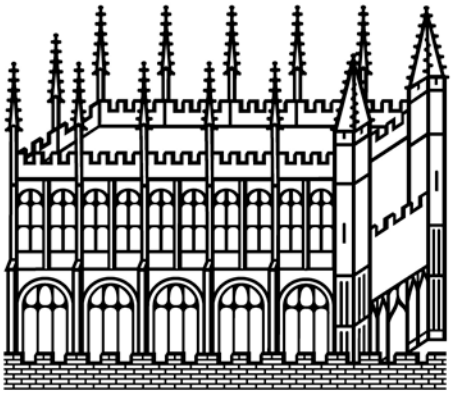

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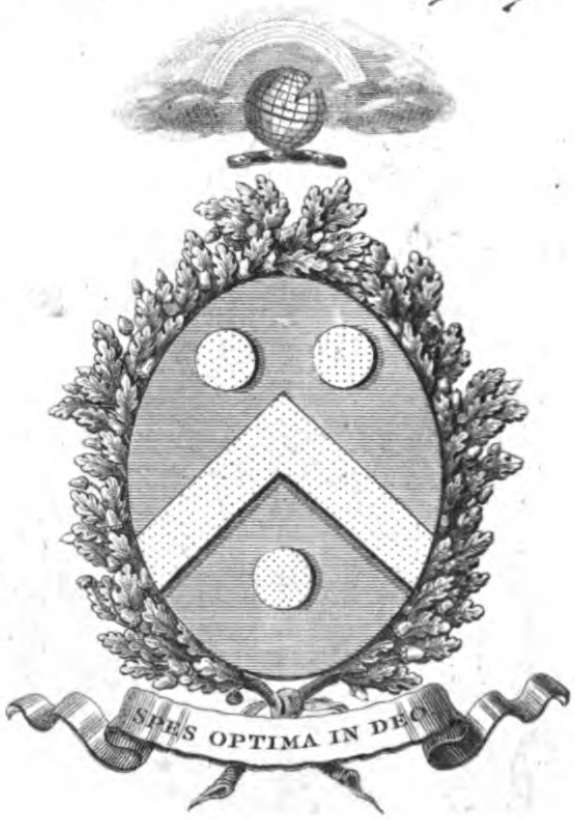

John Thomas Hope.

THE TABLE TALKER

OR BRIEF ESSAYS ON SOCIETY AND LITERATURE

Quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non.

VOL II

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THE TABLE TALKER.

THE FEMININE HEART.

FEW things are more touching to a contemplative and affectionate mind than the meek, patient, enduring, beautiful constancy which the heart of woman so often exhibits. Lord Byron, who, with all his declamation about beauty and passion, did a great deal more by his writings to degrade, than to exalt, the female character, has one passage in particular which has been much admired (and by women too), but which (according to my view of the matter) winds up with one of the most offensive opinions regarding womankind that I have met with in any modern book. The poet makes Donna Julia enter into a sort of comparison of the common fate of men and women, and she expresses herself thus—

" Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence: man may range
The court, camp, church; the vessel and the mart,
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange,

Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these cannot estrange.
Men have all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone."

What sense can we make of such a passage, but this?—that whereas a man, having satiated his love-fit, may occupy his heart with various other things—he may turn to war or politics—to law, physic, or divinity—or even to merchandise; a woman has nothing for it but to try another lover, and be transported again and again by passion into sin.

If this be a fair interpretation of the lines, and I really do not see what other can be put upon them, are they not most insulting to the female character? It is true they are given as part of a letter from a lady, who had previously proved that she was not less impudent than licentious, but it is evident that the letter is intended to be an exquisite description of genuine feminine feelings. It is of this very letter that Mr. Jeffrey speaks, when he says that "the poet chooses to make this shameless and abandoned woman address to her young gallant an epistle breathing the very spirit of warm, devoted, *pure*, and *unalterable* love—thus profaning the holiest language of the heart, and indirectly associating it with the most hateful and degrading sensualism. Thus are our notions of right and wrong at once confounded—our confidence in virtue shaken to the foundation—and

our reliance on truth and fidelity at an end for ever." I cannot tell what induced Mr. Jeffrey to say that a letter, in which the lady-writer of it speaks of loving *again*, and being *again* undone, breathes the spirit of "pure" and "unalterable" love, but it seems most likely that the poet intended the letter to be a very captivating and womanly production. Indeed he makes the Lady Julia say towards the close of her epistle,

> "My heart is feminine, nor can forget,
> To all except one image madly blind;
> So shakes the needle and so stands the pole,
> As vibrates my fond heart to my fix'd soul."

