every painter who has a touch of churchmanship in him, and is anxious to keep himself in a line of unbroken connection with the traditions of the Church, where they do not intrude themselves into the place belonging to weightier matters—will necessarily follow it. The ancient ages were likely

to know better than we, and we should not put our vulgar modern prejudices as to red hair against an old tradition like that. Into the abstract question of whether this is the right complexion for the painter to give, I shall not now enter, though I believe I could prove it to be right. We would not have Christ painted very fair, and surely not very dark. Sufficient for the painter that he followed an old tradition. The robe has been found fault with. Some people think it too strait. But it is the seamless robe, and this is the justification of its form. It symbolises the unbroken unity of the body of Christ, that the Church of which he is the head is one, and surely this is better set forth thus than by any approach to graceful modern costume. Some have said that it is a monk's robe. It is not. It is partly an ascetic robe, but not necessarily so. Christ's whole life was a triumph of soul over body, a long mortification of the flesh, a perpetual trampling upon lower things in order that higher things might rise, and in this sense the robe is ascetic. It is not the white linen robe of the Revelation, as one writer has said : that comes at quite another epoch of the human soul. The outer robe is that of the priesthood, still worn in the Roman Church.

Here also is the jewelled Urim and Thummim, and the clasp typifying the bringing together of the Jewish religious system with the Christian. Then there is the lamp carried by Christ. One has said that it is the lamp of the conscience, another the lamp of the Church. It may possibly be intended as the lamp of the Word, seeing that Christ was the *verbum*, the word that was with God from the beginning, and the painter may have had in his mind the words of David, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path.” It may therefore be the lamp which guides the feet, and which, lit within the house of the soul, would be an abiding light. Probably the truest interpretation is that it is the lamp of the Church. The way in which the cords of the lamp are twisted round Christ's wrist, is no doubt meant to typify the intense unity existing between him and the Church. The door of the soul is beautifully rendered. You can see it is long since it has been opened. The weeds have climbed where they never could have climbed had it been kept open ; stains of rust are over the iron-work. Hovering over it we see, not a singing bird, but the bat—bird of night, bird of darkness, bird of ruin and neglect. All the plants are admirably chosen. We have

brambles, because a place overgrown with brambles is the acknowledged type of a place to which the husbandman has not come. The trees are intended to be ugly, and admirably ugly they are. There has been no heavenly pruning here; they do not look like “trees of my Father’s planting.” They are trees in reference to which the gardener might put in the awful plea, “Spare them another year, and I will dung about them and dress them, and if they bear no fruit, then let them be cut down and cast into the fire.” The fruit they bore has fallen to the ground—natural fruit, uncared for and untended; but shone upon by the light from the lamp, the fruit looks as if it had come off a good tree, leading one to think that if the heavenly husbandman had had the pruning of those trees, they would have brought forth fruit to life everlasting.

As to the face of the Lord, I count it the most beautiful and expressive that has ever been painted. It must always be difficult for a painter to make choice of a form for Christ’s face, but to put it into expression is far more so. If he paints a human face only, there is a tendency to sordidness and earthliness. If a painter meditates much on the text, “The foxes have holes, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head,”—if he thinks of Christ as “a root out of dry ground,” a root forked, crooked, ugly, deformed—if he fills his mind with this, there will be danger of our getting such loathsome pictures as are sometimes to be met with, where, as with some preachers, the mere physical suffering, the mere agony, is the great matter. In England there has been a great deal of preaching of this sort—mere appraisalment of the physical suffering of the Crucifixion, and not the awful lessons taught by its inmost spirit. If, again, the painting of the face be divine, it fails in its great work of brotherhood, and we no longer feel that it is our High Priest, who became “perfect through suffering,”—we forget that he is the “carpenter’s son,” the “friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” In the face before us, the difficulty is overcome. Its sadness is painful in the extreme, and the justification of this sadness is that Christ has knocked, and knocked in vain. There is a fine old English hymn—I don’t know its author, but it sounds like Wesley—which to my mind more truly describes the scene than even the lines of Lope de Vega, which have been quoted:—

“Behold a stranger at the door,  
He gently knocks, has knocked before,  
Hath waited long, is waiting still ;  
You’d use no other friend so ill.

“Oh, lovely attitude ! he stands  
With melting heart and open hands ;  
Oh ! matchless kindness ! and he shows  
That matchless kindness to his foes.”

I would call your particular attention to the character of Christ’s knocking, as indicated by his half-open hand and listening aspect ; in it there is nothing impatient or imperative ; he is still “long-suffering, slow to anger, plenteous in mercy,” showing that at the eleventh hour he will knock as woefully and persuadingly as he did at the first. I believe that many a man who has not heard a sermon for years, might see in this painting the whole meaning of the life of Christ, and the whole story of his own neglect.

It should help, also, to deepen the much-wanted feeling that Christ, and not Christianity, is to save the world. The palmiest days of the Church have been when men were most devoted to Christ’s person, and no man has ever written a great work or moved the Christian Church who was not distinguished for his personal love of Christ. The world cares more for a “*De Imitatione Christi*” than it does for Calvin’s “*Institutes*” or Dwight’s “*Theology.*” The only thing that ever will save this world is the passionate dependence on the man Christ Jesus. And a picture like this, overflowing with endless humanity and sweet charity, is worth a whole bundle of dissertations about election and reprobation, fate and free will. The picture is an embodiment of the doctrines of election and reprobation, fate and free will, such as I could make plain to the most ignorant collier in Staffordshire. Just as Paul’s speech was likely to do more good than Paul’s letters, and a warm hand in troublous times is worth more than the best discourse of Seneca, so to some people a knowledge of the life of Christ, how he lived and died, may be more easily conveyed by a great picture like the one before us, than by the trumpery hair-splittings of rusty theologians. None but a frivolous man can look at it without having his heart touched. I am thankful that it is an Englishman, and not an Italian, who has painted it.

“THE SHADOW OF DEATH;” OR, “THE  
SHADOW OF THE CROSS.”

(MR HOLMAN HUNT’S PICTURE.)

A GREAT man who was called a “wise man” preferred to put that title aside, and to be called a “lover of wisdom.” So our word “philosopher” is coming to mean what the etymology of the word does, no longer. And if anyone were to say that I was an artist, I should still put aside the flattering term, and say I was a “lover of art.” I regret even the word “lecture” being used in connection with a meeting like this. One would rather have said “An hour’s talk about a great picture;” for I am simply going to talk to you for an hour about the picture before us. I come here to fulfil a duty which I think the artists themselves greatly neglect. For instance, in a town like this, with its annual Exhibitions, the artists should select one or two of the best pictures, and then if they find people who can understand them, have those pictures explained by poet and painter; for it is as foolish for one to think he can understand a picture by once looking at it, as it would be to suppose that one had mastered “Hamlet” when he had read it once or seen it played once. The more a man ponders over a great play, the more he studies and understands it, the more his first love becomes deepened by subsequent perusal.

The picture before us is one that challenges from you, not a hasty criticism or an idle remark, but a study so patient and a presumption of goodness so deep that you can scarcely be said to be able to form a judgment of it until you have seen it a thousand times; for when a great artist gives years of his life, years of patience and unintermittent labour in exile and weariness, and puts into a picture conscience, morals, thought, devoutness, painstaking toil, it is due to him to suppose that there is something more in it than you can see at first sight, and that that which took years to paint requires more than half-an-hour’s study to understand. Under

these circumstances, it seems to me that the picture may grow upon us by talking a little time concerning it.

Of course its object is obvious to you, but before I proceed it will be necessary to warn you of the extraordinary effect upon the human mind of its unusualness. If we listen to the criticisms which are passed upon this picture, in nine out of ten cases they come to this, "This is not what I have been accustomed to." To which I answer, "Oh! Not what you have been accustomed to!" When Shakespeare wrote his great plays—and you must remember that Shakespeare was the artists' friend, their great repository and instructor in all things—when he wrote his great plays, the English critic and the French critic looked at them and said, "This is not what we have been accustomed to." To which the answer by and by was, "Granted. What then?" This picture, I grant, is unusual—unusual in subject, unusual in light and shade, unusual in colour, unusual in treatment, unusual in almost every way, and only they can find any usualness in it who know and have studied the great Pre-Raphaelite masters. There is a difference of execution, the reigning thought is different to that which is common to the newer English school. I admit it is not usual, but it does not follow that the artist may not be right. What can you know, trying to get a view in perspective in a town like this, what can you know of the light and glory of the East? What can you know, in a neighbourhood like this, of the moonshine which Joseph and Mary saw when they took the wondrous babe into Egypt? I trust you don't want our atmosphere to be universal. Therefore, although I know the effects of the light and shade in the picture are unusual, may we not admit that the picture, which has been the study of its painter for years, may perhaps, though unusual, be right?

You all know Mr Hunt—what he has done, where he painted this picture, and how long he took to paint it, and no doubt you will have been pestered by those vulgarities as to how much he got for it; for even a picture like this is judged by some by "what it will fetch." Every man has his own measure of all things; Judas Iscariot had his measure of the original head and its worth, and he took what he counted to be its value. Now, the amazing time, study, patience, conscientiousness, and faithfulness bestowed upon this picture may hint another thing to you—pictures like this are

not intended to be seen only once. The misfortune of many of us, is, that we can only see many of the great pictures of the world once. Our one visit to Antwerp to see “The taking down from the Cross” can only linger in the memory. In the old days, when men put pictures into churches—their proper place—they were intended to be seen daily, or weekly, or, as it would happen to many of you, occasionally, and to some *very* occasionally. Then, a picture was painted to be seen often; but now-a-days, people will strut into a room like this, stop one quarter of an hour in it—half of which time they prate—and then say they have seen “The Shadow of Death.” It requires hours of study before you can understand all that is put into this picture. I don’t say the artist claims it, but this picture, by its faithfulness, its conscientiousness, its originality, and the time spent upon it, claims the first rank among pictures. Therefore, it claims long study and patient endeavour to understand it. Can any man do justice to “Hamlet” who has read it but once? Is it not the glory of the student to read it again and again? for, as extremes meet, cultivated men do as the little child does who asks to hear the same song and the same story, and to look at the same picture book, again and again. The cultivated man, like the child, resents novelty, and glorifies the old and the familiar; but the man who is between childhood and true cultivated manhood is hasty, impatient, unsettled. This picture requires long, frequent, and deep study, much thought, and then we shall have our abundant reward.

I need not warn you that this is not the place for controversy, and if any theological term should slip from my tongue, you will please to remember that I am using it in the larger and broader sense. The picture is unusual. It is, in the first place, unusual in its subject. I have seen no picture before of Christ as a workman. There was a picture some years ago which provoked much controversy—“The Carpenter’s Shop.” In that picture, Christ was represented as a child, and Joseph was at work; and it was considered that this “realism” of which we hear so much was pushed too far. I remember no picture of Christ as a workman; and yet, you remember, we have warrant for it: “Is not this the carpenter?” says one Gospel; “Is not this the carpenter’s son?” says another. He who came to fulfil the Law in all things, and who went down to Nazareth and was subject to his parents, would



be sure to honour his father, and in joining him in his labour, honour labour by toiling with his own hands. But it is curious to speculate why no artist ever painted Christ as a carpenter before. You could give a reason, I suppose, many of you. To you, that representation of Christ's life is best, which explains man's troubles best. Each century takes a different view of Christ. In one century the deity of Christ engrosses all thought; in another the death on Calvary becomes the subject of controversy; another time the resurrection is that upon which the Church insists, that to which the people chiefly turn. But in our time these questions, though they remain, are not the foremost questions about the life of Christ. The doctrine of the Incarnation in a large sense, and the humanity of Christ, these are the things that interest this generation most. Witness the great books of Europe and America. This picture appeals to the human understanding, placing in a thoroughly human way before men the fact that in Christ human nature is thoroughly exemplified, its miseries thoroughly understood. Whatever incarnation may mean, this is certain, that the body of Christ was in all things subject to like passions with ourselves, sin excepted, and to like sufferings.

Why should old times have cared for Christ as worker? What did they care for a workman in the olden times? But in our century, the interest is in Christ rebuking vanity and pride. The *ouvrier* is a modern thought. In that thought, Christ is obedient and subject to his parents, is working at the lathe, wielding the homely hammer, using the saw, sweating in a narrow shop, up to his knees in shavings, and acting the downright *ouvrier* or workman. Whilst gentility and pride still haunt men, what do they care to paint Christ as a workman? as the son of a carpenter? He belongs especially to those of us whose sympathies are with the multitude, with the poor and the wretched, with those who have to live on short commons in this world, who have little of its goods except the goods which the good God gives to the multitude without favour. Therefore, I count the picture to be unique—the first attempt to represent Christ as a working man. (I am sorry to use the term, because it has been rather spoiled in our time.)

I will take, first, the imagination of the picture. To me it is a great picture; it possesses something beyond words, because it

has an existence and meaning which no language can describe. Language can do much to put the unseen before us, but this painting goes deeper, because it conveys more to the eyes, the understanding, and the senses, than even words can do. Mr Hunt took a few words of the Gospel, and thought them out, and worked them out ; and we have here before us not only the carpenter's shop, but the carpenter, the man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. The imagination of the artist has had, out of the unseen, to make the seen ; to put before your eyes things which might have happened, and in such a way that your understanding may say, “ This is probably what did happen.”

Let us look at the figure. The figure of Christ strikes you with its unusualness. The larger part of the Christs that have been painted have been to some extent Pagan. Apollo has haunted some of the great artists in painting Jesus Christ. Their object was, because he was God, or supposed to be God, to make him the summary of all beauty and of all charm. When the Greek painted his Apollo he intended him to be beautiful in body. The Gospels have nothing to do with that. Christ is there described as a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, poor, hungry, emaciated, lean, without so good a lodging as the birds of the air. This is the Christ of the Gospels. Turn here ; this is no Apollo ; or if you turn to the face you will find this profound truth, that though labour and want, hunger and thirst, may make the body spare and mar its graceful outlines, yet these things take not the divineness out of the eyes, the nobleness out of the face. Any artist will tell you that the body has never been surpassed in beauty of proportion. “ But,” you say, “ it is spare.” Certainly. You did not expect Christ to be anything but lean, did you ? Then the colouring of Christ displeases some of you. What do you want ? A white skin under an Eastern sun ? Do you suppose that the toiler under the burning suns of the Holy Land would be anything other than the colour he is in the picture ? The colouring is to the life ; it is the truth. “ But,” you say, “ I don't like it.” That proves nothing, except the whiteness of your own skin, except that unless the skin is like yours it is not true to nature. The legs are perfect, and in strict accordance with beauty of proportion. “ But they are thin.” Hard work, short commons, mental sorrow and fore-looking are not the things that make

plumpness. Lean and toil-worn, the body tells a holy tale. It is the poor man's body, the workman's limbs, the hard-working man's appearance throughout.

And yet, when the artist mounts to the eyes, the expression there teaches the great lesson, that God can look through human eyes though those eyes have been oftentimes dimmed with tears; that sorrow and suffering and poverty cannot rob the face of beauty, and that the Spirit of God was within him. I challenge any artist to find, within the whole range of painting, taking in Raphael and others of his school, any one piece of painting in this world equal in beauty, in significance, to the expression, the human and divine expression, of these eyes. If you were to apply to them the highest magnifying power you could get—I wish I had a lens big enough—if you were to apply to them this experiment, all of you might gaze into these eyes and learn with me to marvel how a human hand, by means of the pigments on a brush, could transfer to canvas the hidden life and soul of man and the Spirit of God as they are represented in this glorious picture. But we must keep to our unusualness. You say the hair is red and the eyes blue. Why not? You may say it is not what you have been accustomed to look for in a Hebrew. That only proves where you have lived; nothing else. Because the majority of Hebrews in England have black hair and dark eyes, it does not follow that the Hebrew of Poland is not blue-eyed and fair-haired. The blue-eyed Hebrew is uncommon in this country, but is common in Poland, and in some other countries. The colour of the hair and eyes are literally true, because painted from dwellers in that country. The oldest traditions about Christ give him this colour, and some of the oldest pictures give him this complexion. The meagreness of the body is an emphatic protest that he was a man hard-working, sorrowful, poor. Yet look at these eyes, and see with what rapture they look up toward God! We see here spareness, leanness, weariness of body, the arms raised in fatigue, yet above all there looks out from this picture the spirit of rapture and adoration, and we learn the great lesson—it does not need to be beautiful nor noble, nor of high birth, nor to dwell in kings' houses, nor to wear soft raiment, in order that the Spirit of God may look from a man, dwell in him, lift him up, and become a glory to all who behold it.

As to the dresses, of course these are all accurate pictures of the East as it is now, and the presumption is that it is as it used to be. Eastern countries are not like ours, given to repeated changes and constant alteration, and it may be assumed that the dresses have not changed much. When I was there, I saw men with just such dresses as this. The old East changes slowly. You may take it, then, that all these details are what can be found in the East now, and, therefore, the probability is that they may have been found at the time when Christ was on the earth.

Turn to the mother. Now, how far Christ's mother knew his coming doom is impossible to say; but that she had had forewarnings of it we know. One had told her that a sword should pierce through her own soul. And after that talk in the Temple, she laid these things up in her heart, and pondered on them. The casket, here, contains the gifts of the Wise Men of the East. We know how a mother would treasure these gifts as a compliment, a prophecy, the vague mystery of undeveloped hope. The mother has been looking into these wonders with a feminine pride. Is there a woman who has got a treasure in her house but will look at it often? How often she goes to that hidden treasure! How many times the lover looks at the lock of hair treasured for love's sake! How those that mourn for the dead look often at the cherished relics that were associated with their loved one! So the mother looks at these things with true womanly feeling, wondering when the day shall come when that grand frankincense and myrrh shall come into use. The wonderful child was to restore the kingdom. She little understands, at this time, about the “Kingdom of God” of which her son spake, and she is thinking of an earthly kingdom, and hopes that the sceptre will be restored to Israel.