As a general rule I should recommend ladies to allow the fact of their hearts being feminine to be inferred by others rather than asserted by themselves; but there is this excuse for Donna Julia, that if she had not given direct testimony in her heart's behalf, no one would, in all probability, have made the discovery of its feminine character.

How much more beautiful than the lines just quoted (and also in my opinion, how much more true) are the following. I know not by whom they were written. They appeared a long long time ago—not far short of twenty years ago, I rather think, in a London magazine, with the signature "M.":—

> "Whither—ah, whither, is my lost love straying;
> Upon what pleasant land beyond the sea?
> Oh ye winds, now playing,

Like airy spirits round my temples free,
Fly and tell him this from me.

" Tell him, sweet winds, that in my woman's bosom,
My young love still retains its perfect power,
Or, like the summer's blossom,
Still changing from the bud to the full grown flower,
Grows with every passing hour.

" Say, and say gently, that since we two parted,
How little joy, much sorrow I have known,
Only *not* broken-hearted,
Because I muse upon bright moments gone,
And think and dream of him alone."

This is the tender, warm, earnest (but not violent), expression of deep, enduring, fondness, which, when the heart is young, makes it swell until it overflows in tears. Here is nothing about " loving again," as if it were possible for a woman's heart in the full tide of *honest* affection towards one object to speculate upon a complete turning of that tide towards another. Away with such philosophy. Human nature is much to be suspected, but there *is* a virtuous constancy as enduring as life itself, and (it may be hoped) far more so—a well-spring of affection coming up from the very depths of the heart, which gushes out as pure as innocence itself—which even the storms of calamity cannot disturb, and which the heats of passion never will dry up.

FEMALE ATTIRE.

Some Frenchman has remarked that no woman is ugly when she is dressed. This is a clever remark, intended to convey, after the French manner, that a skilful attention to the setting off what is best, and the suppression of what is worst in any lady's appearance, will at least take away from her the reproach of ugliness. I do not consider this beneath the attention of the wise. I am well convinced that to direct my fair friends in general to pay more attention to dress would be a very superfluous piece of advice. I have reason to believe that, so far as exertion and devotedness go, they are quite unimpeachable on this head. There may possibly be some matters to which they give less earnest attention than they ought, but he must be little better than a calumniator who ventures to hint a doubt that, in respect to the affairs of useful or ornamental clothing, they are as earnest or as attentive as it is desirable they should be.

It is, however, one thing to be industriously attentive to any matter, and quite another to direct industry by the rules of science, and to govern attention by the suggestions of taste. I have no desire to enjoin my fair friends to pay more attention to dress, but I may venture to think it within the limits of credibility that they

might make that attention more valuable. As to the Frenchman's suggestion for the avoidance of ugliness, that is a point in which, upon their own account, I know they can have no concern, for let them apply or misapply art as they will, nature will not permit them to look ugly. But then as nobody, but such as are quite shocking, agrees with the poet that beauty is when unadorned adorned the most, even beauty may have some interest in considering dress as an important article of the fine arts. And again, even the beautiful may have *friends* who are not so, and to whom a little judicious advice now and then would be of no inconsiderable service. In short, whichever way we look at the case—either as they themselves are concerned, or as their friends may be, through their assistance—I would suggest that the artistical attention I refer to is founded in benevolence. Whether it be directed to the proper framing and *ajustement* of their own beauty, which is so delightful to behold, or to the mitigation and veiling of certain defects in their friends, which are *not* delightful to behold, the end is the same, namely, the increase of the sum of the happiness of society. If any one doubts that this is virtue, let the heretical person read the philosophical works of Jeremy Bentham, in nine volumes, large octavo.

Now for a little practical application of the philosophy upon which I have had the rashness

to touch: I would in the first place—because I know my fair friends are persons of high spirit—advise them to dispute the *absolute* rule of fashion. The same thing—the same mode of putting it on—will not suit everybody. Yet it is to be feared that for the most part there is a rage for having the thing which is the fashion, without taking into account whether it be really suitable or be not. But deviation from the fashion, or rebellion against it, must be managed with discretion. It is not pleasant to be singular, but skill will show how much of the fashion may be adopted, so as to pay it a certain amount of deferential homage, without going so far as to detract from those gifts of nature which it should be the object of dress to improve.

For example, it may be laid down as a positive fact—at least I suppose it may—that it is not allotted to every beauty in the world to look best with her head dressed *à la* Grisi, without a single curl. There is a certain grandeur, and a certain simplicity of expression, to which it is well suited; but there are several varieties of beauty which I humbly opine it has a tendency to spoil. Nay, I have doubts whether *all* the studious and meditative, are quite right in adopting this *severity* of head-dress to its full extent. I think I remember some such lines as these, which I always thought made rather a pretty picture:

" As o'er that lake, in evening's glow,
The temple threw its length'ning shade,
Upon the marble steps below
There sat a fair Corinthian maid,
Gracefully o'er some volume bending;
While by her side a youthful sage
Held back her ringlets, lest descending
They should o'ershadow all the page."

Now, though a mere utilitarian might deduce from this, that curls are apt to be in the way, yet as I am not of those who pretend that the essential idea of beauty is derived from a sense of utility, I deny the force of such pleading, and contend that the Corinthian maid in question would not have been so happily dressed if she had not had descending curls, or curls liable to descend. I am sure, at all events, that the " youthful sage" was of that opinion, and I very deferentially suggest that he was likely to know best.

Well, then, I would have persons to consider how much of the *ajustement à la Grisi* becomes them. If altogether—very well—so let it be. But, if not, why do not allow the mere novelty of the mode, or what is called the fashion of it, to induce you to discard the finest ringlets in the world, or to bring too much out, features which nature formed with a far more lovely expression than that of boldness.

By the way, whatever the Frenchman may say of the impossibility of his country *women* looking

ugly when they are dressed, there is undoubtedly a fashion now of disfiguring French children, which is called dressing them, and which makes them look fifty times uglier than nature has made them, though the exertions of nature in that respect have been tolerably considerable. The poor little creatures look as if all their hair had been grasped up by some horrible straining engine, and dragged as nearly as possible off their head, in order to be screwed down in a knot at the back. It is as bad as a shaved head, with the addition of suggesting, by sympathy, a sense of pain from the violent dragging of the hair which is made perceptible. It is plain that there is something not exactly as it should be in the Government of the French, or this hideousness would ere now have been suppressed by statute or by *ordonnance*.

Now as to the very very long gowns, which sweep not only ball-rooms, but promenades, in these times, it must be confessed that such as have unproducible ankles show a good taste in adopting them, and a laudable perseverance in encouraging their adoption by others. When the fox lost his tail in a trap, he persuaded all his friends that to be in the fashion they should get rid of their tails. Doubtless had his misfortune been that of having another tail stiched on to his own, he would have brought tails into fashion as long as the trains of 1839. I propose

that any lady having a certificate from her doctor that the exposure of the smallest portion of instep or ankle would not be for the good of her health, should have a license to bury them in the oblivion of several yards of velvet, satin, or muslin, as the case may be; the license, however, not to extend so far as to give them an action of damages against trespassers upon their garments, if not approaching nearer than within three feet six inches of the wearers thereof.

It is not by any means my wish to see the *liberality* of some years ago imitated now, and I think all persons should so accommodate themselves to the fashion as to wear gowns which come down at least within sight of the ground; but assuredly the length to which these garments are now carried cannot be said to be necessary to more than a few, nor are they becoming to all.