Whilst looking with a fond maternal pride at these tributes, she turns round suddenly, and then the shadow, falling in what looks to be a cross, strikes her. She knows what crucifixion means. She has heard this child talk strange things—“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?” She has heard from him strange words about the “Kingdom of God,” which she could not understand. Full of thoughts of the glitter and glory of an earthly crown; in the midst of her pleasurable contemplation of the splendours of the casket before her, she

turns round, and all in a moment, with the sad presentiment common to those that feel deeply, she saw the shadow—the “shadow of death,” the shadow of the shameful death.

The artist has rather left you to think what the expression of her face might be, than made a futile attempt to realize it. Let us remember that one of the greatest artists would not trust himself to paint the face of Agamemnon. It was thought admirable to turn the face of Agamemnon away from the beholder. What a lesson to everybody. You mistake if you think that if I don't see your face I don't know what you are and what you are thinking about. Your back is an illustration; your shoulders tell tales. So, by foolish art, you may try to look thirty, but you fail. I could tell your age, to five years, by your back. Every part of the human body, every attitude, is an eternal indication of character; it shows itself everywhere, and in unexpected places, and ways. So in this figure of the mother of Christ. Her face is turned away from us; we see not its expression, but the soul knows it. To those who understand what looks out of every inch of this female form, it is not necessary to see the face; the back is a revelation, and the shoulders tell tales. The artist did not need to paint her face, for the mind can imagine what it would be; and if I were an artist I should not attempt to paint it, for I might have failure.

Then look at her foot. That foot alone is worth a long journey to see. Some of you may say it is not shapely. It is the shape of a human foot unfettered by fashion and glorified by labour. It is the ankle of an honest woman, who has worked hard, and toiled hard; who has wept much, and known piercing grief. It is painted with a power never surpassed. “But the sole of the foot is dusty; it is frivolous to paint it so.” No. I have seen so many pictures of the Virgin Mary, the fourth person of the Trinity, the mother of God; I have seen so many pictures of Assumptions and of the Glorified Mary, that it is a comfort to see a humble hand-maiden grown into a homely matron, and to see the dust of the carpenter's shop on the sole of the foot. She has known what work is, and her feet have trodden, as poor people's feet have to tread, in the dust of labour. I have seen so many fine ladies, that it is a mercy to see a woman. Christ's mother was a woman. Her hands also tell of labour and of toil. The whole

of this figure is a marvel ; though there is nothing to be seen of the countenance, yet the whole tale is told.

Then, as to the shadow. And here let me put in a plea for this representation of the light of the East. I have had the privilege, which I greatly value, of being in Egypt at the sunset of a sunny day, and I can say that the light of this picture is no exaggeration ; if anything, it is under the mark, and the light and the shadow are true. Those of you who remember that great painting “ *The Scapegoat,* ” will call to mind how it glowed in glory. The glorious light of this picture is true to nature. “ *But,* ” some of you say, “ *I never saw anything of that sort.* ” No ; but some of us have. Speaking of the shadow, let us say nothing about its glorious imaginativeness, but look at its glorious accuracy. Let us say nothing of its holy symbolism, but consider its marvellous originality. In the painting of some of the old masters, there is not a single coloured shadow. It is only within the last few years that English artists have learnt to understand shadow. It is only within the last thirty years that artists have understood that a coloured fabric does not lose its colour by being thrown into shadow, that the colour only becomes deeper with a lesser light upon it. If the Pre-Raphaelites had taught modern artists nothing but this, they would have done a great work. Keep your eyes open, and you will see that shadow or comparative absence of light does not destroy the colour or texture upon which the shadow falls. The shadow falling upon a wall does not make the wall black, but the patterns of the paper are all left under the shadow perfect. The shadow of this picture is a real shadow ; there never was a better shadow painted in the world than this, where the lines and light of the shadow have been so correctly studied and so faithfully rendered. I challenge anyone to show me where the laws of shadow are more accurately observed. The shadow upon the bench, the shadow upon the wall, are simply perfect.

I believe there is no better service one can do, than to remove a certain difficulty you may feel in honestly admiring the picture. With the larger part of the artists of the world, the theory they act upon is this—that objects, according to their importance in a picture, should be more or less carefully painted ; that is, to use the jargon of art, the lesser things should be compromised, and

anything not important should be sketched, indicated, slovened, instead of being carefully, minutely, and accurately rendered. Therefore, with a great many artists, the main subject might be as carefully painted as this, but the shavings would be “indicated.” “The great fault of this picture,” I have heard people say, “is the quantity of shavings.” “Oh,” they say, “what a quantity of shavings! Why take such pains about trifles? Why spend such faithful labour upon unessential, unimportant parts?”

This divides the two schools of painting. One says, “Whatever is worth doing, do it with all thy might.” Having used their imaginations on a subject, on the rendering of spiritual things intended to set forth particular subjects, they take every detail with accuracy and faithfulness, leaving nature to see that they do not intrude improperly upon the attention. Some of you may offer objections, and say that your eyes are attracted from the principal subject of the picture by the minute care bestowed on the details. Did you go to the shavings first? Possibly; but then that is the result of your having been schooled by the print-sellers. I hope there are none present who would go to the shavings first, and say, “How beautiful the shavings are!” An artist would not come to you and say, “Now, sir, would you just sit still; I am going to paint your studs.” No; but yet these little details are accurately rendered. If you go to the studs before your eyes can rise to the face, that is your fault.

The school of opposition to this class of painting says that minor objects are not observed in the presence of anything solemn and passionate, and therefore, in painting, the care bestowed upon an object should be in proportion to its importance to the solemnity or spiritual character of the picture, and that those things which are unimportant, symbolical merely, these need not be painted with great care, but slurred and blurred and slovened.

Now, I justify this picture and others of its class upon the grounds stated. To an observant man, all things are of importance. Nothing is lost upon him. The poor peasant, born in the midst of the most beautiful scenery, knows nothing of its loveliness and glory; but the cultured eye looks up in adoration, nothing escapes its attention. It is a mistake to suppose that deep thought makes a man negligent and unobservant. I wonder if any of you ever knew what love at first sight is. Were you so

taken up with the new-born passion within you, that you had really no time to observe things? No ; anyone heartily in love will note everything, every curl of his darling's hair, every jewel she wears, every fold of her dress, everything, from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot. The more deeply passionate I am, the more deeply are all these things impressed upon my mind. There is a passage in "*Romeo and Juliet*" where Romeo gives a wonderful description of an apothecary's shop. When that passage was read by the French critics, they lifted up the hands of unusualness, and asked, "Is it likely that a man in Romeo's plight would notice all these things?" Grant that when Romeo looked into that shop he was an idler ; but when he gave his account of it his whole soul was in agony, and in that agony every little detail came back to him. When *Hotspur* was leaning upon his sword, stiff, wounded, bloody, breathless, weary, did he take no notice of the fight? He took notice of everything, and such notice that he was enabled to record them afterwards with accurateness and minuteness. Shakespeare is generally right. Some of you may say that when you are very greatly taken up with anything, you do not observe little things. That may be true of you, perhaps, but it is not true of Shakespeare, Holman Hunt, and many other persons. The deeper and stronger the passion, the more regard there is to detail, and the more accurate is the observation.

Therefore I argue that such pictures as this are justified by Nature. This picture I count to be altogether right. In this picture we have imagination at its height, and even some of its vagaries : we have symbolism almost carried to excess ; but those who do not see it will not be much damaged by it. This symbolism is carried out here to such a length as to be most impressive to an imaginative nature. It teaches such a man that there is no visible thing but once was invisible ; that every stone, and every living thing was once a thought in the mind of God before it became a visible thing in the mind of man. To him, symbolism can scarcely go too far, and every detail comes under his observation. In the picture before us, you see this symbolism carried out in the minutest details. You see it in the tools. Here, where the shadow falls, is the hammer that will one day be wanted on Calvary, and there are the nails that will one day pierce those



sad hands and feet. Here is the reed indicated in the prophecy, and there are the shavings beneath his feet, which have been made to look as much like the serpent as can be. If you never saw all these things in the picture before, don't be afraid, it won't hurt you. These at best are only the playfulnesses of the imagination; they are the fringes, as it were, of the work, and are perfectly lawful to the eye of the artist or the poet. It is important to know, too, that the saw here represented is an Eastern saw as a matter of accuracy; for the true law of painting a good picture is, that whatever is to be painted ought to be painted as it looks, on the basis of minuteness of detail.

You may say that the picture looks crowded. But it tells its story, notwithstanding. Poor men's houses are apt to be crowded. You don't suppose that Christ carried on his carpentering in a marble hall, do you? But what a small shop! you say, and what a quantity of shavings! Diligent carpenters make many shavings now-a-days. I have heard it said by a little man that there is no room between the figure and the wall; but if you measure it you will find eight feet. Eight feet was enough for the man of sorrows, acquainted with narrowness, straightness, pinchedness, and grief.

“Well, but the shavings!” There, there; let them alone. You say, “The surroundings and the shavings are too well done; my eye is drawn to the shavings.” Yes, yes; but look at this picture once a week. When I came to see you, of course it was your face that was the chief thing I regarded; but I saw the floor, and the carpet, where everybody sat, who touched the other and who did not, and all the while I could go on talking to you. “I don't understand it,” you say. No more do I, only I know it is so. And I do know that there is no height of passion that blinds a man to everything surrounding the one object he is wrapped up in. How, then, *can* these surroundings be too well painted? Are you unobservant, unable to take in more than a little point at a time? This painting is intended to last as long as man shall last; it is to be looked at often, and then all these details will take their proper place. Would it have pleased you to have had an isolated figure? Could you have gazed at the carpenter, unsurrounded by the shavings, by the mother with her glorious treasure, and all the sweet details of the scene?

Mark how faithfully every part is done, and ponder over the

wonderful story that is here depicted. Look at the cupboard at the edge of the picture. How beautifully simple ! It would not cost much, that poor carpenter's cupboard. Then let your eye run from the cupboard to the casket. Ah ! there's a marvel and a mystery. Here are frankincense and myrrh, and the glorious gifts of kings ; and over against them are two pomegranates painted with lovely accuracy. This scroll shows that the carpenter was one who loved the law, and studied it. All these things contrasted show the Master. No wonder that men have delighted to lift him up into heaven, to make him God of gods, very God of very God. Whatever school of theology you may belong to, there is nothing to find fault with in this picture. If you fear for the divineness of Christ, go to those eyes, and behold that face, and then you will understand that those eyes might lead those lips to say, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him."

I do not know that anything more need be said. I do not wish you to accept what I say without discussion ; but I want to challenge that hastily-formed conclusion about the unusualness of the picture which many have expressed. The great law of art is, that whatsoever fact is to be represented, shall be represented with accuracy, faithfulness, painstaking, and care. The artist, having satisfied himself about the mysticism to be represented in this picture, set himself to render the probable facts with the most careful accuracy. Then, the beard. You say the beard is too well done. But, because it is the holiest man's beard, it is not less a man's beard, and does not absolve the artist from rendering every hair accurately. A painter, when he has God's work before him, has no business to have any theories ; he must use his hand with set faithfulness to render precisely what the Almighty has put before him. I call this a devout picture, a pious picture, a religious picture ; every stroke of it is a stroke of worship. Do you say the greatest pains have been taken with the shavings ? Look again at those eyes. I love the picture myself because I find in it the height of imagination, the depth of symbolism, the glorious playfulness of mysticism, the boldest execution, the most faithful carrying out of details, the most patient painstaking. I know this picture is intended to be one of the great pictures of the world, because into it a man has poured life, conscience, faithfulness, and labour for many years.

## THE "IDYLLS OF THE KING."

ALMOST all great writers may be divided into two great classes—those that leap into fame at once, whose first book is their best, whose first air is their only air, and all whose subsequent writings are variations more or less excellent upon the old and original theme ; others that climb slowly to fame, whose early works give promise of after excellence. Tennyson's genius is slow to exhibit its fulness. Tennyson climbs slowly to fame, and it is easy to trace the progressive labour, the constantly accumulating success, and the constantly diminishing faults of all that he has written. Some of his earlier poems were feeble, the elaboration was over-done, and the meaning obscure. But he has since learned to clothe lofty thoughts in simple words. He owes more than any other poet does to his predecessors. He has in his works little that is new, but he has almost all the glories of his predecessors. He has all the splendour and purity of Shelley, the mellow notes of Keats, the severe simplicity of Wordsworth, the divine abundance of Milton, and the rich tenderness of Spenser ; but these qualities are so absorbed in Tennyson himself, and so assimilated by him, that they do not belong exclusively to Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Milton, or Spenser, but become entirely Tennysonian.

He is far happier in his forte and fortune than some of the poets with whom we might compare him. An early death took off Keats and Shelley, before their skill was matured ; but our only wonder with Keats is, that, dying so early, he did so much ; and with Shelley that, living so little, he lived so long. Tennyson has all that life can bring, and has lived to a time when his thoughts have become rich, brown, mellow. It is a very glorious thing to lay wreaths upon a man's tomb, but it is better to lay crowns upon a man's head ; therefore it is that we are glad that our great poet has lived long enough to be praised by all, even by the dunces

that have not understanding, or the lazy that have not patience to make out the meaning of his earlier works. I confess that some of the earlier poems are disfigured by obscurity of expression. This is always a fault. Anything worth saying can be said plainly ; and there is no greater error in poesy than obscurity of expression. There was a great German who once said there was only one man who could understand him, and he *didn't* understand him. Almost everybody complains that they cannot enjoy Tennyson's earlier poems. People honestly say they do not understand him. That is partly their fault, and partly Tennyson's. As has already been observed, in some of the early poems there is too much elaboration. The labour is not worked off enough ; there is an artificial quaintness which rings of rhetoric rather than of inspiration. The mosaic can be seen, and one seems to see the man doing it. An old and beautiful thought, or a verse written long ago, is embroidered into the new work. As one critic says of him—he at first forms his circles laboriously, by dots, and not with the bold stroke of an artist. Another says, his work is like Jacob's ladder, but you can see the rounds. This may have arisen from a fine fastidiousness, or from an immaturity of genius. But the longer you read this glorious poet, and the more you climb with him, the fewer prettinesses, the fewer insertions, the fewer betrayals of his subject to run after an epithet or a prettiness, are to be found. One of the greatest maxims lays down the rule, “Use lofty thoughts in lowly words.”

It was, perhaps, better to live in the old time than in the present. Who can now feel a new affection, or suffer a new emotion ? What lover can strike off anything from the chords of love that have not been struck off before ? The men of science are the only men to be envied now. So with Tennyson ; he has little that is new, but he has all the splendours of his predecessors. In his earlier pieces, a critic is able to detect the process of formation ; he sees the process of annealing ; but the longer we read his poems, the less noticeable are these blemishes ; and when we come to the “*Idylls of the King,*” we shall not find a fault.

An idyll is the most favourite form of English national poetry. Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Cowper, Wordsworth, are intensely idyllic. An idyll is properly a little picture-poem, Nature in the

back-ground, and in the fore-ground men and women of primitive manners and simple nobleness. Every Englishman looks forward to the time when he can have his little farm, or retire to the country, and so end his days in quiet and peace. Birmingham, however, has no such redeeming features as some other towns. Cork is one of the fairest cities I have seen—every street ends in a river, or a ship, or a tree, or a grassy slope, or a hill, or blue sky, birds’-nests and glory. That is an idyll—a fair town backed up by fair country; and the English are like it. At the end of their hard life they want to see gardens and peace. The people in idylls are often shepherds and shepherdesses, and some think the term idyll is misapplied when Kings, princes, princesses, and heroes are the subjects. But I think the subject may be Kings and Queens, or shepherds and shepherdesses. You may see the heir of all the Russias die, and a princess implanting upon his forehead the last kiss of love, and a wise man sees endless beauty in the scene. Nothing can be more touching than to see that fair girl give that kiss which she had hoped she might often have given in life, and who could only hope now that God would let her repeat it in that better land, where love is as a sweet measure played by him whose life is love, whose law is love, whose soul is love.

The “*Idylls of the King*” have this merit; if they belong to imaginary persons, they relate to persons who were imagined under the creed we all possess. Do we really enjoy the old Pagan gods? I suffered under them when I was young, and I think it is time they had their characteristics properly understood. What business has Jupiter coming here and loving earthly women, and then escaping from responsibility? The men and women in the “*Idylls of the King*” were real men and women who lived on the earth. I think “*Enoch Arden*” is greater even than the “*Idylls of the King*,” because it is a far greater work to put poetry into the street than into running brooks. He must be a dull blockhead who can see no beauty in Nature; but he is an acute, wise, far-seeing man, who can see it in life. It is easy to see poetry in King Arthur’s life, but to see it in the life of a tarry sailor requires keener vision. Sir Launcelot moves in poetry; the Round Table has its being in romance; but to take a sailor and his wife, and put *her* into a little shop to sell her rings and

small chandleries, and to take *him* off to sea and bring him back again, and "up and down through a common little sea-town, and to make all this in the highest degree poetic—to do this requires a master. If there is a man who can read "Enoch Arden" dry-eyed, those who know him had better not know him, and those who love him had better commit suicide at once; for who can read that dry-eyed is fit for murder and all iniquity.