As touching the highly important and interesting article of bonnets, it is not to be questioned that to some charming little heads, with faces radiant and brilliant as an opening rose on a bright June morning, the bonnet of the present day is extremely becoming; but it is equally certain that some countenances are more bewitching when shaded in the delightful mystery of a deep bonnet, destructive though it be to the prospects of *collateral* inquisitiveness.

In brief—for were I to touch upon all the

points which start up before me, and not inappropriately either, to the present theme, I might talk on for hours—in brief, I would have my fair friends to proceed, in respect of dress, according to the analogy of Mr. Pope's advice about building and garden making—

> " Consult the genius of the place in all."

Let those who dress consult the genius of the *face* in all, and not only this, but the figure, and the natural air and disposition. But let us have a few lines more of Mr. Pope—

> " To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
> To rear the column or the arch to bend,
> To swell the terrace, or to sink the grot,
> In all, let Nature never be forgot:
> *But treat the goddess like a modest fair,*
> *Nor over dress, nor leave her wholly bare;*
> Let not each beauty every where be spied,
> Where half the skill is decently to hide;
> He gains all points who pleasingly confounds,
> Surprises, varies, and conceals the bounds."

And again, hear the same judicious gentleman—

> " Still follow *sense*, of every art the soul,
> Parts answering parts shall slide into a whole;
> Spontaneous beauties all around advance,
> Start e'en from difficulty, strike from chance;
> Nature shall join you—time shall make it grow
> A work to wonder at."

Alas! no: the analogy stops there; time may add to the beauty of gardens, but there is

another sort of beauty in which we disclaim his aid.

And this puts me in mind of a class of persons whose attention to dress is any thing but skilful. They are generally on what is termed (perhaps erroneously) the wrong side of thirty-five, and being of a mathematical or arithmetical turn of mind, are betrayed into the following error. They know that the drawing-room beauty of a person of eighteen is made up partly of that freshness and brilliancy which belongs to youth, and partly of the dressing which is appropriate to that rosy time of life. Knowing also that with respect to themselves, one of the component parts of this beauty, to wit, the youthfulness, has unfortunately gone away, they think to wake up the same whole, by adding to the youthfulness of dress. This may be very good arithmetic, but it is unquestionably bad dressing. The extremes meet, but they do not blend. They stand out in offensive contrast. The better plan would be to dress beyond "a certain age" rather than below it, as those of a dark complexion think it prudent to wear still darker clothes. As a point of art, therefore, the youthful dressing of those who are no longer youthful is an unmitigated mistake—as an affair of mental taste it is excessively odious—but one must not be too didactic. I am not quite sure, that I ought to have ventured to talk about dress at all: *mais n'importe;* 'tis done now, and

here is a stanza which any one may sing at me who is in the humour:

" But Reason his head-dress so awkwardly wore,
That beauty now liked him still less than before;
While Folly took
Old Reason's book,
And twisted the leaves in a cap of such *ton*,
That Beauty vow'd
(Though not aloud)
She liked him still better in that than his own."

READING FOR LADIES.

HAVE the novels of Sir Walter Scott done any harm to society? Perhaps they have, even from their very excellence. This will seem a paradox, but so do many true things, until by a closer examination we find that to be sequential, which at first sight appeared to be contradictory. Such is the excellence of Sir Walter Scott's novels—so free from all impurity—so full of animating description and elevating sentiment, that they did a great deal towards removing the wholesome prejudice, or precautionary suspicion, regarding that class of books, which at one time, and that not very long ago, prevailed in well brought up families.

Sir Walter prodigiously raised the character of novels, but he could not bequeath that power to his successors in novel writing, which would have made novels continue to be worthy of the character which he imparted to them. Instead

of this, the circulating libraries have been filled for the last ten years, with trash far more deleterious than that which chiefly loaded their shelves from the beginning of the present century until 1815, when the author of "Waverley" threw all the other prose writers of fiction completely into the shade. The novels of Miss Austin, Miss Edgeworth, and even of Miss Burney, all did good, while they interested. Sir W. Scott's wonderful tales induced a certain distaste for the comparative tameness of the works of these lady authors, and since Sir Walter's time, the excitement which he produced by noble means, has been strained after by means the most ignoble. The most deleterious stuff has been cooked up to meet the appetite of a rapidly-reading public, and it is now positively dangerous for a well regulated family to admit within their doors the common run of the "popular novels" which circulating libraries supply.