Why did Tennyson choose the "Idylls of the King"? Probably from that deep-seated feeling which makes men take refuge in a far-off time, a far-off place, and far-off people from the vulgarity and meanness and common-place of the hour in which they themselves live; for there is no denying that every hour whilst present is a vulgar hour. There is no knowing what I or anyone else may be by and by. Perhaps picked up like flies, and set in amber. The amber is wanting now, but the fly, with its buzz and its sting, is constantly near. The present hour always has its environment of vulgarity. If *Demosthenes* is speaking, the gas will go out, or there will not be enough of it, or some ridiculous person will come in with his boots creaking. What chance would Demosthenes have against a fool with creaking boots? What chance would Cicero have against a gabbling woman that cannot sit two minutes without her tittle-tattle? What opportunity would the greatest hero have against gigglers, she-dribblers, and he-fools? The best friend I have, nothing can make his boots noiseless, and the best man I know coughs like the trump of doom. There is always something mean and vulgar about him. All this is a necessity. You may carry your head very near God, but you may be sure your feet are in the mud along with other people's. But in thinking of old times, the meanness and vulgarity are all gone. Time and the grave take the coarse and the common sooner than the noble. The bones do not go first, but the flesh—the carnalities. When King Arthur's grave was opened in Glastonbury, the glorious bones were there, and the crown, and, as Tennyson says, the crown rolled off and ran on its rim.

Some people do not believe that King Arthur ever lived. But there is no shadow in the world without a substance. No man ever lived in a nation's notions but lived in a nation's life. It is only the overstrained criticism of to-day that reduces the great

names of antiquity to mythicalness. There are over six hundred places in England named after Arthur. When I see “Jones’s Place,” that is to me sufficient warrant for believing in Jones; and when I see “Smith’s Buildings,” I know that there was a Smith, and, more than that, I know that Smith built, and that when Smith built, Smith was satisfied with “Smith,” and knew no better name than Smith to give to his buildings. Are there, then, six hundred places called after Arthur, and no Arthur? Be you sure he lived, loved his God, loved his wife, fought, and died, or else six hundred places would never have been named after him. His history is given in “*La Morte d’ Arthur*,” collected by Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, in the time of Edward the Fourth, and printed by William Caxton.\* There is not much better reading than that book, and whoso reads the preface to it reads the soul of Tennyson when he wrote the “*Idylls of the King.*”

As I said before, these *Idylls* have at least this merit: if they relate to imaginary persons, they relate to persons imagined in the creed we profess. I am tired of Jupiter and Apollo, and am sick of Venus and Minerva. I suffered under the old Pagan gods when young, and I have borne a grudge against them ever since. The majority of them were sneaks and vagabonds. When they had used up Olympus, they came down here to enjoy earthly delights, and sneaked away from the responsibilities. What business had they with earthly loves? But King Arthur, and Sir Lancelot, and the Sir Tristrams—these men at least profess the Christian faith. When I read them I am not plagued with mythology, but hear the name of Christ and Our Lady. I know where I am; I understand the appeal; I know the inspiration; I can throb with their joy and mourn with their tears; they are nearer, dearer, more picturesque, more refined, and more true. I would rather have a romance of King Arthur than the

\* The first edition was printed by Caxton at Westminster in 1485. Among modern editions may be mentioned one published by Messrs Longmans & Co. in 1817, in two vols. quarto, with an Introduction and Notes by Southey. *La Mort d’ Arthur*, Compiled by Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, reprinted from an edition of 1634, with Introduction and Notes. By Thomas Wright, F.S.A., F.R.S.L. 3 vols. London, John Russell Smith, Soho Square, 1858. Lastly, the Globe edition, which is the original edition of Caxton revised for modern use; with an Introduction by Sir Edward Strachey, Bart. Macmillan & Co., 1884.

most precious book of antiquity. The same feeling probably led Tennyson to King Arthur. He knew the society of the present time, and, like almost everybody else, must have been disgusted with it. He knew well that "fame is half dis-fame;" that if a man's head be carried high, it must be carried in "a cloud of poisonous flies;" he knew the Englishman of to-day, and called him an "oiled and curled Assyrian bull;" he looked at the fashionable manners, and said "stony British stare," and "slew with noble birth." He knew the vulgarity of wealth, the offensive obtrusiveness of the poor, the indifference of the well-born, the sneakishness of the low-born, and chilled, indignant, repelled, he fled from the vulgarity and impurity and corruption of modern times, to the nobler times of old.

And yet it must not be supposed that he has no sympathy with modern times. A worshipper of Kings and Princes? Not at all. One sentence of his is sufficient to show that he is far beyond the miserable superstition of a drivelling loyalty. "He knew her proud to bear her name;" but her pride was no match for his—"too proud to care from whence he came."

He says :—

"The gardener Adam and his wife  
Smile at the claims of long descent."

And he writes :—

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood."

So, prepared on the one side to reverence antiquity, and on the other to sympathise with modern times, he writes these wonderful poems. Where to begin to praise them or to illustrate them is the difficulty. Altogether the book is a wondrous romance; it is a romantic history rather than an historical romance.

One of the greatest glories of the book is the female characteristics. What a wonderful gallery of women it contains—second only to the women of Shakespeare! What wonderful types are Enid, Vivien, and Guinevere! Many cry out against Vivien, saying it is a pity Tennyson put her in. But do we want a poet



to sing the Round Table, and forget that there never yet was a table round that could keep out traitors? Many object to Vivien. Do you suppose a poet has anything to do with prigs and purists? If Judas Iscariot is painted in the Gospel, may not a poet paint Vivien, and sing of Merlin, who was befooled by her? Vivien is one of the finest drawn characters in the world. I admire the skill of the artist that painted her—light, sly, wily, selfish, scandalous, shallow, with no resource but old Merlin, and fooling him. She is a she-devil. The fates of Merlin and of Samson teach the same lesson—that unless a man can despise pleasure, all other despising is vain. Who was Merlin? His name stands for all that England knows of law, of science, of thought, learning, wisdom and skill; but he fell like Samson, and in the same way. The story of what befell him is to teach us that there is no wisdom can save a man from being befooled. Vivien has her representative in modern times in “Becky Sharp” in “VANITY FAIR.” It would be well to read a passage from Vivien, purposely, as many of you will not like it, and there is no greater pleasure than to shock the ridiculously priggish, or put out of countenance the absurdly prudent.

“ There lay she all her length and kiss'd his feet,  
 As if in deepest reverence and in love.  
 A twist of gold was round her hair; a robe  
 Of samite without price, that more express  
 Than hid her, clung about her lissome limbs,  
 In colour like the satin-shining palm  
 On sallows in the windy gleams of March:  
 And while she kiss'd them, crying ‘Trample me,  
 Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the world,  
 And I will pay you worship; tread me down  
 And I will kiss you for it;’ he was mute:  
 So dark a forethought roll'd about his brain,  
 As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
 The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall  
 In silence: wherefore, when she lifted up  
 A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,  
 ‘O Merlin, do ye love me?’ and again,  
 ‘O Merlin, do ye love me?’ and once more,  
 ‘Great Master, do ye love me?’ he was mute.  
 And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,

Writhed toward him, slid up his knee and sat,  
 Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet  
 Together, curved an arm about his neck,  
 Clung like a snake ; and letting her left hand  
 Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,  
 Made with her right a comb of pearl to part  
 The lists of such a beard as youth gone out  
 Had left in ashes : then he spoke and said,  
 Not looking at her, ' Who are wise in love  
 Love most, say least,' and Vivien answer'd quick,  
 ' I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
 In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot :  
 But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid child !  
 Yet you are wise who say it ; let me think  
 Silence is wisdom : I am silent then,  
 And ask no kiss ;' then adding all at once,  
 ' And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,' drew  
 The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard  
 Across her neck and bosom to her knee,  
 And call'd herself a gilded summer fly  
 Caught in a great old tyrant spider's web,  
 Who meant to eat her up in that wild wood  
 Without one word. So Vivien call'd herself,  
 But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
 Veil'd in gray vapour ; till he sadly smiled :  
 ' To what request for what strange boon,' he said,  
 ' Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,  
 O Vivien, the preamble ? yet my thanks,  
 For these have broken up my melancholy.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily,  
 ' What, O my Master, have ye found your voice ?  
 I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at last !  
 But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
 Except indeed to drink : no cup had we :  
 In mine own lady palms I cull'd the spring  
 That gather'd trickling dropwise from the cleft,  
 And made a pretty cup of both my hands  
 And offer'd you it kneeling : then you drank  
 And knew no more, nor gave me one poor word ;  
 O no more thanks than might a goat have given  
 With no more sign of reverence than a beard.  
 And when we halted at that other well,  
 And I was faint to swooning, and you lay

Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of those  
Deep meadows we had traversed, did you know  
That Vivien bathed your feet before her own?  
And yet no thanks: and all thro' this wild wood  
And all this morning when I fondled you:  
Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not so strange—  
How had I wrong'd you? Surely ye are wise,  
But such a silence is more wise than kind."

At length Merlin bows his reverent head, entrapped by that vilest wretch that ever talked the language of love out of a hollow heart, or passed the sweet words of purity through lips that had long known nothing but the kisses of impureness.

"Vivien" contains a fine picture of how the occurrences of life are read by back-biters, scandal-mongers, gossips, and tattlers, and how by large-hearted, generous men. Enid is too sweet for most folks to love, too lowly for any but the lowly to admire. She is the type of all that a faithful, tender, loving woman should be. In "Elaine," the world is the better for having one more picture of a true and loving woman's heart. A more beautiful character than Elaine was never drawn, even by Spenser. And then there is the Queen—a queen every inch of her, every inch a sinful woman. The love of the Queen for Lancelot, the consequences of that love, and the character of the King in dealing with his unfaithful partner, are well portrayed. Guinevere is unable to clasp her feelings to her duty. That is the tragedy of all our lives. If we could make our feelings climb, like sweet tendrils, round our duty, and shed no leaf, no bloom, but what grew on that holy stem, there would be little need to pray for a holier state. Lancelot is a perfect, stalwart, genial gentleman, the model of a true knight, but guilty, and therefore stained. How well Tennyson puts it:

"The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,  
In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time."

Did ever man that had missed being great because he would not be good, set it forth in sweeter words than these?—

"In me there dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
Of greatness to know well I am not great."

Arthur is the finest figure in English poetry. The people about him never understood him ; the Queen never did. She said the man she loved must have a touch of earth about him ; it was the low sun that made the colour, she said, and she wanted a low sun in the west, just ready to kiss the earth. She could not gaze upon the sun in heaven. Arthur's "white blamelessness, from very whiteness unintelligible, was accounted blame."

## ENOCH ARDEN.

I PROPOSE rather to read the poem of *Enoch Arden* than to give a long discourse upon it. Some introductory remarks may, however, be necessary to help you to see the full beauty of this—the best, completest, noblest work of by far the greatest living poet, a poet who has had the advantage over two other great English poets which long life and much culture have given him—opportunities which poor Keats's death at twenty-four and Shelley's death at thirty denied them. These are the two poets with whom we should ally Tennyson. Whether he is greater than these it is not worth while examining. In the fantastic region of romance, we sometimes read of a love philtre and other pretty conceits, something embracing in a very little compass that which, if let loose, has a wonderful power to stir the heart and move the passions. Such is the poem of *Enoch Arden*. Well understood, it will always have power to stir the heart and move the passions, in spite of the hardness, and worldliness, and conventionalism which daily life is sure to bring upon all of us.

In a former poem, Mr Tennyson brought out the idea in an Idyll. An Idyll, properly speaking, as to its essence, is a background of natural scenery, with a fore-ground of men and women, primitive, simple and noble in manners. Now, the Englishman's ideal is almost always an idyll of commerce, politics, and professions. They are like so many great streets in a well-placed city. At the end of them they want a green field, a tree, a lake, or a seashore. Almost every Englishman, however deep his heart may be in trade, commerce, politics, or ambition, dreams that the day will come when he shall work out his own little idyll—some lovely little estate, some sweet lawn, some little lake to which he may remove from the fore-ground. That is what almost all of us have in our own hearts—to retire from the life we know to live in the life we dream of. This is the ideal idyll of almost every true-hearted Englishman. Yet we have reduced the conventionalism

of life perhaps to its perfection. English life is one of the hardest, dullest, driest, most conventional that can be found. The majority of Englishmen are eaten up with form, pestered with little rules, and live, move, and have their being in a very atmosphere of punctilios. Yet this nation, more hard in its conventionalism than any other, is at the bottom the most ideal and poetical of all others. There have been people in history who have not cared for Nature ; but there is scarcely an Englishman who does not adore her from the bottom of his heart.

In this respect, and in every respect, Tennyson is the most English of our poets. The story of the Miller's Daughter is a perfectly admirable idyll. The "Idylls of the King," till this new book came, was probably Tennyson's greatest achievement ; but I put the new book far above it, for this simple reason, that in it I can see the life, glory, beauty, nobleness, and chivalry of the human heart in a common sailor. A miller, and a miller's wife have grown to a height and a depth of humanity far above the thought of him who, in order to see these qualities, has to see a crest, a helmet, a spur, and a coat of arms. It is the early stage of men and women when, to get a dream of nobleness, they are obliged to go to yesterday for it. It is a stage most of us pass through. It is a natural one. There is no man who does not once in his life long to get away from the common-place of life to see a beautiful life-dream. The common way to do, however, is to go to King Arthur, the middle ages, the monks, the nuns. Well, the middle ages were picturesque and antique. History has taken the dirt and dust off them. But we must be fair to this generation. This generation is as picturesque as any that ever lived ; but it requires a very wise man to see it.

Let us notice these two little things. It is a natural escape for a man, wearied and worried by the meannesses and pettinesses of the hour in which he lives, to take refuge in yesterday, to believe that old times were more noble than his own, that old forms of life were necessarily more admirable. Partly, perhaps, they were so ; but we must remember that time and distance take away the disagreeable details. The best man we know has got something ridiculous about him ; the noblest person has got one bad habit. It is only when men are dead that the pettinesses and common-places die out of our remembrance, and the true heart, loving

spirit, and noble life come to light. Death takes the foolishest things from a man's memory first, and leaves the noblest last. So it is in history. If I go to see some great procession—to see the Londoners welcome Garibaldi—I have to mix in the crowd with some very questionable people, whose recent libations I can detect from their breath, who tread on my feet, pester me with bad grammar, and spoil the hero of the day with their horrible mispronunciation of his name, until at last all the heroism of the occasion is trodden out with the pettiness of the hour. I forget that the day will come when that very act, in which, as the French say, I “assisted,” will be enshrined in history as one of the great heroisms of this age, one of the noblest outbursts of our nature. But, in the middle ages, I want to see a hero entering Paris, or riding through London, and to catch the pageantry and glory of the romance without the mob, and its dirt, and its meanesses, and its vulgarities. So it is in old times and scenes; the noble portion lives when the evil is long dead. It is an easy thing to find old times romantic. None of us need at all flatter ourselves if we are able to do so. But some cannot see the qualities of romance in the forms of modern life.

I account it a far higher achievement to show this generation the deep things of the human soul in the dress of this generation, than to show the great things of humanity under the dress of knights, monks, and nuns. The one is an easy task, the other a very difficult one. Therefore, I deliberately prefer those poems which treat of modern times, as Hood's “*Song of the Shirt.*” I account “*Enoch Arden*” a far greater poem than the “*Idylls of the King.*” These were grand beyond all description, but this is nobler, because it finds the qualities of King Arthur in the rough and humble garb of the sailor, the miller, and the sailor's wife. I am of course perfectly aware that many will not agree with me, because it always jars at first when you hear very elevated thought from seemingly low people. Few can escape associating the hero with perfect features; they dress them up and make them oval face, perfect eyes, Hyperion-like nose, &c. Whereas, those who know life know that crooked forms often contain most upright souls—eyes not altogether straight have looked most directly into the face of God. A lowly life in exterior manners often covers the most upright and spiritual mind.

This is illustrated by many incidents in the life of our Saviour. Those poems rise highest in Christian nobleness that make us realize the possibilities of greatness of spirit under the poorest and most common-place conditions of life. This takes a long time to learn. It is the last stage to which a wise man probably comes. It is the most difficult thing I know. I have only half learnt the lesson.

“Enoch Arden” I consider the noblest and best production that Tennyson, that mighty master, has written. I find in it almost every quality of that poet—true sympathy and all the rest. There is not a fine word in it. The conceits and affectations, and ringlet-within-ringlet of the earlier poems of Tennyson, are all gone. Some of his poems are too elaborate. Most people require to read them several times to understand what the poet means, and then they are not certain ; but in “Enoch Arden” is brought to perfect clearness the last lesson of the true-hearted. I have looked through it many times, and there is not a word in it that I cannot understand. It is the perfection of even narrative—neither break, nor flaw, nor pause—but calmly and quietly on goes the flow of verses—fit things in few words, and these words most apt. You may think it is easy to write simple verse like this. I have heard people say, “Anybody can write like that.” I should like you to try it. Write one letter, so brief, so full, and so remarkably beautiful. It is the last triumph of art to be perfectly simple and natural.

Of course, the subject-matter of the poem may not be pleasant. It is not pleasant ; it is a painful, altogether painful poem. With regard to the ethics it is a case of casuistry. It is one of those special cases of conduct to which no general law can apply, which will have to be dealt with each by itself, on general principles, but those general principles regulated by the peculiar circumstances of the case. Of course, it is a case that does not happen often ; it is one by itself. It is a case of casuistry which leads to much debate, and on which scarcely two people will come to the same conclusion. People grow almost angry in their differences about it. One says the man ought to have died without telling his story, and cries out against the wretched egotism of his having disclosed the truth. The poor dolt who writes that criticism is unable to see the great glory of the poem—that to give the woman of his



love perfect peace in her new love, it was necessary to let her know of his death. "Why didn't he go back to his pothouse, and keep his secret untold?" The man who writes that had better go to the pothouse himself; he is entirely unable to enter into the noble sentiment of the act. I admit it is a subject of debate. The conduct may be questionable, but the great beauty of the poem is this: here is a sailor, and a little dull town, and a miller, and a miller's wife; and in that poor sailor's heart there beats the whole depth of passionate human love. Everything self-denial can do is done. The sorest stress ever laid on human heart is laid on his. The circumstances are almost too terrible to contemplate. God grant that you and I may never come anything near such a crisis of the soul.

These are the great reasons why this is a noble poem;—perfect as a work of art, pure in its language, simple in its narrative, deep in its passion, and, above all, showing the depths of the human soul in the simplest forms of modern life. (Mr Dawson then read the whole of the poem). I do not propose to add any comment. There are some present, who I think may like to know that they can read the same story, told with a very different power, and ending very differently, in "Legends and Lyrics," a book of verses by Miss Adelaide A. Proctor. She did her best with the story, but little thought it would be taken by the master-hand of Tennyson. In "Enoch Arden" we have an heroic soul in a simple dress, and a tale of love stronger than death, told in matchless language. It is an idyll of the noblest heroism, told of simplest people in simple circumstances, and in daily life.

## THE RELATIONS OF POETS, PAINTERS, AND MUSICIANS.

I WISH you this evening to look upon Art in its very highest acceptance and meaning. I will ask the picture-dealers to go to the door ; and if a large part of the art-critics would go to the door also, and carry their slang with them, it would be a mercy. Never give too much heed to art-critics ; for the constant use they make of certain terms shows how very little comes out of either understanding or art. I have no quarrel with showman critics, picture-dealers, tea-tray painters, bread artists, pot-painters, and others. Such people must exist—they are necessary—but I am not addressing them this evening.

I will ask you, at the outset, to admit a few propositions :— That the highest beauty must live in God alone ; that God is the great artist, the great geometer, the great architect of the universe, the foundation of all thought, the beginning of all art, the designer of all beauty. Beauty is the dialogue God carries on incessantly with the soul of man, and his object is to incite, to urge, to call upon, to entreat man to realise his highest nature, his loftiest powers, and the purity of his life. This dialogue is carried on in infinite ways. No artist, whatever his realizations may be, can be true unless he feels perpetually the one great saying, “ Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Every artist should look upon himself as being sent to supply men with that bread by which height of intellect and breadth of spirit are maintained in man. Let him remember that God is praised by every successful effort of creative skill. The uses of art are to smooth the rough places of life. I count all true art as part of the Gospel of mercy, because it bestows on man freedom, love, and truth, and these are all tokens of the highest life of which man is capable. One of the duties of art, is to let men put off their working dress ; these pictures which surround us we may look upon as ornaments and jewels and consider that we are ornamented and bedecked therewith.

Let us, in the first place, take two or three things that the poet can do for the painter, and which it is impossible for the painter to do for himself, except he be one of the few chosen souls. There have been artists who were both poets and painters. The great office of the poet to the painter, however, is to make him look at and look into. Sense and colour and actual form are conveyed by painting. The great function of the poet, the moment he sees a thing, is to see its inner points. Words, however, will not always set forth the emotions; and then we have to call the musician in; for he, being prince of the air, and dealing in the air, is able to call forth emotions more than the poet or the painter. The musician's great gift is that he can set forth emotion, and call it better forth than either the painter or the poet. The painter has to get from the poet his observing eye quickened, and never to put an object down until he has seen what is its soul, until he reaches what is in its spirit.

Every work of poet, painter, and even sculptor and architect, is a prison in which is locked up the emotion, passion, and feeling of him who put them there. Great works of art are the vases of God, in which the good wine is imprisoned, of which we can all drink freely. Without this hidden spirit, the picture is only a carcase. Unless they put soul into their pictures, soul will never look out of them.

What pictures I behold every year! They are drawn pretty well, all proper; but when I look at them, no greeting comes to me; no soul looks out, because no soul was put in. That is what the poet does for the painter—enables him to merge the visible and invisible. Another use of the poet to the painter is that the painter gets subjects from the poet. But he who would make the poet's creation visible, must know his poet well, or his efforts are presumption and impertinence. It is "materialising the spirit" of the poet. Do you remember the bag of tools that was found when a "materialiser of spirits" let himself down by a sheet, and jumped from a window? That man had "materialised the spirit" of a dead child. But they looked at his bag, and found a doll—a base, mean doll—which the rascal had thrust upon people as a "materialised spirit." Let those painters who attempt to materialise the spirits of poets beware of offering only a doll. Of course the good painter serves the poet, because the poet's

passages are beautified by being painted. It enables the poet to appeal to the eye, as well as to the ear and soul. No artist's studio is complete without a shelf of poets.

The painter has some limitations which the poet has not. Although I would frequently rather have a replica than some originals, yet each copy of a picture, it must be remembered, is a little further from the original. With the poet, this is not the case.

As to the musician—and I will not speak of rosin-mongers, hucksters of music, and that tribe; but of great composers—the great musician comes uncommonly near to the great poet. The musician is prince of the air. The poet helps him, and the painter helps him. How many little people try to set the creations of poets to music—the writings of Shakespeare, for instance! But take the works of Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Spohr, and see how the musician unites the capabilities of the painter and the poet. The poet gives the musician subjects. It is the glorious gift of the musician to speak the unspeakable. The poet must go with the musician, and the painter should not lag behind; for these three combined make the three-fold cord which cannot be broken. All mutually help one another to the conception of their duty, the execution of their duty, and, therefore, to the reaping of their reward.

Could I but have my way, there would be a change in many things pertaining to music. I would have no vulgar encores—the greedy public putting up its greedy mug, and asking to have it filled again. That is destroying all the beauty of music. The effect is spoiled by repetition. *Encores!* The majority of the people do not know how to pronounce the word. Do you go into a shop, and buy a yard of ribbon, and cry “encore”? Try it on. The singer has done his best to give the people measure, and we should set our faces against the horror of encores. I would put an end to all that. I will conclude by again affirming that the creations of the painter, the poet, and the musician, will be of no avail unless heart and spirit and soul are put into the work, as that is the law which governs all the three.

## CHURCH DECORATION.

WITH AN EXPLANATION OF THE SYMBOLS AND FIGURES USED IN  
THE INTERIOR ADORNMENT OF THE CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR,  
BIRMINGHAM.

WHEN Christianity was first introduced into the world, the early church, meeting, through poverty and fear, in "upper chambers," owed very little to art, taught the artist very little, and received very little from him. But then when the persecuting days were over, when Christianity began to spread in other countries, and to displace their religions, it was necessarily and naturally influenced by everything which man was not bound to drop, in accordance with the spirit of the new religion. This must be mentioned, because many well-meaning people have an old dream about primitive Christianity, about some sweet Arcady, where no heresy, no schism, no quarrel, no division existed, where the Sermon on the Mount was an accepted law. But no such sweet Christian Arcady ever existed at all. Long before the Apostles had dropped the coil of mortality, division, schisms, and heretics prevailed in the early Church.

In even early days symbols were not forbidden, but were taken under the influence of Christianity, and made to become the means of representing the guiding principles to be followed out. When conversions were made, men taken from Paganism or Judaism were unwilling to drop them altogether, and the artist, now a Christian, came and naturally exercised his art upon the new story, its doctrines, and its hopes. In doing this it cannot be denied that the early Christians, often without thinking, and sometimes mal-thinking, adopted many Pagan signs, but they took care to get them baptized and turned into something Christian. There is no very great objection to this, since the great office of Christianity in this world is to take the things of this world and re-baptize them, to make them minister to God's glory and man's

earthly good. There is no greater absurdity than to denounce those who teach a new doctrine with not having everything new. The wisest innovators are always the truest conservatives; and true conservatism is that wise innovation which preserves all that deserves a wise man's attention even in introducing the new. As men got richer or became Magistrates or Emperors, there was naturally more and more work for the Artist, and more development for his calling. Men are never asked to drop the old insignia of Magistracy, except they hold the modern Quaker doctrines, believing music to be sensuous and earthly, colour to be a temptation to the flesh, and being in fact wiser than their Maker. When once the question was settled that the artist was to serve the Church, he began to follow every variation of the Church's doctrine and story; and old churches, missals, pictures, tell the tale when Arian controversies commenced, and other changes began to come into the Church.

Brought up as so many are, to believe that squareness is beauty, whitewash neatness, and ugliness primitive, admiring barn-like meeting-houses, and building churches with niggardly hand, there is nothing more shameful than to live in private houses adorned and luxurious, and to leave public buildings, ecclesiastical and secular, mean and shabby and contemptible. It is one of the bad signs of this town that the begging box must be sent round again when an old church spire is to be finished; or a new foundation stone must be laid on credit, and there is no public spirit amongst us to regard as contemptible what is still unpaid for.

A study of Christian art is necessary for every Englishman visiting continental churches, that he may have some knowledge of what he sees without depending on that of a stupid guide. Christian art would do much to instruct men in the early history of the Church, about which most people are so profoundly ignorant. How many a boy, learned about Athens, great about Rome, who could tell all Virgil's tiresome story through, and follow noble old Homer in all his tales, knows but little of Jesus Christ or his Church! The study is an admirable branch of knowledge which all ought to know, and they would then find Church History not written only in Church historians but in old church architecture, in pictures, on missals, and on stone.

I hold that a church ought to be decorated with comeliness and some little degree of splendour, but managed with such good taste and discretion as should become a house for Christian worship. The next question is as to the principle on which the decoration should be done. Many would cover the walls with an arbitrary pattern, borrowed from the best of the last new papers, or run over the place a number of unmeaning scrolls and flowers. Such a place might be adapted for a temple, but not for a Christian church. The ornaments of the place should be significant of the purposes the place is intended for—the spirit of the place should determine their shape and form. The ornaments chosen should body forth the spirit of *the Church*, and not of any particular church; and as some preserve the old chair of the father and grandfather, however inconvenient and unsuitable to modern custom, because it is old—because it has old memories around it—so in a Christian church the best ornaments are the symbols and figures of its early days.

A church like this in which we meet is bound to be catholic and comprehensive; and although some may think some of the symbols are too evangelical, there is nothing here which the New Testament does not refer to and contain. A religion without a history is only a philosophy, and a history without a religion is only a doctrine, a piece of impertinent history. Take the New Testament teachings; eliminate Christ, the man, deny that he was the Christ, and you get the mere philosophy and precepts without what is emphatically Christianity, the life of Christ himself. So again the church is not a simple body holding certain doctrines, but one great family beginning with its head Jesus Christ, and continuing in unbroken succession down to to-night; and thus in one sense there is a true “apostolical succession,” an unbroken descent from the church of the Apostles, founded by martyrs and saints. Thus in ornamenting a church the symbols selected should be those of the oldest date, and used by the largest number, not sectarian, but catholic, having an historic beauty of form and a true spiritual significance.

Another general principle is to distinguish symbols from figures. For example, a circle round the head of St Mark is used as a symbol of the holiness it bodies forth, simply because in the early Church art the aureole or nimbus was used for that purpose. A

symbol is an exterior formula representing some dogma of religion. There are three symbols of Jesus Christ,—the Cross, the Lion, and the Lamb—the “Lamb that was slain,” the “Lamb of God.” This symbol, at any rate, must be taken, as it is merely representing in form and colour the words of the New Testament itself. About the Lion there can be no dispute, as the “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” and other texts, will prove that the Bible applies the word to Christ himself. The Cross needs no remark. With figures the case is different, and there is not this authority. These we are not required to receive ; symbols we must, figures we may. The first figure to be noted is that of the Pelican, who, according to old, not very observant, naturalists, sheds the blood from her breast for the feeding of her young, and was used by the early Church to represent Christ’s shedding his blood for his people, and doubtless arose from some fiery Christian orator, such as Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed, or Tertullian of the famous Apology, who seized on the similitude as conveying to his hearers exactly what he wanted them to know and feel. Another figure is the monogram I.H.S., the letters of course being the initials of the words *Jesus Hominum Salvator*—Jesus, Saviour of Men. The figure of the lamb bearing the cross needs no explanation. The lamb with the banner symbolises the resurrection of Christ. The star explains itself to everyone, and its use need not be defended. These figures are all comparatively small, are placed on a blue ground, and are repeated round the church, the designer properly thinking that a large variety was rather evil than good, and that repetition of well-known figures was admirably suited to a Christian church.

Among the larger decorations in the panels on the walls are the Greek cross, the dove, and the “figures” of the four Evangelists. These are taken from the description in Ezekiel, and were adopted by the early artists of the Church. The peculiarity of Matthew’s Gospel being Christ’s humanity, his birth, and early history as a “man of sorrows,” an angel represents him. It was Luke’s peculiarity to set forth Christ as a priest, and as an emblem of his priesthood and victimship the lamb with the cross is adopted. To John, who uttered his great Platonisms, of “the word made flesh,” &c., is given the eagle ; to Mark, the lion, for reasons of a similar nature ; and the winged lion of St Mark was adopted by



the republic of Venice when the bones of the saint were removed to that city.

It may be objected to many of the figures that they are not well drawn; but like the signs of heraldry, they are not wanted well-drawn and anatomically correct, but just as they are, as used by the early Church, and made venerable by associations and age. For example, none would suppose that the Egyptians could not have improved their drawings if they chose, but they preferred to keep unaltered for ages the symbols of religion which their forefathers had used.

Two other figures used in the church are earlier than Christianity: they are Pagan, and you may object to them on that ground. The one is the serpent, with its tail in its mouth, symbolising eternity, and the other the inverted torch, symbolising death. These, however, may perhaps be considered as baptized by the texts beneath them, "I am the resurrection and the life," and "Death is swallowed up in victory."

The Beatitudes round the church explain themselves. They are surrounded by the ivy, the emblem of perpetual freshness, and over the one, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" is appropriately placed the symbol of the Holy Ghost "descending like a dove."

No figure of the personal God the Father is given: not that I object to a symbol of that sort, believing, as I do, God to be the Great First Man, in whose image we are made.

The roof-lights of the church have running round their margin a vine wreath, and those to whom the vine suggests only a Bacchus, should remember that "to the pure all things are pure;" that Christianity takes the common things of life, elevates, ennobles, and hallows them: that Christ himself took bread and wine, and blessed them, and taught his disciples that he was the vine, and they were the branches grafted into the great old tree, to bring forth plenteous fruit.

The decoration of the church has given general satisfaction; the most prejudiced have admitted that it is a great success; and that success has been obtained only by the designer simply studying Nature, and humbly imitating by poor human work the glories and the beauties of the world around.

## BEAUTY AND PURITY IN TOWNS.

I AM going to lecture to you to-night on The Duty of Seeking after Beauty. We will admit that we all know what beauty means ; that there is some power in man of knowing and appreciating what is beautiful, and that there are abundant objects in Nature for gratifying that knowledge and taste. We will take it for granted that there is a faculty in man of which beauty is the object ; and thus, as the power to see co-exists with things to be seen, so we find the faculty called " taste " exists for a something called " beauty " that gratifies and excites it. Beauty is a legitimate aim, like truth, and is not capable of analysis. Of course, the estimate of beauty varies very much in different people. I fancy that possibly the evening may be best spent by considering the ethics of beauty, and their relation to pleasure and goodness. I hope to show you that every man and woman is bound to be in him or herself as beautiful as possible, and to surround themselves with as many beautiful objects as they can. God has made this world beautiful, pleasure-giving, peace-creating. I also wish to connect the outward with the inward world, and to show that all outward beauty is a flower of which there is a spiritual side. This instinctive perception of beauty requires to be developed, fostered, enlarged, and gratified.

Beauty is always allied to goodness. God is a lover of beauty ; He takes pleasure in it, delights in it, smiles over it. Beauty is the dialogue that God carries on with the human soul. I will take one wonderful passage out of the New Testament, which, if men understood, they would have the law of beauty, the method of art, the objects of art, the rules of practice for the artist, the laws of faith, and the laws of works : " But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Beholding with " open face," is beholding with the culture of the artist, beholding with open eyes. We cannot see the

beauties of God but with unveiled faces, with faculties open. That next sentence, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image," reveals to us the great law of assimilation. No man can see God and live, and therefore we have, as it were, our backs to Him, and Nature has spread out a mirror, so that we may see as much as possible for us without being dimmed with glory. Let us look at the glory of the Lord long, and we shall become his image: let us behold Him in the mirror called Nature, and we shall be changed. Could there be a better image for the artist, a better explanation of the faculty, a better definition of what Nature does, and a better laying down of the law of assimilation?

It is because of this law of assimilation that wise men keep out of the company of fools, because no man can herd with fools without becoming foolish. If we surround ourselves with dirty things we by-and-bye become dirty. He who would get and keep within himself the sense of beauty must look upon things that are beautiful, in order that the law of assimilation may be carried out. A lovely mother will by degrees make a lovely child, and a hideous father will impart hideousness to his offspring. All outward beauty is good and does good, although it may not have inward beauty. Every beautiful thing is not a reminiscence of the lost Paradise, but a prophecy of good days that are to come. The pursuit of beauty becomes a duty to all. Every man is bound to surround himself and those he loves with things which tell of what man might be, and would be, if Paul's figure were carried out—by continually seeing the glory of the Lord he will be transformed into the image of the Lord, step by step.