It therefore seems to me that what Mr. Gisborne says upon the subject of novel-reading, in his essay addressed to the female sex upon the employment of time, is as applicable now as it was when he wrote, and perhaps more so. I request the particular attention of my serious yet cheerful lady listeners, to the extract I am about to quote from Mr. Gisborne, and I call upon them to answer to their own minds whether some of his cautionary remarks will not exactly

apply to the most popular works of fiction which have been lately published:—"There is one species of writings which obtain from a considerable portion of the female sex a reception much more favourable than is accorded to other kinds of composition more worthy of encouragement. It is scarcely necessary to add the name of novels and romances. Works of this nature not unfrequently deserve the praise of ingenuity of plan and contrivance, of accurate and well-supported discrimination of character, and of force and elegance of language. Some of them have professedly been composed with a design to favour the interests of morality. And among those which are deemed to have, on the whole, a moral tendency, a very few, perhaps, might be selected which are not liable to the disgraceful charge of being occasionally contaminated by incidents and passages unfit to be presented to the reader. This charge, however, may so very generally be alleged with justice, that even of the novels which profess high and established reputation, by far the greater number is totally improper in consequence of such admixture, to be perused by the eye of delicacy. Poor, indeed, are the services rendered to virtue by a writer, however he may boast that the object of his performance is to exhibit the vicious as infamous and unhappy, who, in tracing the progress of vice to infamy and unhappiness, *introduces the reader to scenes and language*

adapted to wear away the quick feelings of modesty, which form at once the ornament and the safeguard of innocency; which, like the bloom upon a plum, if once effaced, commonly disappears for ever. To indulge in a practice of reading novels is, in several other particulars, liable to produce mischievous effects. Such compositions are to most persons extremely engaging. That story must be singularly barren or wretchedly told, of which, after having heard the beginning, we desire not to know the end. To the pleasure of knowing the ultimate fortunes of heroes and heroines of the tale, the novel commonly adds, in a greater or in a less degree, that which arises from animated description, from lively dialogue, or from interesting sentiment. Hence the perusal of one publication of this class leads, with much more frequency than is the case with respect to works of other kinds (except perhaps of dramatic writings to which most of the present remarks may be transferred) to the speedy perusal of another. Thus a habit is formed, a habit at first perhaps of limited indulgence, but a habit that is continually found more formidable and more encroaching. The appetite becomes too keen to be denied, and, *in proportion as it is more urgent, grows less nice and select in its fare.*"

This is a long extract, but I think every one of sound judgment and correct taste will admit

that it is well worthy of being attended to. I cannot part with Mr. Gisborne's advice on this subject until I have called attention to a little more of his shrewd and just observation :— "Let it be observed that in exact correspondence with the increase of a passion for reading novels, an aversion to reading of a more improving nature will gather strength. Even in the class of novels least objectionable in point of delicacy, *false sentiment* unfitting the mind for sober life, applause and censure distributed amiss, *morality estimated by an erroneous standard*, and the capricious laws and empty sanctions of honour set up in the place of religion, are the lessons usually presented. There is yet another consequence too important to be overlooked. The catastrophe and the incidents of these fictitious narratives commonly turn on the vicissitudes and effects of a passion the most powerful of all those which agitate the human heart. Hence the study of them frequently creates a susceptibility of impression, and a premature warmth of tender emotions, which, not to speak of other possible effects, have been known to betray young women into a sudden attachment to persons unworthy of their affection, and thus to hurry them into marriages terminating in unhappiness."

The book from which I make these extracts was once put into the hands of most young ladies, who were brought up with elegance and

care. I quote it as an *authority* deserving of respect.