As to the looking in a mirror, however, I have known men look at the beauties of Nature, and see no beauty in them until they saw them painted. The office of the landscape painter is to gather the scene from Nature, and put it into a mirror. Therefore it is that the artist has a great vocation—to hold up the glass to Nature until man can behold the glory, and, looking into the picture, be tempted to go back to its original, and see, perchance for the first time, how glorious it is. To a well-taught man everything is beautiful. There are no ugly things in the world but ourselves—nothing but the unruly working of carnality. The frog is not ugly, nor the worm. Blue-bottles are beautiful, and beetles

have their charm if properly looked at. The only deformity I can make out is decomposition, which means death, and afterwards ugliness. There is physical decomposition and psychical decomposition—decomposition of the body and decomposition of the soul. Then, again, we must be in the spirit of a thing before we understand it, just as a painter must understand the anatomy of the body before he can properly paint the human form.

The office of a man's house is not only to give shelter, food and meat, but also to surround his children with those fair sights and sounds by which the sense of beauty may be developed. There are houses in this town in which not a poem is read nor a song sung throughout the year, and yet people wonder why their children are vulgar. We must surround ourselves with beauty, that thereby a true sense of beauty may be cultivated.

I want you to see that the beauty of towns is one of the most neglected of duties, and one of the most deserving. If a town is beautiful, people take a pride in it, are glad to live in it, and are sorry to leave it. Take this town, for instance. I do not think there is very much to take a stranger round to see: I do not feel remarkably proud of it for its beauty. But we want to reform it. Let us see what has been done already. What a different feeling we have, now that New Street is clean, from what we had a year ago when it was deep in mire. One used to be ashamed when strangers came into it. The manufactures of the town would improve if every street were well paved and well cleaned. The workmen of the town would improve from the moment the town became more beautiful. There is now one street clean, and have we no joy in it? *I* have. I not only get joy from it, but my taste is refined. There is a duty we owe to the town, that we should seek after beauty.

What is wanted in Birmingham is a new society, which might be called the "Beauty Society." (Not that I mean that the members composing it should be called "beauties"!) This Society should be composed of educated men, artists, and all true patriots, and it should have for its object the seeking after beauty. Its first duty would be to see the law enforced against those who, from a greed of selfishness, work against beauty. Every manufacturer who pours out more black smoke from his chimneys than is allowed by law should be followed up—the fines should be

made cumulative. I should go against these smoke people, because I am convinced that the number of minutes allowed by law is quite enough, or if there is a loss let the manufacturer lose rather than that the people should perish. You may say that this would interfere with trade. *Smoke* interferes with trade. Who would come to this town for pleasure? Now and then the inspectors make a raid, but the magistrates are generally pretty merciful; perhaps because they feel they are great sinners themselves they do not like to be too heavy upon the persons summoned. Then take another thing. Look at the state of the streets on a Sunday morning. Every little shop-keeper late on a Saturday night sweeps out the rubbish from his shop into the street, and there it lies. If there is one thing more loathsome than another, it is dirty paper in the wrong place. The police have the power to stop this. The Beauty Club would insist on shop-keepers consuming their own rubbish—eating their own dirty greasy paper if they like, or doing anything with it except sweeping it into the street to be blown about on a Sunday in all directions. The Club must fight the smoke and fight the paper. It would, perhaps, ordain that we should have a festival like the Jews, called the Feast of Purification, when once a year the townspeople would turn out and clean away all their abominations. I should like it. Let the Mayor have a besom, the Councillors be marched out, and the women act as cantineers. What a heap of filth there would be! The mountain we should have to carry away in the first year would convince us in what a mass of deformity and abomination we have been content to live. No beauty we can give to a town can atone for dirt. I should be happy to shoulder a besom and make one of a procession to clean the town thoroughly once a year until, like a new shilling, it would shine with brightness. We might have a day of jubilation afterwards if we liked.

The Beauty Club might go further, and advise a man who is going to build a house. Many such men now trust themselves in the hands of a cheap builder. If I were to tell you all I know about builders, it would be a tale of woe before which the Lamentations of Jeremiah would sink into insignificance. A man who goes to build a house cannot always afford an architect, and if he could I should say "don't" in many cases. Such a man

could go to the Beauty Club, and they would show him the best plans. The Beauty Club would be a sort of consulting body on such matters, where men could go and have their eyes opened. There should be no fees for registration or anything of that sort, but all done out of pure love, pure patriotism, and a pure seeking after beauty.

Then, we would take the new Act of Parliament, and put it into force ; and what exquisite pleasure it would be to go harrying a landlord, and hounding down those men who build styes and charge heavy rents for them ! No money could be more properly spent than in doing away with the filthy, unwholesome, vile, stinking alleys of the town. We could try to regulate the new streets, and keep the committees of the Council up to a sense of their duty. The streets must be made wide,—there must be no narrow alleys where there can be little sunshine, little light, and little beauty. The houses must not be too high, because high houses mean a small pitcher of water carried up to the top. We must prevent deformity in every way. We must sweep away that hideous church, that mountain of stones, that monstrous hideousness, that offence to God and man called the “Free Church,” and improve the area round about. Here we could plant a tree, there put up a medallion, here manufacture a floor, and there give out a pattern. We must encourage all to spend a little more money in making their places beautiful, and insist upon pure air and clean streets, with the minimum of smoke, the absence of dirt.

Then let us judge of the effects. The result would be that the death-rate, especially that of children, which is an utter disgrace to us, would decrease ;—and if we could only prevent that fearful death-rate amongst children, what good we should accomplish.

The Club could buy pictures for the Galleries, and might secure that the poor should have the fullest advantage of them ; they might induce rich men to give their pictures for the many, instead of shutting them up for the few. The proposition may seem absurd, but I do not despair. When I came to this town, there was no Art Gallery, there was only one Library, and one or two Statues. By-and-bye, the Library and the Art Gallery will be enshrined in some proper place. The Beauty Club would at once proceed to pull down the building used as the Midland

Institute ; and remove it from the face of the earth. I would write over it, "This building is erected to show the very reverse of beauty, to show lovers of beauty what to hate, what to loathe, and what to avoid." I would write, "There is no truth in the inward parts,"—a white dickey over a dirty shirt—a pair of cuffs where there is no shirt. If these seekers after beauty could have ten years, they would change all, only providing they could find all people with an open face, understanding beauty, and determining that the generation to come should see a picture, an eloquent truth, an exposition in stone of all the spiritual laws that I have so imperfectly laid down to you.

If anyone likes the plan, they can soon form a Club. I would be a member for one, and I have no doubt that we could get plenty more, and we could easily find a president. My views may sound like romance ; but to me their accomplishment is a possibility, and I hope to achieve it before I die. We could soon form a Society, of men devoted to one object, of men whose desire is to make the town clean, orderly, pure in air, healthy, lovely ; to fill it with objects that can lift people, by degrees, from glory to glory ; to fill the people with a taste for the beautiful, until at last one can go down the streets with pleasure, and Birmingham men can say, with the passion of the Jews of old, "I will go round Jerusalem and tell the towers thereof, I will stand on the bulwarks and look at the beauty of the city." \*

I call upon the artists and men of taste in the town to aid the movement, to foster beauty in every form and assist it forward, to help the manufacturer who is striving to make men understand beauty, to promote education as the means of doing so, and then, by degrees, we may see a *Porch Beautiful*. True, as in olden times, it may be used by the man with the sores who sits there. But even the man with the sores who sat in the *Porch Beautiful* would be more likely to meet with an apostle going up the steps than if he sat in the back court of dirt, deformity, and meanness.

\* As observed before, Mr Dawson's quotations give the sense, and are not always intended to be literal.

## NATIONAL EDUCATION.

I CANNOT do better than make you clearly understand that I speak to-night for nobody but myself. I belong to no sect, am attached to no party. I am to-night what I have always been—a free lance. I have nobody to represent, and, therefore, I shall commit nobody, and I only trust I shall not commit myself. I am not a member of the Reform League, and, therefore, I cannot be looked upon as expressing their views; I am not a member of the clerical body, and, therefore, understand that I am not speaking for my brethren, Dissenting or other. I come simply at the invitation of the League, and I think it does them credit that they have laid no stipulations on me, and that they have put no fetter on me, no bondage, no limit, no condition. They have simply invited me to speak on the subject without requiring any pledge or imposing any restriction. Therefore it is but fair that I should say that I, and I only, am answerable for any nonsense that may be uttered.

Now, I have to congratulate you as thorough lovers of your country upon that happy consent which exists with regard to the question of Education. It is one of the phenomena that sometimes occur in history, the origin of which it is not very easy to understand, but the glory of which it is our part to take a share in. For many years some of us have been, in season and out of season, agitating this question. We have differed strongly and manfully and bravely, but now by one of those happy chances that wise men would call “providential,” all England, with the exception of one or two crotchety people, have made up their minds that the one great question of all the questions of the day is the enlargement of the means and the better application of the means for the better education of this nation.

Of course, I am aware that our distinguished Member came lately to Birmingham, and played an entirely new part in his history. Mr Bright has generally been the man to kindle a flame,



to raise an enthusiasm, and to rouse the holy fire of popular zeal ; and why he came lately in the character of a fire-engine, and told us that there was a very feverish activity in the country with regard to education, I cannot tell. Well, it is not given to one man to play every part well ; and he whose enemies call him an incendiary, and whose friends have called him an admirable apostle of the good cause, he it was who told us that ; and it was a novelty to both to see him come with a pitiful cold wet blanket and endeavour to chill the holy zeal of the people for the education of the nation. I never have found too much fire in this country for change yet. It takes a long time to make the English people move, and about the last duty of a wise man is to pour cold water, and talk about " feverish activity " on any question such as that of public education.

Passing that matter over, (and I mention it because I am an enemy to a slavish adoration of public men, and endeavour to keep myself ready to admire when I ought, to condemn what I should) I can only say that I feel no feverish activity on this question of education. The activity I feel is old, long considered, well weighed. If there is any fault to be found with my activity, and with that of most others on this question, it is not that it is feverish, but that it is too cold and too feeble and small. Now, this happy consent of which I was speaking is this : there is no man who knows anything of the condition of the people of this country who is satisfied with the present state of the education of this nation. The worst picture I could draw would be but a feeble picture of the ignorance, the stupidity, the animalism of a large part of the poor people of this country. Go where you will—in the country districts you find many country labourers who are little removed above animals. They work hard all day, but the moment they have done work what have they to do ? The skittle-alley and the beer-house are their paradise, their study and their library, and they know nothing else, and nobody is their friend. The brutal ignorance of the peasantry of this country is a shame and a disgrace to the nation.

Do you think, after having stated that, that I intend to come to Birmingham and tickle the artisan and flatter the working man, to proclaim that the virtues which have fled from a base and brutal aristocracy have taken refuge amongst the unwashed ? No, not at

all. In fact, one wonders how men who never save anything can swallow such stuff. All of you should have read an admirable report supplied by a man whose honour and ability are above all question, and who has made an examination of certain children employed in the manufactories of this town. He did it openly, and with the consent of the manufacturers. Taking 100 children (boys), he says that of that 100, 42 could read well, 18 moderately (by which he meant badly), and 40 could not read at all. Fifty-eight children out of a hundred in this town who can't read decently! Then, talk about a man writing! Look at the work some poor people have to write their names. They do it in physical agony; it is a misery to them. And that is called "writing"! Why, it is only the old cross elaborately designed for show's sake. Out of the 100 boys, 34 could write decently, 22 moderately (and he explains that that really means badly), and 44 failed altogether, or wrote so wretchedly as not to be worth the name. Sixty-six children working for their bread—sixty-six children gone into the world, with no chance of ever getting back to school—sixty-six boys gone out into the world and not able to write decently, and not able to read a letter. This is the education of the country! And there is a "feverish activity" about it that requires a cold blanket and a fire-engine to put it out! Then, as to spelling: 18 out of the 100 could spell decently; 11 could not do it decently, but did it moderately; and 71 did it indecently, were entirely wrong, and knew nothing about it. Here are eighty-two children out of a hundred launched into the hard world of work who cannot spell the English language decently! And these people were sent out into the world in that state to spend their threescore years and ten. Arithmetic—well, they should be more at home in arithmetic, because that's profitable. Taking 100 boys of Birmingham, the chief centre of civilisation, the chief town of democracy, the town from which liberty radiates to all the world, the town of towns, what do we find? Eight of them were good at arithmetic, 8 were moderate, and 84 knew nothing at all about it. Then we go into general knowledge. Seven had got some general knowledge; 19 hadn't got general knowledge, but had a "little knowledge"; and 74 had no knowledge at all. These are the children that need no Factory Act to protect them—sent out into the world to slave

and grind before the brain that God gave them has had any fostering care, these little ones are to be turned into workmen before they are men, and their poor undeveloped natures to be launched into a field of labour to earn their weekly wages.

Now, let us see how it fares with the girls. Of course, you will say, they would do worse. For even sensible men have not come to their senses yet with regard to the education of women. Barbarism still looks upon woman as a convenient drudge, a useful slave or an inferior helpmate. Well, 28 out of 100 girls could read well; 24 moderately; and 48 not at all, or so badly as not to be worth calling at all. That is, 72 girls who cannot read a letter from a lover; for if they cannot read a printed book, it will go hard with a letter. Let us look again at the capacity of these angels for writing. Sixteen of them can write well, 20 can write moderately (I should be sorry to be obliged to read it), and 64 cannot write at all. As to spelling, ladies' spelling is always pretty feeble. It never has been a strong point with women. Even out of 100 educated women, 99 will spell "independent" with "a," d-a-n-t. Well, out of 100, 9 of them could spell well; 5 moderately; and 86 not at all—that is, licentiously. In arithmetic there was one girl (I will not mention her name, or she will have too many suitors) who could sum well; 4 moderately; and 95 not at all. In general knowledge, again, one girl—perhaps the same—had good general knowledge; 10 moderate; and 89 failures.

Let us look at this bill. It is a bill of shame, a bill to make every Englishman blush and hide his head, and to make him resolve never to travel in Germany again as long as he lives. Our modern system of education has done its best, and here is the outcome; and is it not time now to supplement it by something better? Let us, therefore, be thankful that there is unanimity upon one point—that the present system wants either enlarging, supplementing, or changing. There is no question amongst us upon that ground. We are all in earnest that for the future the nation shall be better taught. Some of the chiefs of the Voluntary system have in a manly way confessed that the voluntary principle has not educated the nation, and cannot educate the nation, that it does not supply the means that would be adequate to educate the nation, and that, therefore,

for the future something must be done. Mr Edward Baines, the man who led the voluntaries on this question, the man who many years ago unintentionally but mischievously put back the cause of education more than any other man in this country, has lately made a confession, which I cannot but admire, that the voluntary principle cannot educate the people of this nation. I never was with the Dissenters on this subject. I have no faith in the voluntary principle as a means of educating this nation. It cannot do it; it has not done it. Of necessity it fails; for the voluntary principle of state-aided education has this radical fault, that where there is least wanted most is given, according to the old rule that "To him that hath shall be given, and from him who hath not, shall be taken away that which he hath."

The present system in England, as you know, is voluntary and denominational, and it has Government aid. The question before us is, shall the system of education retain that character at all? Are we to develop the present system, or are we to abolish it? In other words, are we to have a reform or a revolution in education? Now, I honour the men who ask for reform, but I admit that I am one who asks for revolution. I am for abolishing, or gradually absorbing by a sort of painless extinction, the present system. I am an extreme man, and my doctrine is — a national system; rating to be compulsory, and locally administered; schools locally governed; attendance at the schools compulsory upon everybody. If all we can get is a development of the present system, I for one will help heartily in its development; but I would rather help in its overthrow than in its development. That seems to be the spirit of the agreement come to at the Manchester Conference, and that plan would lead almost to a revolution in the education of this country. Summed up, the Manchester scheme amounts to this, that in formally abandoning the present denominational system, it demands that secular schools shall receive Government aid; that the conscience clause is to be a necessary condition of public assistance; that powers shall be given for levying local rates where voluntary action is inadequate to the necessities of the district, and that local committees shall be created for the administration of those rates, and where a district remains obstinate, and wont tax itself, there the power of levying the rates shall be transferred to the Committee of Council.

By that scheme, therefore, education is to be no longer voluntary, but compulsory. Now to me that system does not go far enough, but it goes a long way in the right direction. A system of education to be national must be uniform. According to the extreme view I take, we cannot recognise any difference between country and town; we only recognise this, that English children are to be educated. Therefore we ask first for uniformity, then we ask for rating, then we ask for local management, and then we ask for compulsory attendance. The effect of this system on the present schools would be ultimately fatal, we must admit, but that would not be a great evil.

The great question is, ought we to have a rate for education? Now, I always advocate rating, except upon such subjects as religion and conscience. I advocate a rate for this reason, that in every State there are a great number of fat, double-chinned, prosperous people, who will not come forward and discharge their public duties, and who never do anything for anybody but themselves; who are without a grain of public spirit, and who throw the duties of citizenship on those who have public spirit. There are in this town a set of great, fat, lazy manufacturers, who do nothing for anybody but themselves—I am speaking of those who never give a penny to our charities, or, at least, whose names never appear in the lists. If they do good at all, they do it by stealth; and I should be glad to see them blushing to find it fame. Then, I say, let us clap a rate upon such, and touch them up, and if they will not do their duty by love make them do it by law. Let us have Sinai down upon them, and get the tax-gatherer to call upon them. I love the tax-gatherer. I love the goad, and whip, and spur, when applied to these fat-flanked men who have no public spirit in them, and who take all they can get from their country, and give nothing for it. Nothing pleases me more than to see these men shell out for the Free Library. Oh, to see these dunces obliged to contribute to learning! They say that it is interfering with the liberty of the individual. That is why I like it. I rejoice to see that kind of liberty—liberty to shirk public duty—curtailed. Bondage is better than liberty, if liberty mean the shirking of duty, the neglecting of other people, and simply the getting all you can out of your country and putting it into your pocket and giving none.