In the same useful book, the author recommends a habit of committing to the memory select and ample portions of poetical compositions, not for the sake of ostentatiously quoting them in mixed company, but for purposes of private improvement. The mind thus becomes stored with a treasure of sentiments and descriptions such as elevate the heart, and add energy and grace to precepts of wisdom and morality. Our author recommends passages from Milton, Thomson, Gray, Mason, Beattie, and Cowper. This is, however, a very limited range. I would certainly have mentioned Shakespeare before Milton, put Goldsmith after Thomson, and in these latter days leave out Mason altogether, and add Walter Scott and Wordsworth. It is strange that Mr. Gisborne should have omitted Goldsmith, whose poetry is a perpetual refreshment to such as love naturalness united with grace, and kindly sentiments endeared by the simplicity, and elevated by the beauty of the language in which they are clothed. There are few enjoyments of a tranquil kind to be preferred to that of getting into a pleasant seat in the shade upon one of those warm summer days,* and travelling with Goldsmith from the first line of his delightful "Traveller" to the

* This was written in June.

last. Kindly affection, mature philosophy, shrewd observation, just balancing of virtues and defects, softening pathos, and elevating sentiment, gradually succeed each other, so sweetly expressed, so felicitously blended, that the mind is borne along, as the body might be in a well-balanced boat upon the gently-moving surface of some delightful stream. Just consider the exquisite propriety of the epithets, and the sweet flow of the harmonious cadences in the opening lines:—

"Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the *lazy* Scheldt, or *wandering* Po,
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor,
Against the *houseless* stranger shuts the door,
Or where Campania's plain *forsaken* lies,
A weary waste, expanding to the skies,
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My HEART, *untravell'd, fondly turns to thee:*
Still to *my brother* turns with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain."

Let any one of manly feeling ponder upon these lines, and we mistake if he will not pay them the tribute of an honest tear.

Consider the united simplicity, elegance, and affectionateness of the lines which immediately follow:—

"Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend;
Blest be that spot where cheerful guests retire,
To pause from toil and trim their evening fire;
Blest that abode where want and pain repair,
And every stranger finds a ready chair;
Blest be those feasts with simple plenty crown'd,
Where all the ruddy family around

Laugh at the jests or pranks which never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale;
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good."

That last line may be well known, but it never can be common-place. Would to Heaven that it were more in the hearts of rich men, and more in the conduct of the powerful; would that that which is lavished upon senseless pomp and prodigality, or worse than that, upon low corruption and base animal sensuality, were devoted to the "luxury of doing good." But let us be thankful that even in this respect, things are not worse than they are. There is in this country a great deal devoted to the luxury of doing good, and this luxury is unostentatious, and vaunteth not itself, while folly and preposterousness delight in an insulting publicity. But let us turn again to Goldsmith:—

"Even now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down, a pensive hour to spend;
And placed on high, above the storm's career,
Look downward where a hundred realms appear,
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings—the shepherd's humbler pride.
When thus creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store should thankless pride repine?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good which makes each humbler bosom vain?"

The philosopher answers in the negative, and wisely resolves that his universal sympathy should take in all, and rejoice with all the good that he beholds, whether it be humble or elevated

in its character. But then comes the natural feeling of the unsatisfyingness of the whole world to the human soul, which, by the constitution which its Maker has given it, yearns after something better—after a less broken happiness, a less chequered condition:—

"As some lone miser, visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er;
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still.
Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
Pleased with each good that Heaven to man supplies;
Yet oft a sigh prevails and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small;
And oft I wish, amidst the scene to find
Some spot to real happiness consign'd,
Where my worn soul, each wand'ring hope at rest,
May gather bliss to see my fellows blest."

What an exquisite aspiration of benevolence! The lines that follow possess an *energy* which is perhaps the rarest excellence in Goldsmith's poetry:—

"But where to find that happiest spot below
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shudd'ring tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease;
The naked negro, panting at the Line,
Boasts of his golden sands, and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave;
Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
His first, best country, ever is his home."