I would make Government do almost everything, because in a representative nation Government's doing is the nation's doing. But there linger amongst us some good and wise men who talk the anachronisms of yesterday, and still speak of the Government as hostile to the nation. To hear some Dissenters talk about the State, would make you imagine that it was some great ogre about to swallow us up. That is yesterday's talk. Why, what is the Government now? It is the nation acting. There is no such thing as the Government acting hostile to the people under the wide suffrage that now exists. If the Government does act contrary to the wish of the people, it is their own fault. My opponents will say, "I like individual action." "So do I," I would reply, "but I like national action better." I can conceive of no sublimer sight than the sublime march of a nation to the great work of education.

Some people will say they like to see every man doing it for himself. I do not want that. Are we going to have every man rating himself to make his own roads, to set up his own post-office, and do the things that Government now does for him? "Don't let the State do too much for us." What bosh that is, to talk about the Government being hostile to the people. It is like some Rip Van Winkle coming back, after a sleep in the mountains, and talking the jargon of exploded Voluntaryism. I respect every man who shies like a well-bred horse at the look of "compulsion." I do not like compulsion myself, but I have been obliged to bend to it, and now I almost adore it. The east wind is compulsion; the summer heat is compulsion; the winter's frost is compulsion; duty is compulsion; Moses is compulsion; the laws of life and chemistry are all compulsion. There would be precious little done in the world were it not for compulsion. It is objected that a system of compulsory education would relieve the parents from a duty which belongs to them. If compulsion to parents means anything, it simply means relieving them from the attempt to teach their children that which they do not know themselves. The sublime duty of educating their children would remain with the parents just as before.

Talk about the liberty of the individual: I suppose if I wanted to have two wives, they would not let me. But why should they meddle with that? Suppose I said, like Martin Luther, that there

is not a single text of Scripture that prohibits my having two wives. Oh! don't let them interfere with my liberty. Ah, he who goes into society does so on the principle of being limited in his individual liberty. Is there *no* where to go for a man, where he can be let alone? There is not. There is nothing but suicide left for a man, that will not have his liberty interfered with. "But is education a matter upon which the State should infringe on the liberties of the individual?" Certainly. You say, "I claim that my children shall be brought up in ignorance." Then I say, "You must take care of them then when they grow up into criminality." Why am I to be taxed to build asylums, and gaols, and lock-ups, and to pay for the eternal police, because another man says, "We must have the liberty of the individual to bring up dunces and to breed fools"? In the name of society I deny that liberty. They might say, "I shan't." Then I would make them. And if they said they would rebel, let them rebel, and there is the margin of martyrdom for them.

Now, it seems to me that if we have compulsory rating and compulsory attendance, we shall be inevitably brought to a secular system; and I maintain that the only system practicable in this country must be a secular system, for it seems to me that public rates applied to denominational purposes will be exposed to the same objections, and to the encounter of still more bitter hostility than Church-rates. There we should be going to upset Church-rates with one hand, and to impose them with the other. At present, though, perhaps, we do not notice it, because it comes out of the Consolidated Fund, we are supporting all the creeds in the country. When rates come to be local, that will not be tolerated. I can say Amen with all my heart to the words of Archdeacon Denison, when he says that "the great mistake in this matter was entering into partnership with the State with regard to religion," and urges that the partnership shall cease and determine as far as regards religious teaching, and that there must be unconditional freedom from religious teaching in all schools taught by the State. Now, I am careful upon this point to fortify myself with authorities. The Rev. W. W. Howard, Inspector of schools in Devonshire and Dorsetshire, reports that "the influences in the way of education in the West of England are the irregular attendance of the children at the schools and the early

age at which they leave school." The wages reach from 9s. a week to 11s. ; and we can hardly wonder at that bad system—if it can be called a system—of economy which leads the agricultural labourers to send their children to work as soon as they are possessed of any strength. The girls are taught glove-making and lace-making ; the girls never go to school at all ; they are allowed to live their lives through in a settled ignorance which is disgraceful to humanity. I have no hope for improvement in such a state unless we have legislation that will make education compulsory.

One often hears that compulsory education of the children will leave the parents in brutal ignorance ; that compulsory education will cause most likely the separation of the secular and religious elements of instruction. I believe that both would be served thereby. I can say nothing stronger than that. In the department of Sunday School teaching, what an advantage it would be if such matter as reading and writing had not to be taught there, as in many instances they now are. At present, we want to teach the children the alphabet, and leave the mysteries till afterwards. If the children have elementary teaching first, we can take them a voyage into the dark, and bring them home triumphant in the understanding of the unintelligible afterwards. I deprecate the quality of much of the instruction that is now given in what are called the denominational schools. Let us go to the Blue-books of the Commission on Education, and we shall see marvellous stories there about children's lessons. How they say these lessons, is like the style of the performance of a certain brass band, in which every performer took one note. There is the boy who believes in the Father, and the boy who believes in the Son ; but the boy who believes in the Holy Ghost is at home ill.

I regret the attitude of some who ought to know better. One High Churchman in London has said that, rather than not have religious education, he would have none at all ; and another clergyman, one of the oldest in Birmingham, has stated that unless he could have his children taught religiously, he would turn the key on the school. How can any man in his senses say that if children are not educated according to what he calls religion, they shall not be educated at all ? When I know what "religious education" means in this country, the idea is something too absurd to be considered. What does the Government



require of me in my school in the shape of "religious instruction"? To "read from the Authorised Version." We read one verse each day, and they are convinced that we give religious education. It is monstrous; it is marvellous! What I would advocate is, that clergymen should devote themselves to their own peculiar sphere, and leave geography, arithmetic, and reading to the Government, to be taught in national schools. I take shelter in the words of one of the wisest men with whom God has blessed Old England: with all my heart I would subscribe to the immortal dictum of Lord Bacon, "that atheism is better than superstition." I hold, from the bottom of my heart, that it is better to be an atheist than to be superstitious. Bacon would rather, he said, that a man knew no God at all, than believe God to be a revengeful, passionate, angry man. In this the clergy are against him, I am sorry to say. If people do not learn the catechism, the clergy, it seems, would have them learn nothing. But is not a clean and civilised atheist better than a dirty and brutal atheist? Take two boys. Let it be certain as anything that these two boys will be led up to be atheists—to know of no God at all. Therefore you will keep them dirty, brutal, untaught. Would you do that? Show me two unbelievers—one clean, the other dirty. Give me the clean one, if you please. Be assured, every law of Nature learned is a gain to the world. Every man who makes out one fact in this world gains something. Talk to these men of religion! If we are not religious in their sense, we must not educate ourselves. If we are unbelievers, we must be dirty, ignorant. I am an unbeliever in the eyes of these men. I don't say I am well educated; but don't you think I am better for such education as I have, than if I had received none? Take the followers of the great man Comte. Are the dirty, greasy, unwashed, rampant, noisy infidels of the last generation to be compared with the cultivated, polished, intellectual men of a school which has such men as Congreve and Bridges? Is a nasty, dirty African savage, brought up what is called "religious," preferable to a clean, well-educated English Comtist? The clergy would have catechism, or no education at all. Look at it in the light of public health. Because a man does not believe in God, is he to be nasty, and to have the fever? Oh, it is madness! Civilisation is a blessing to all men, and knowledge is

always a gain. Let us give all men equally a chance of knowing the great laws of life. Let us have clean unbelievers. If we are to have men of this class, give me those who are healthy; but keep me from those who are feverish and nasty.

Well, "No education unless you have religion." I say "Yes." "But," you say, "knowledge does not convert a man." No; in the technical sense it does not. You may have a great deal of education and a great deal of sin. But education will save men from much folly and much wrong. As education spreads in this country, so the scenes of drunkenness become rarer. Why have the middle classes left off their drunken habits of yesterday? You will say they have taken the pledge. Not a bit of it. They have taken in knowledge. They understand the laws of health better. They have dabbled in chemistry, and deviated into sense in some points; and the consequence is, drunkenness is going out. Better be a sober unbeliever than a drunken unbeliever. They are not a "converted" class. True; but they are nearer to the kingdom of heaven when clean and sober and well taught, than if they were dirty and drunken and ignorant. If the clergy believed this doctrine, their influence would extend. If they were wise, they would know that it is easier to teach and direct an educated than an uneducated people—not to believe nonsense, but the things that touch the heart. So if any body of men whatsoever tells me that unless their religion is accepted the people must not be educated, then I say there is but one way out. We must fight. Let godly people take warning, whether they go to church or chapel. I say this in plain words to them. If you are determined to thwart our desires to have a national system of education, unless it be rendered to suit your taste, unless we will allow it to be denominational, there can be nothing but a fight. We raise our banners. Do your best, we will do ours. A fair fight and no favour, and we will throw you in the end. "No education without 'religion'!" I hold it to be one of the most pestilential heresies I ever listened to, the apotheosis of barbarism, the bray of savagery, a lie all through, to say there must be no education for the people unless they will take it with catechism. To say a man would prefer a dirty African savage to a clean well-educated Englishman—to say that a clever, scientific man, not a believer, is not to be preferred to a nasty, dirty,

ignorant unbeliever—oh, it's rank nonsense. The nation can never become healthy, the sacrifice of children will never cease, until the people are educated.

I have said education will not convert my heart. Religion will not wash people's faces. You can be religious and be very nasty. I say the church and the chapel will never benefit under the present system. There is a great want felt for the spread of knowledge on many points. Church and Chapel has not made a healthy, decent, cleanly, well-informed, and sober people, understanding the laws of morality and of health and of well-being. The laws of health are not taught, not studied, not understood. You ask, if these laws were known, would they be followed? Certainly. The education I have had is far too small; if I could I should be only too glad to sit down as of old and extend its boundary—to be a schoolboy and a student again; but what little education I have had has regulated my life. There are many things it has determined with absolute certainty that I never shall do. For instance, there is no possibility of my ever buying a prophetic almanac: I shall never have my horoscope cast: I shall never consult a "wise woman," never seek after a wizard, never have my fortune told, never swallow quack medicines. Why not? I know too much. I am not a religious man in the opinion of most people—thank God, thank God. But my education, such as it is, has done this for me: it has taught me the laws of health; it has taught me (I have not followed them) the laws of wealth; it has taught me public spirit after my fashion, taught me patriotism—and I deny that anyone feels its fiery glow more than I do; it has taught me to keep clear of the magistrate, and never to help to fill a gaol, or be a candidate for an asylum. Let every Englishman be taught as much. If the nation is to be unbelieving, in God's name let it be at least clean, sweet, and sensible. Therefore, to any clergyman who says, "Unless you let us educate you our way, you shall not be educated at all," I say, "The sooner you get out of the way the better for you; the nation is coming down the road, and when the nation comes it will not be your little apple-cart that will stop it."

A London alderman once was laughed at because he expressed an opinion that he had discovered a plan to put down suicide. But he had got hold of a principle. There is nothing in this

world that man cannot put down. Man put the plague down: we shall kill the cholera before long. We shall yet put down drunkenness. God sends evils that we may combat them—that we may fight them and conquer them. We shall yet put down dirt and nastiness. We shall put down ignorance. It is man's duty to do it. Every man who increases knowledge increases human happiness. Therefore I am for geography, the Athanasian creed to the contrary; I am for history, though the Penta-teuch should be treated lightly by the Bishop; I am for chemistry, even if it involve the calling in question of the infallibility of the Pope. I prefer to have my dinner well cooked, though the cook may be in heathen ignorance of the great points of departure of the Eastern from the Western Church.

I insist upon secular education, and I insist upon compulsory education—the one hanging upon the other. I hold that the clergy have nothing to do with secular teaching. They have no more to do with teaching geography than with teaching farriery; and the sooner they give up meddling with what doesn't concern them, the sooner they will be able to apply themselves to their own proper duties. We deny the right of the clergy to give secular education. They can impart the religious touch. We are told about the beggars whose feet the Pope washes, that their feet are first carefully washed, and then they are sent up to the Pope, who gives them the last touch with a nice damask towel. The chamberlain does some preliminary washing, and the Pope comes in afterwards and rubs them with eau de Cologne. The advocates of secular education want to have the dirty little English beggars taken and washed—to be handed over then to be rubbed with eau de Cologne. We want to take these poor children into the secular school, and then pass them to the different churches. The Americans have their schools on the secular system, and are the Americans religious? The Rev. Mr Frazer says so; we are told they are more religious than the English, and yet they have secular schools. This is awkward, isn't it? I don't understand it; I give it up; it passes my understanding altogether. The plan is, compulsory rates, local administrative bodies, uniform system, attendance compulsory upon all—no option, send your children.

There remain but one or two other points. We don't propose

to legislate for the education of the poor only. We long for the day when a searching inquiry will be made into the use of the money that our forefathers left for the education of the people. No man knows the extent of the endowments in this country for that purpose. In the single instance of the University of Oxford, it cannot be told for certain the amount of its income, whether it is £200,000 or £400,000. Every year between 300 and 400 young men enter it, and between 300 and 400 young men go out at the other end. This is £1000 per annum for each one. Then come to the public schools, the money of which goes to those for whom it never was intended—money which might educate the whole people if properly spent. Next come down to our own town of Birmingham, with its great school a close corporation—a little mutual admiration society. When they want a new governor, they look out a man the least afflicted with crotchets. They are on the high road to where self-election always leads to—unmitigated old fogeyism and utter failure. But in this question of national education we want no huckstering. Educational endowments should be restored to their proper use, and the Universities should be open to all men.

I am sick of hearing people talk of education as a means of making men better tinkers, or putting them in the way of earning more money at brass-casting. We want to educate them that they may live better. We want to give every man a large field. Don't fear the result. Some may say, "Nobody will work." Oh, you leave nature alone. Hunger is a wonderful fellow, and the belly has a marvellous appetite. You don't wish to educate women, or they will cease to be women? Let them try. You say they will get almost like men? Oh, not quite: nature is strong; God is great! If they are educated they will still mark Valentine's Day—they will still "cleave to their husbands," and the husbands will still "love their wives." Let us leave these things alone; let us deal with women as beings bound up with us in the same bundle of life and death, and let us try to overcome the miserable poverty and the brutal ignorance which exist. Let all men walk through life with a fair chance. Think of what Moses said: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets." Would that all the English were scholars—at least that they knew how to read and write and count a few figures, and understood something of the lovely

world in which God has placed them—knew something of its geography, felt something of its beauty, wondered at the rising of the sun, saw the heavenly order of all things. But they see nothing of these things; the heavens are a dull leaden colour to them, and have no message to them.

The state of education in England is a national disgrace. We should say with the old prophet, "Mine eyes run down with tears for the iniquity of my people." I would rather have a Church of England school than no school; I would rather have a Hebrew school than no school; I will go further,—I would rather have a Mohammedan school than no school. I am the very antipodes of my clerical friends. I say *any* school is better than no school; and so I shall go on crying—a rate compulsory, administration local, attendance compulsory, the school free, the education large, liberal, and good. Now that the Factory Acts are in operation, let us when we drive the children out at one door, drive them into school at the other. How can you argue with people who hardly understand the language you talk to them?

We tell the clergy, "If you will not give us education without religious teaching, we will take it." The education of the people belongs to the Government, just as the Post Office is a matter for their supervision and control. Secular and religious education are incompatible in this country; and if they are united you will have the old Church-rate question brought up again in all its old sectarian bitterness. I hope for something from the new Parliament; for whatever the upper classes and the clergy and the squires think of it, every working man I have met almost is for being rated, and compulsory education; and compulsory education must be unsectarian.

## ETIQUETTE.

WITH your permission, I am going to discourse for a short time upon the very important matter called Etiquette, the origin of which, the nature of which, the use and abuse of which, the admirable services and monstrous absurdities of which, I hope to point out to you.

We will begin at the beginning, by looking at the meaning of the word. Of course it is a French word, the modern meaning of which is a little label or ticket that is fixed to a bag or anything else to tell what is inside ; or, as in the case of a person travelling, a ticket on his portmanteau tells who the distinguished person is, and the distinguished address to which he is travelling. It would be very easy to trace out the way in which the word came to be applied to the actions of man. As the French say, *par l'etiquette du sac, on peut, juger que c'est un homme de bon sens et de bon esprit*, which simply means that, by the little ticket on the bag, one learns to tell whether a man is a man of good sense and a man of good spirit ; it means those outward labels, manners, customs, forms, and fashions which are hung on to people, by themselves or by others, with a view to indicate the contents of the bag or *sac*. There are people who buy jewels and wear them on their own bags. Nearly all the vulgarity and the disasters which are witnessed in society arise from persons buying labels from others, and putting them on to themselves. These labels used to be put on to gentlemen—men of manners, men of real taste ; but the thing becomes an absurdity when the labels are adopted by those who are not men of real taste, when the label no longer indicates what is in the sack.

Etiquette arose out of manners, and manners arose out of the great primal fact that there are two ways of doing everything, and, therefore, there is a *best* way of doing everything. When I speak of manners, I do not speak of morals, I do not speak of *what* we are doing, but of the *way* in which we are doing any-

thing. There are certain men who come into this world and make manners. They do things so much better than everyone else, that everybody tries to do things in the same way. Thus, out of the happy method of those men, there comes to be a rule established, a law ordained, and there comes to be etiquette. All good manners, all prescribed manners,—those that are laid down by teachers, taught in books, and at schools—all have their origin in something excellent.

The uses of defined methods, enjoined manners, and established rules are very much the same as the uses to which we put oil. Oil is a very fluent and pliable body, and it prevents the hinges of society from grating too harshly. Manners are the feathers with which to use the oil in order to prevent them squeaking against each other. All of us are egotists. Most of us want to have our own way, and two who want to have their own way are sure to get harsh with each other. If two people ride on a horse's back, one must ride behind. Who is to settle the question as to who is to ride behind? Society comes in, and, supposing one man to be an Alderman, and the other a Town-Councillor, it will be decided that the former shall have the foremost place and the Councillor shall sit behind. Society dips the feather into the oil, and lubricates, and so prevents people from coming into collision; precedence is established, things go smoothly, and there is no fighting. The object of good manners is not regeneration, but the prevention of collision. There are a number of people who are all standing upon what they call their dignity—generally a very small place to stand upon—and neither is willing to give way. The man of manners comes—gentle, self-possessed—and, without saying much, he dips the feather into the oil-bottle of precedent and established custom, and gives each of them a touch; it is delicately and quietly done. They are as big fools as ever they were; but outside they are obliged to go smoothly. They cannot escape the oil; oil meets oil, and peace is the result.

Another great result of established manners is the prevention of too close a familiarity. Etiquette is the great maintainer of distance between man and man. It is a true proverb that “Familiarity breeds contempt.” Only twice or thrice in a lifetime does a man meet with another that it is good to be familiar with; for



familiarity, rightly understood, is the drawing together of two men who are not ashamed of each other's faults; who dare have the tooth-ache in each other's presence, or the heart-ache in each other's house; who dare to confess, to repent, to be without the crown, without the sceptre, wounded, groaning, and sad. How many such is a man likely to meet with in the course of his life? And yet this familiarity is the holiest feeling and the truest thing between man and man to meet with in this life. But how many pretenders there are; how many people there are ready to rush into your house while you are dressing, and seem most anxious to put out their fat paw to show they have won the right to be familiar with you! This is a kind of familiarity which antedates reverence, that outruns knowledge, and is earlier than love, and is a thing to be checked and put down. Fine manners and enjoined rules of etiquette are provisions made to put men on their initiations and trials, to keep them far enough off until one may see whether they are fit to come near. Good manners are like a little trap-door, through which we may take stock of a visitor before he gets on to the doorstep. If we do not think much of him, let us not make much of him—let making much and thinking much go together.

Take the matter of introduction. Some people laugh at introductions, and say what nonsense it is, that they cannot speak to a man until they are introduced. I think it is an admirable rule; for, most men I do not want to speak to, and the large majority I hope will not speak to me. What am I to do? The answer is found in the established rule of introduction. It may be carried too far, of course. You know the story of a gentleman who, seeing another drowning, dared not attempt to rescue him because he had not been introduced. The principle of introduction is a very admirable one; it is the proclamation,—“Don't come till you are called; don't speak till you are asked; wait until life brings you next that man, don't go out of your way—wait till you see someone who knows you both, and leave the rest to circumstances and to time.”

Familiarity never breeds contempt for a man who has earned familiarity. The opposite of this is what some people admire. Some people say they like free and easy manners. The perfect gentleman is he who cannot tell what it is that makes him so

gentlemanly. To be free and easy in the common sense is an abomination. You all know what "free and easy" means in the common sense. As to hand-shaking, there are men who consider the introduction of handshaking has been the cause of a great amount of mischief existing in the world. It comes into use very much at election times; when they get electioneering, then gentlemen shake hands with everybody, kiss the women, and praise the brats; and so handshaking has come to be looked upon as a point of good manners. It is a pity; it is a rude familiarity; it is an indecency, whensoever it is not justified by true friendship. Handshaking is almost always an insincerity; it destroys respect between man and man. I do not go so far as to say that familiarity, having taken the place of politeness, is likely to be the ruin of nations; but it is asserted that the introduction of European manners and customs into Turkey was the cause of that nation's going down. You will remember what the poet Cowper says:—

"The man who hails you Tom or Jack,  
And proves by thumps upon your back,  
How he esteems your merit,  
Is such a friend that one had need  
Be very much his friend indeed,  
To pardon or to bear it."

It is a favourite manner with people in this town. They call you by your Christian name three weeks after they know you; they thump you, and pinch you, and fancy it is pleasant. It is not.

The reckless manner in which oaths are taken at the police courts, and in which the business in other courts is sometimes conducted, may be instanced in proof of the looseness of manners and improper familiarity which exists. Fine manners keep up worship, and worship would not live long apart from a due observance of manners. Almost everything we count worshipful we are obliged to surround with the niceties of ceremony.

Again, I find that fine manners make people endurable to one another. How many people really, now, in themselves, do you find endurable? Look at the large number that are bores, and must remain so in spite of everything; look at the number of people who are ugly to you to the last; and look at those men—noisy, squint-eyed, vulgar, loud-voiced, thick-thumbed, gravy-spillers—people who shout loud, and never shut the door when it

ought to be shut, and never open it when it should be open—these things are never endurable to anyone. Cookery is absolutely necessary to render our food eatable. There is something analogous to the art of cookery in society, and we want cookery and the science of manners to tell us how to serve ourselves up. Manners and conduct are the cookery by which the human creature becomes endurable to the human creature. There is only one way to make men and women endurable one to another, and that is to make them love one another. *Love* one another. Look at one another—is it *possible*? There are some people I know, and I always wonder if anybody ever did love them. There was a tradition that their mother did once, but it has faded away. What am I to do? As I learn to love other creatures by attention to science, looking upon them as manifestations of a great law, so I look upon these men and women; that is, as being of the same soul, coming from the same origin, having the same destiny, going to the same bourne, moved by the same passions, ordered by the same Master, ruled over by the same solemn and great laws. I learn at last from this holy and divine science of charity, that it is possible to dwell together with them—not loving them in the earlier sense, but with that fine, scientific love which conquers diffidence and passes by everything. Thus I look upon manners and dress as methods by which unpalatable people are served up, and the science of love as the means by which utterly odious and unlovely people are made to wear a beauty, not of the outward, but of a scientific character.

Many absurdities have arisen from a want of knowledge on the matter of etiquette. Take that question discussed in Birmingham lately—"Evening Dress." Profane men call that "war-paint," and when they are going to an evening party they say, "War-paint?" meaning, are they to "get themselves up," or would it be enough to go in plain clothes? Some people rage against the little notice in the corner of the card; they think it is an innovation upon individualism, and that it is trampling upon their right. But just contemplate that terrible, that marvellous performance—*evening dress*; the tedious uniformity, the dismal monotony of the business! That wonderful shirt-front which extends as far as possible, and the wretched mag-pie look it gives to a man—white on the breast and black on the tail! It is a matter of fact that

men and women love finery, and like to meet each other with their finery on. That is the object of parties. Those who understand what a dinner is—that it is a triumph, a work of art; that a dinner properly given and rightly understood is man in his glory, anticipative of a world to come—man crowned in roses for a short time,—those who meditate upon what a feast was amongst the ancient Greeks, will understand that in dress there is an element of greatness. But such dinners are rare; they are the banquets of the gods. Most people attend them, more or less—generally less. Wearing evening dress—to go in your “war-paint”—is right, if people did not make such blunders about etiquette. People have no independence; they will not shape their expenditure to the size of their rooms. The absurdities of etiquette are shown when it is assumed by those who are not big enough to wear it, those who have not reason enough to know how to use it, nor sense enough to know what it means, and make it as little decorative as something I saw in the neighbourhood of the Lickey, where a man had ornamented his plum-tree by nailing all the oyster-shells he could find upon it. I looked at the tree with some wonder; obviously the shells did not grow out of the tree, and did not decorate it; obviously they were *nailed* upon the tree. Such are the manners of some people—oyster-shells are nailed on to conceal the roughness, forms adopted of which they cannot tell the meaning.

Then, coming to the difficulties of etiquette, it is so difficult to piece it, to join it on to one's own manners. I believe a masterly thing in tailoring is to mend a hole so that it shall not be seen. If that is not the perfection of things, I know not what perfection is. But this joining of pieces is difficult work; therefore the majority of people who have not fine manners, who do not know their source and root, do not rightly apply them; we can see the joinings—the bit that was put in at home; the bit that was put in out of the book. It is when manners are bought and stuck on, like the oyster-shells, without any right understanding of what they mean, that they become ridiculous. There is only one way to have fine manners; that is, to go to the source of them which is to be found in fine feelings. Every grade of society delights to create extravagant and eccentric rules, in order to make it more difficult for people to get into their society. The

House of Commons, for instance ; no gentleman would get up there to talk about the "Pitchley hunt" without some of the county people staring to see what creature could have said "Pitchley,"—he ought to have said Pytchley. Let us not meddle with things we do not understand. Look at that unfortunate woman in the town who bought French shoes. They are sent home ; she sends them back "because they are not a pair." She says, "Why, look here, in one it says *gauche*, and in the other it says *droit*." What had she, the mother of many children, a coverer of acres, to do with French? One must also mind that letter "H," if he would get within the circle which educated men draw with such savage cruelty around themselves. Then there are the Latin quantities. It is all over with a statesman if he does not know his Latin quantities of Virgil and Horace.

What is the better way for people to do? To take to manners slowly, and not take to etiquette too quickly. Let them learn the origin of good manners. There is but one origin, and that is, good feeling. The best-behaved people, after all, are those who think least of themselves and most of those with whom they are. What is the secret of beauty in the body? Health. What is the secret of absurdities? The paint, pearl-powder, and patches—the things laid on, stuck on, pinned on, hooked on, eyed on, buttoned on, painted on, patched on. There is no beauty derivable from these things. There is only one way to have a beautiful face, and that is to have a beautiful thought underneath it. Watch the most popular man you know, and his manners. What is the secret of his popularity? He is a hearty, genial, kindly, loving man ; easily pleased, thinking little of self, ready to be carried away at a moment with anything that is going on. These are the men who do not want etiquette ; *they* need not buy sixpenny books, because they have reached fine etiquette by having reached the fine feelings. No rules can be laid down : good manners, like true beauty, can only come out of inward feeling.

Of course, etiquette has had its martyrs. It is etiquette to wear a very small boot, and you have, in consequence, a very large corn. It serves you right ; it is your just punishment. You were fools ; now you are sufferers. Who will stick a piece of leather on his toe in the wrong place, he shall find Nature

stick a piece of leather on his toe. Then there is professional etiquette. One of our kings nearly died because of professional etiquette. The law said there should be two surgeons in the room when he was bled ; ordinary people could be bled by one. The King had a fit. What was to be done? The fact is, he hadn't his finest manners on that day : he had a fit in a hurry, —and the perfection of good manners is not to do anything in a hurry. The doctor ventured to bleed him alone, and there is a paper in existence now in which that man is declared to be *pardoned* for bleeding the King alone, although he had, by so doing, saved the King's life.

In conclusion, I advise you to go to the root of the matter and cultivate good feeling, and then you will know good manners. Fine etiquette will almost come of that ; and who knows but some of you may live to write a better book on the subject than any we now have : because we are all defective, and require teaching. If ever I have time, I shall write one ; it will be cheap, but it will go to the root of the matter.

## BEAU BRUMMELL.

### I.

MY subject to-night is "Beau Brummell." Some of you have puzzled yourselves to find a reason why I chose such a subject. I can find you many. Was not this man the companion of Kings; the chosen of the aristocracy? Before we are done with him, we shall find Brummell teaching as many sad examples as any great man whatever. It is refreshing, coming after Bunyan, the low Bedford tinker, to turn to the man that basked in the countenance of George the Fourth, the pet of the noble, the darling of dowagers, the man of three shirts *per diem*, of spotless linen and unstained hands. He was not the mere ignorant dandy folks take him to have been. I can sympathise with such a man; not over rich in purse, not high in pedigree, by work and force of brains finding his way into the society of rich boobies and titled folk—a man that would have none of your dastardly, cringing, grovelling at the feet of those who happened to be able to trace their grandmothers for two or three generations. Brummell was an English classic. He is in "Pelham," in "Granby," enshrined in Byron's noble verse, the George Brummell of history that snubs the other George, George Rex, his "fat friend." If any of you felt disposed to lift up a stone against Brummell, you are not the people to do it. Everybody is a dandy. All you that ever dyed a hair, went through tricks to improve a figure, or fluttered in a new bonnet, put out a fibre of relationship to the King of the class.

Dandyism, as an historical matter, is a great thing. All our old, great, strong men have a touch of it. Julius Cæsar was a considerable specimen. The Romans pushed it till it became a fine art; but the Hebrews did it before them. These Roman masters of mankind had even their rings for different seasons. In winter, when their muscles were strong, they reached down their large rings, their heavy rings, their ruby rings, their twisted rings; but when the summer came, they took down their light rings, their

fillagreed rings. They were kilted men, and they removed the hairs from their legs that they might have a clean look about them. Then the mediæval dandy was great; his shoes curled up at the toes, with chains from the points to his waist. Then came the later dandy, bewigged and bepowdered. Of the present dandy I will say nothing. Dandyism is an eternal and perpetual passion in the mind, even in this day, when women, ordered by fashion, put their bonnets on the back of their head, and take rheumatism in the front.

But this man was something more than a dandy; he was the bosom friend of "the first gentleman in Europe," the companion of the wits, of Fox and Sheridan, and old Crabbe, the poet; the chosen of the noble, the delight of these Olympian folks. And to his honour be it said, that when a beggar, though he could have had a thousand guineas for his letters from them, he would rather starve than give them up. He had a soul, had that dandy; and it would be a strange thing to know how he looked at life—how God looked, how Hell looked to his eyes. He could teach us some lessons. You must remember that the end of his life was a tragedy. The hand of rough mischance lay on him, and all his summer friends were gone. He came to wear a shirt a month, and to be so filthy at last that money could not hire assistance, and the poor sweet Sisters of Mercy did it for love,—against whom if a Protestant can utter a maligning word, I pronounce that man a fanatic eaten up by bigotry.

Why, Brummell died only the other day—in 1840. He was born in 1778. His grandfather was a confectioner in the east of the city, and let apartments. An *affiche* in the window, written by his son, attracted the notice of Mr Jenkinson, afterwards Lord Liverpool, who got the youth a Government place under Lord North. After a time, Brummell's father retired, and young George was sent to Eton. The ruling passion there began to show itself. He wouldn't go out on a wet day, and hated a splash. His splendid impudence and glorious coolness never deserted him. There was a feud between the boys and the bargemen; and one day a big barger fell into their hands. They proposed to throw him over the bridge into the river. Brummell coming up, interposed in a moment; and what do you think he suggested? Anything about the cruelty or danger of the thing? No. "Look at the



fellow," he said, "he's in such a perspiration that, if you throw him into the river, he'll take a cold." The fellow escaped a bath that time. Brummell fagged well, toasted cheese, was no dunce, and went to college. At Oxford, he ordered his horse when he ought to have been learning; and there came out the intense selfishness of the man, and his habit of mapping out his life—as for instance, cutting anybody that could interfere with his right acquaintance. He could look *at* a man, *through* a man, and beyond a man, and yet never see the man. That is a great art. He was then known for his cutting wit, biting sarcasm, and the power of trotting out anybody who had got an oddity—all done in that bland way that nobody could resent. George the Fourth, who was always looking out for large-calved footmen and men of wit, when he came to London had him introduced.

For a profession, Brummell got into that man-millinery affair—the 10th Hussars. Of the business of an officer he knew nothing, and gloried in knowing nothing. He never even could find out his own troop, but at last hit on a soldier who had got a great blue nose that stood out like a promontory from the ranks, which served as his beacon and his guide. But the soldier was one day removed, and Brummell, late as usual, was looking out for his friend, who could be found nowhere. The old colonel thundered, "Why don't you find your troop?" "Why, sir," said the imperturbable Brummell, "I am looking for my nose." A good soldier, that, for England at the present day! At last he gave the army up. He was a man of mixed motives, and his motives for this step were that he hated hair powder, and that the regiment was ordered to—Manchester. George could submit to nothing so low, vulgar, and horrid. To go to the Patmos of Cotton, to be liable to be run against by dirty factory people, to live amongst chimneys, and to come into contact with frowsy manufacturers, with females to match, was death. Hence he threw up his commission, and set up as a gentleman at large, established at Carlton House, and fast rising into the position he occupied as arbiter of fashionable destiny.

Brummell was no dandy of this day. He realised the perfection of dress; that is, that if you had seen him you would not have noticed how he was dressed. He was, to be sure, immense in cravats; the proper wrinkle was a morning study and a night of

dreams. He was great in gloves, too,—not your funeral gloves, however; not large, roomy gloves, wrinkled and baggy, that one would like to borrow for a stocking. Political economists were ungrateful to Brummell. He knew the value of the division of labour; so, as the man that made the fingers of his gloves couldn't make the thumbs, he had two artists for the purpose. He detested scents, hated perfumed folks; taught cleanliness as a virtue. About boots he was particular; in coats he was glorious. Walking down Bond Street with a nobleman, he suddenly stopped, and looked at the other's feet. "What do you call these?" he said. "Shoes," replied the other. "Oh! I thought they were slippers." So also with a nobleman's coat. He lifted up the lappet lightly. "What do you call this?" "A coat," was the reply. "Oh! a coat, is it? shouldn't have known it if you hadn't told me." He was no gent of the present day. He wouldn't have put his legs into those stripes that look as if they had been stolen from a chess board, nor into plum-coloured unmentionables, with large spots like a tiger's: he would have fainted at the thought.

Well, he became supreme in the fashionable world. He was always at Carlton House; and it is said that he declared he would order the Prince Regent to ring a bell. "George, ring the bell," he said. Even the Prince's endurance couldn't stand that, but he rang the bell, and—ordered "Mr Brummell's carriage." So the story goes, but it seems to belong not to Brummell, but to a young sailor highly connected, who told the Prince to ring the bell. He did it; and when the servant came, he said, "Take that poor little drunken fool off to bed"—a solitary bit of magnanimity in George the Fourth. But, bye-and-bye, the two Georges quarrelled. At the door of Carlton House was a great fat porter, whom they called Big Ben. Sometimes Brummell wickedly mistook the porter for the master, and called the Prince Regent "our Ben." Mrs Fitzherbert, who was no sylph, took a dislike to Brummell, and expressed it to the Prince, who gallantly cut his acquaintance. But Brummell had his revenge; as shown in the well-known anecdote of Brummell asking a companion whom the Prince had addressed in Brummell's presence without noticing him, "Who's your fat friend?" At another time he said that if the Prince didn't mind what he was about, he would bring old George the Third into fashion again.