All these fine and touching ideas are to be

found in the prologue of one short poem by Goldsmith! How different from the inane verbosity which book makers now-a-days amass into volumes.

DESPOTISM AND OBEDIENCE.

Despotism, when viewed as the attribute of a person or a party, is unspeakably hateful. The exercise of mere power upon the uncontrolled suggestion of human wilfulness—of the slow mistakes of prejudice, or the impetuous injustice of passion—is frightful to behold, and every honest and courageous man ought to resist it by all lawful means. Nevertheless "the despotism of the law"—though there may be some degree of needless pomposity in the expression—signifies an excellent thing, well worthy of the respect of society. The despotism of the law is the direct antagonist of personal or party despotism. I speak not now of countries where the will of an individual is law, and where consequently the law is as unstable as the temper of him who makes it. I speak of our own country, where law is a deliberate and solemnly arranged thing, to which the consent of various ranks and classes of the people is necessary. In such a case, the despotism of the law is to party or personal despotism, as the judgment of the whole is to the

wilfulness of a part. The only true representation which exists of the judgment or deliberate will of the whole nation, is that which the law affords. When any body of men, no matter what their station may be, who have not the authority to make laws, presume to set up their will in opposition to the law's decree, they make an insolent attempt to exercise despotism, and they deserve to be punished. Such a body of men, though they should be those who take a part in the making of laws, are yet but a part, and it is insolent tyranny if they set up their will against the judgment of the whole, which is expressed in the law of the land.

Some people think that there is something very fine in despotism. It touches their imagination, and they look upon it as the poetry of power. This is the rhodomontade of sentiment —it is unspoken rhapsody—and, when brought under the consideration of sober judgment, is discovered to be sheer folly. Power is indeed a grand thing; but if severed from wisdom and benevolence, it is at best a Satanic grandeur. When united with a waspish temper and a strutting vanity, its grandeur is lost, and it becomes merely hateful and disgusting. Moreover, religion dictates, and experience teaches, that the true elevation of humanity lies at the opposite pole. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. It is well said by Mr. Farquhar Tupper, in his "Proverbial Philosophy:"

" There is nothing on earth so lowly but duty giveth it importance;
No station so degrading but it is ennobled by obedience."

Let it be first determined where obedience is really due, and then he that is faithful in obedience does really soar above even the best administrator of mere power. All human power, when rightly exercised, is a form of obedience to some recognized authority—to some principle which has been determined to be just—or towards some end which has been ascertained to be lawful.

LONDON IN SUMMER.

How wearisome is the crash, and jangling, and hurrying to and fro of London streets, in this June weather, when the sun is glaring and hot, and seems to order one away to the woods and to the running brooks! How very unpleasant the soot-flakes settling upon one's nose, and slowly commingling with the skin's moisture, forming into those particulars which taken in the aggregate constitute a dirty face! How afflicting are the Courts of Law—the thick wigs, and the obstreperousness of forensic eloquence! How dreadful the thought of being a Member of the House of Commons! How senseless and soporific does the system of popular legislation seem! Think of spending the whole of a fine day in

June listening to the wrangling of barristers, the stupidity and terror of witnesses on an election committee, and then having for recreation in the evening a discussion upon ballot, or some such interesting subject, in a company of five hundred people of more than average slovenliness and noisiness. Really it must be allowed that such of our M. P.'s as are capable of feeling do suffer for their country in no inconsiderable degree.

One can fancy the bustle of London and the burden of legislation as less unnatural and unendurable amid the sleet and slush of winter, but *now* the contemplation of them is very nauseous. At this very time the country is in its richest dress of green and gold, and pouring forth sweets from hedgerow, and wood, and field. The breeze that sweeps over bean blossoms and flowering clover is inexpressibly delicious, and woods and fields are full of song.

> " Sometimes a-rising to the sky,
> We hear the skylarks sing;
> Sometimes all little birds that are,
> How they seem to fill the earth and air
> With their sweet jargoning."