Brummell was then at his culminating point. But, earning nothing, and spending a good deal, he took to gambling, and lost much. His summer friends fell away as the cloud gathered round him. He had to abdicate; he had to run away. But he did it in state. He went to the opera that evening, and then ordered his horses, rode down to Dover, and passed away to Calais. The monarch of fashion set the example to other kings. Emperors of Austria and kings of the French have run away since then. The turn of the lantern of his life will form a subject for our future consideration. His impudence was sublime. After dining with some old squire, he asked, "Who is going to have the honour of taking me to the Duchess of So-and-So's?" "Why, you will go in my carriage," said the host. "But what will *you* do?" said Brummell; "you can't get up behind, and you can't be my *vis à vis*."

## II.

Having justified my choice of such a subject against the absurd notion that some of you have in thinking there can be nothing worthy of consideration in the life of such a man, I closed the last lecture by a rapid sketch of the Beau's progress, showing how the Eton boy, by great wit, by exceeding talent, without gold or good looks, and by intense usefulness, ambition vast, and glorious impertinence, became the arbiter of English fashion, the king among high-born folks, exercising a royalty more real than that of his obese friend, the head of the Church, his sacred Majesty George the Fourth. Some of you may have missed your favourite stories of the Beau. I could have told you many more, such as that wherein he showed his sublime indifference. When a man asked him if he took vegetables, the Beau thought deeply awhile, and then, with intense ponderousness, said he believed he had once—caten a pea. It was then that he was at the height of his glory. But now the great monarch, like those of later days, was about to abdicate. He set the fashion even in that. You remember how another emperor, Charles the Fifth, went out, abdicated into obscurity, resigning the crown to his son Philip in the presence of a magnificent assemblage of nobles, and then

retiring to a monastery. Brummell was extinguished by that great thing—the want of money. He had great bills for washing, heavy bills for eau de Cologne, immense bills for soaps, for blacking, for gloves, and for the two artists who had to make them—one the fingers, another the thumbs. He began to feel this want of money, so he wrote to his friend Scrope Davies:—“Dear Davies: All my money is in the Three per Cents. Send me some.” And his friend wrote this severe reply:—“Dear Brummell: All mine is in the Three per Cents. Can’t be done.” Well, as his kingdom could not be carried on without money, what could be done? He abdicated—went off like Louis Phillippe, bundling off from creditors he had long kept from their rights. He went off by night, setting like the sun in glory. From the opera he departed for Dover, and landed in Calais.

Brummell would not have gone to that place of ugly fish-women and uglier fish if he could have helped it. He would almost rather have borne the Patmos of Manchester. Degradation lower he could not fancy. The man that put him out, who stopped the supplies, and wrote the cutting letter, was thenceforth called “Dick, the Dandy-Killer.” But Brummell did not choose to admit that. When he was explaining the secret of his misfortune, he declared he had had a lucky sixpence with a hole in it, which, so long as he kept it, secured his success. But once he gave it away to a miserable hackney coachman; and from that moment, he said, his fortune left him. “Why don’t you advertise for it?” asked his friend. “Oh, so I have,” he said. “Twenty people brought crooked sixpences with holes in them; but none of them was mine. The fact is,” he went on with that sublime grandeur of his, “the rascally Rothschilds got hold of it, that they might have no rival.” But there was another thing which helped to send poor Brummell to Calais, and that was the great war. When those ugly Russians in their horse tails, with their handsome fat-faced followers came here, our fathers and mothers were doing a little cheap hero-worship, as they do now, and always will do—from a murderer down to a monarch. What could Brummell do against these big greasy Cossacks and other worthies from the East—whom may God in His mercy *keep* in the East!—fêted and feasted by his old friends?

Well, when gentlemen run away, something happens. “The

effects of a gentleman declining housekeeping" are disposed of; and Brummell's brought immense sums. One thing transpired at the sale which I admire. Brummell was great in snuff-boxes, and in one of these was found a slip of paper with these words: "This snuff-box was intended for his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, if he had conducted himself with propriety towards me." That was the sweetest incense the box ever held. Only think of the punishment it inflicted on the King,—the withholding of the toy because he didn't conduct himself well towards Brummell! Why, that man was more a king than the other. Snuff-boxes were a ruling passion with him. For ordinary people, they were *made*; for Brummell they were *built*. George, the Prince, was in a good humour one day, and told George, the Beau, to ask for anything. He did; he knew his man; so he asked the King to have the kindness to give him his portrait on a box. He conquered; for no man can resist the flattery of having his portrait asked for. This one was to be set in brilliants, and the box was built; but George the King meanwhile took offence, and was shabby enough not to give it to the Beau. To be deprived of the countenance of his glorious Majesty, obese and sacred, went to his heart: it would be cruel to suppose the brilliants had anything to do with his grief.

But at Calais, poor as he was, he spent countless sums in furnishing; boxes were in the ascendant: cosmetics, gloves and nonsense ran away with money fast. He began to learn French, like a sensible man,—for Brummell was no fool—but although it was wickedly said that, like Napoleon at Moscow, he was stopped by the elements, yet he made considerable progress. One would like to see how he spent his day. Time flew by Brummell, unheeded. Some people need not work; like the poor Beau, they bless Time by standing like a rock, and letting the great River run by. Time had the light of Brummell's countenance shed upon it. He rose at nine, took coffee, and read the *Morning Chronicle* till twelve. At twelve to a minute, he came out in his flowered dressing-gown, and in majesty crossed the passage which led to his sanctum to dress for company. Then followed two hours, devoted to the solemn operation of dressing. If you remember that it was the monarch of dandies that was dressing, that time, contrasted with that taken by mere subjects in modern

days, was not too great. Then he held his levee to receive company. At five he dressed;—he had dressed before, but this was the grand toilet, the fine bloom of dressing, the solemn toilet. Then he dined. The dinner was supplied from the hotel; but, another degradation was coming on—he was compelled to drink *beer!* Some don't know the degradation implied in that low word—the symbol of a wretched drink, fit for plebeian manufacturing people, but a drink that great men never saw and could not touch. Brummell had to take to Dorchester ale, and apologised to himself for the awful vulgarity by pretending it was good for his little complaints. The rest of the evening he spent quietly with his dog Gyp: he loved the dog, and made a friend of it.

He was fond of animals of all kinds, and one day made an honest confession to a lady, “If I saw a man and a dog in danger,” he said, with this admirable parenthesis,—“and if nobody was looking—I would rather save the dog than the man.” He was tender to his dog, as many selfish people are. How many cruel men, and selfish women, have spent all their love and their lives on wretched poodles! Some of the most terrible people of the French Revolution—St Just and Couthon—had their dogs, and over them they wasted their humanity. I do not blame people for being kind to their dogs; but I hate to see a woman maundering over a little waddling mass of filthy obesity, sentimentalising over offensive dogs, making a fool of herself over a fat woolly dog—those miserable poodles that are always amongst your feet, always snarling, and that you are always wishing would fall into the water-butt.

Then Brummell took to the erection of a picture-screen; an historical, biographical, and memorial screen. He put a portrait in the centre, and then grouped round what he considered the qualities of the man in the border. But a great historic event occurred. George the Fourth was about to visit his Hanoverian subjects, and to pass through Calais. It is said that Brummell went to meet him on landing; but that the Prince took no notice of him. No; the Beau was not the man to do that. The truth is, he was then taking his usual quiet walk, and met the procession as he returned. He was a loyal man to the kingly office, after his loyalty to the person had ceased, so he took off his hat. It is said that George exclaimed, “Good God! there's Brummell,”

and passed on. There is a story that George, who was quite as great a snuff-taker as Brummell, asked the Consul for his box. That high functionary, not being a snuffer, borrowed one of Brummell. The King knew it to be his; so he took a pinch, put a £100 note in it, and sent it back. There were, after all, it seems, some good points about George the King. Brummell took the money. He was not nice about some things, though about personal matters no one could be nicer. For instance, he carried about with him a silver spitting-dish; for no gentleman, he said, could spit in clay.

He went on living this quiet life, until, through the influence of his friends, he was at last appointed British Consul for Lower Normandy. The 10th of September, 1830, was the important period in the world's history. He had every qualification for the office. Had he not taught England how to starch cravats; the greatness of faultless boots, irreproachable gloves, immaculate coats; and to keep its linen clean? He left Calais in debt. To his valet he owed 6162 fr.; 3488 for dinners; 373 to his tailor; 150 to his bootmaker; 176 to the chemists, for cold cream, cosmetics, and eau de Cologne; and to his washerwoman 100 fr. But before he left, he was invited to subscribe for the erection of an Episcopal Chapel. What was his answer? "Really, I am very sorry that you didn't call last week; for it was only yesterday I became a Catholic. However, put me down for 100 fr." It need scarcely be said that Brummell never paid the money. However, he got an invitation to dine with Dr Luscombe, the Bishop; and he excused himself in this admirably truthful letter—a very golden letter from its wit:—

"You must excuse me not having the pleasure to dine with you and the trustees of the Church Establishment this day. I do not feel myself sufficiently prepared in spirit to meet a bishop, or in pocket to encounter the plate after dinner; moreover, I should be a fish out of water in such a convocation."

That he could not encounter the plate was true. Before he left Calais, he had to make an assignment of his salary as Consul to his bankers. At last he set off for Caen, a messenger, a very born footman, going with him. When this man got back, he was asked, "I suppose you found Brummell a very pleasant companion?" "Oh, very pleasant, indeed." "Yes, but what did he say?"

asked the Consul. "Say, sir?" exclaimed the messenger, "why nothing; he slept the whole way." "And you call that pleasant. Perhaps he snored?" "Well, sir, he did; but I must say he snored very much like a gentleman." His whole soul was filled with the high privilege he had enjoyed in having been snored at by Brummell. Having snored his way to Caen, Brummell, without sixpence, a beggar, almost a pauper, began new expenses, ordering a box to be built at the cost of 2500 francs. He was earning calamity.

Well, the lion and unicorn were put up in Caen, and Brummell dwelt beneath them. But there was a man Jones there—a sort of dissatisfied, growling Radical—who severely condemned the Beau's appointment. The Beau determined to conquer Jones. Jones was going to give a dinner. Brummell was not invited; but he said, "I'll go." Jones, on going home, found the Beau seated with Mrs Jones. He had done her that honour, and had brought with him a *pâté de foie gras*, a very triumph of cookery—he would attack Jones in the most assailable point—the weak place everybody has—the love of a good dinner. Jones yielded; he was conquered. The dinner went on; but, much to the Beau's mortification, no *pâté* appeared. His great soul was smitten with sad sorrow, and mourned over the *pâté*; but he had his revenge. He was going away, and, as he was going, he sent his servant to see after the *pâté*. He found it in the kitchen, devoted to the next day's dinner—to the vulgar appetites of the little vulgar Joneses on Master Jones's birthday. He made the servant bear it off in triumph; he put it in his carriage, and thus rescued a *pâté* fit for kings from the picking fingers, and messy, low appetites, of the vulgar little Joneses.

He was then pestered with all sorts of people, wishing to make his acquaintance. One lady was his peculiar horror; and she, watching her opportunity, as he was leaving the hotel, called to him to come up and "take tea." He looked at her with his calm eye: "Madame, you take medicine; you take a walk; you take a liberty; but, madame, you *drink* tea." She never, be sure, asked him to "take tea" again. He was always in difficulties there, although a kind friend, a Mr Armstrong, got him out of many.

Then came the news that the Consulate was to be abolished.



Brummell was asked to resign, and he said he would ; not because he was compelled, but in order that England might have more money to fight the Chinese, and with a hope that he would get a better situation at Havre or in Italy. He got neither ; and Mr Armstrong went to England to raise money for him among his old friends.

Then came a greater blow to the Beau than poverty or death : a stroke of paralysis. But the first touch of paralysis was of another kind—the bailiffs. The bold Beau fled to the bedroom of the landlady, which in France is sacred ; he went further—he got into the wardrobe, and there from amongst the faded contents he sent out his frightened voice, “Madame, do for goodness’ sake, madame, come and take out the key.” Armstrong came back from England with some money, and the Beau left his lodgings, and went to the Hotel d’Angleterre. There he lived till 1834, when another touch of paralysis came. He was at dinner, when he found the soup trickling down his chin. The great man was equal to the occasion ; he put up his handkerchief to his face, and retired so gracefully that nobody knew there was anything the matter. During his illness, he made the acquaintance of a mouse, which he taught and educated most wonderfully. The Beau’s mouse is to be ranked with the mouse of Baron Trenck, or the spider of Silvio Pellico.

But he got lower and lower. His bankers had him arrested ; although out of politeness he had a greater number of *gens d’armes* to accompany him to jail than had ever been seen before. He found it a woeful crib. The man of fine saloons, rich carpets, gorgeous hangings, the first society, found a stone floor, a truckle bed, and a grated window, with nasty people—low, vulgar thieves and murderers—in the next yard. Marius was stunned when *he* fell ; Napoleon losing Moscow was accused of tearing out his hair in stage fashion ;—Brummell sat down and wept in jail. He had lingering thoughts of past comforts ; touching reminiscences of a large basin and a big jug—not the things one sees in France, the toilet-set of a small pint decanter, a shallow pie-dish, and a flimsy pocket-handkerchief by way of a towel. But he had not even food. Thus he writes to a lady :—“You are always good and amiable ; but you will be the best of beings if you will have the kindness to renew your benefaction *en forme de gâteau*. I can

assure you it is my principal nourishment, for the *mesquin* repast they usually send me from the hotel would not be adequate to sustain even a *demoiselle* lost in love. I may represent an additional claim upon your bounty at this moment, my companion; *Minette, la chatte noire*, who is in the straw at my feet, having produced three hungry kittens,—her delicate state disdains the unleavened bread of the prison. I have another favourite belonging to my more private apartment: it is a spider, about the size of a bee, which I have so far *apprivoisée* that it comes regularly to me from its web every morning at seven o'clock, to demand its *déjeuner*. You must forgive, then, my anxiety for the sustenance of these familiar friends as well as my own: they are perhaps the only ones that will soon remain to me. I am sadly out of sorts with the world and with myself; no propitious tidings come to me! Nothing cheers me but the occasional sunbeam that looks in upon me from heaven: when that retires, all is darkness and despondency. It seems to me a century since I have been in this intolerable bondage; every week that lingers away is a year in the calendar of my life."

Brummell was an admirable letter-writer when he chose; and some of his finest sayings in this way were in letters asking for food. Here is another written to Armstrong:—

"I am ignorant both of the name and of the residence of the *traiteur*, or rather traitor, whom you have employed to purvey my daily meal. You shall judge yourself of his liberality, and I will neither exaggerate nor extenuate in my report. Yesterday's portion was the following: *Half* of the skeleton of a pigeon, which I believe was the *moitié* of a crow, buried in rancid butter, and the solitary wing of an unfed *poulet*, without even the consolatory addenda of its *cuisse*; half a dozen potatoes, and, by way of excuse for dessert, half a score of unripe cherries, accompanied by *one* pitiful biscuit that looked like a bad halfpenny. Twice I have beseeched you to send me *three* towels, and to repeat that number every six days. I have been reduced for the last eight-and-forty hours to rub myself down with my dirty shirts, and that resource is now at an end, for they are gone to the washerwoman. I am also in want of some old waistcoats and pantaloons, which are in the drawers of my bureau in my bedroom, at the Hotel d' Angleterre. There was also a pair of *patched* boots in the closet of the sitting-

room ; and in the *armoire* a small glass bottle of Macouba snuff—will you have the goodness to transmit them to me ? ”

The Beau's degradation was complete ; the man of three shirts a day reduced to one a month ; of scrupulous personal cleanness, who “ cut ” a man for cutting his nails in his presence, rubbing himself down with his dirty shirts ; he who annihilated a nobleman by taking his shoes for slippers, anxious about a wretched pair of patched boots. Armstrong set to work again, raised as much money as set him at liberty, and back he went to the hotel, where the landlord found him an excellent sort of decoy duck. It was then he drew his melancholy pun-picture of “ the broken beau ”—Cupid weeping over his shattered weapon.

Down he went still lower : he took to black cravats. That was the last nail in his coffin. His memory began to fail, and urchins in the street to mock him. Then some lady of distinction came *incognito* to see him. Who she was, never could be discovered ; but likely it was some one who had sweet remembrances of other days—long cherished loves for the poor failing man. She saw him as he passed, went off in tears, and was seen no more. He dreamt away his time by the fire, and now and then had the door flung open, and “ the Duchess of Devonshire ” announced, going through all the routine of the old world he had left ; but using their letters—the notes of the noble and great—for shaving papers. At length, he became so poor and filthy that hire would not procure attendance ; and struggling, shrieking, and weeping, under the thought that he was about to be carried off to prison, he was removed to the *Bon Sauveur*, where he was tenderly nursed by the sweet Sisters of Mercy. There he died on the 30th of March, 1840, aged sixty-two years. The reign of beaus is now over ; these times are times of work ; the trumpet-blowers and chief drum-beaters in Vanity Fair would make but a sorry show by the side of the humble, earnest workers in the world, when asked the great question by which all men will be tried, “ What hast thou *done* ? ”

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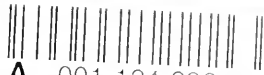




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