True the noonday is very hot, but then it is not a *stew*, as in London. One may get out of the sun's way into the quiet shade. And then how rich, and soft, and beautiful, the evenings! How mellow and pleasant the song of the thrush and the blackbird! In what a blaze of glory the sun

goes down, and how delicately beautiful the quiet radiance of the moon! and the brooks, how soothing is their voice even in the still night—

> "A noise like of a hidden brook
> In the leafy month of June,
> That to the sleeping woods all night
> Singeth a quiet tune."

But in London there are the opera, and state balls, and morning concerts, and afternoon *déjunés*, and sundry other such delights. Well, well! Let them be—people *will* go on, reforming and altering everything but what they ought to reform and alter.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

Mr. Hartley Coleridge, in the essay introductory to his "Biographia Borealis," has some remarks upon the distinction between biography and history, which are highly interesting for the astuteness of observation which they display, and for the happiness of their expression. Taking history in its largest sense, and therefore including biography, he describes it in the following terms of condensed comprehensiveness:—"By history, we mean all such knowledge as rests upon testimony, as distinguished from science, which is grounded on demonstration, or on experiment." Mr. Hartley Coleridge, however, considers it more for his purpose to

consider biography as the *antithesis* of history, that is to *divide* the knowledge of the past, founded on testimony, into history and biography. The distinction he makes is, as he expresses it, not between an inclusive *greater* and an included *less*, as geography is distinguished from topography; but rather such as obtains between mechanical philosophy and chemistry, the former of which calculates the powers of bodies in mass, the latter analyses substances, and explains their operations by their composition.

He then proceeds to point out that the acts of individuals, or rather the narrations of such, when these acts are treated of only in relation to their bearing upon public interests, are to be taken as history, while, on the other hand, the private memoirs even of a public man are not history, but biography—" if the man be regarded as a state engine, no matter whether he be the steam engine that sets the whole in motion, or one of the most insignificant spindles —if his fortune be set forth, not for any personal interest to be taken therein, but merely as an instance, proof, cause, or consequence of the general destiny—such an account, though it admitted nothing, that did not originate from or tend towards a single person, ought not to be called a biography, but a history. Thus Robertson's ' Charles V.' is not a life of Charles V. but a history of Europe in the age of Charles V."

The marking out of distinctions of this kind is a nice exercise of the mind, and fits it for closer appreciations of truth. But we have yet to notice Mr. H. Coleridge's happiest instance of clear compression in this essay. The following brief sentence gives a very clear notion of what is strictly history—" What to one age is *politics* becomes *history* to all that succeed."

As to the benefit to be derived from the respective studies of history and biography, Mr. Coleridge states, that much has been said about the usefulness of history, meaning thereby the history of nations, and hardly too much can be said, if regard be had to the community and its rulers, for it makes the past a factor to buy up experience for the present, and enables the purged eye to " look into the seeds of time." But, he continues, if the consideration be private fireside *moral* usefulness, the benefits of historical reading, as a necessary department of education, or a profitable employment of leisure hours, have been very much exaggerated.

With all this I heartily agree; but I would have my readers to observe the distinction between saying that the benefits of historical reading have been exaggerated, and denying that any benefit has been derived. By people in general, history should be known, and biography should be studied.

COUNTRY SQUIRES.

JUDGE BLACKSTONE, in his commentaries upon the laws of England, has contrived to treat excellently well a subject commonly held to be dry and repulsive, and with less of dryness and repulsiveness than frequently belongs to sciences far more popular than law. There is considerable mildness in his gravity, and he sometimes indulges in a little sally of satire, after a fashion equally pleasant and unassuming. Thus when speaking of the laws respecting the rights of the chase, &c. he mentions that Cæsar said of the Germans, "vita omnis in venationibus atque in studiis rei militaris consistit;" and Tacitus said that "quoties bella non ineunt, multum venatibus plus per otium transigunt;" and, indeed, continues Blackstone, "*like some of their modern successors*, they had no other amusement to entertain their vacant hours, despising all arts as effeminate, and having no other learning than was couched in such rude ditties as were sung at the solemn carousals which succeeded these ancient huntings."

Since Blackstone's time, which is "sixty years since," or thereabouts, be the same more or less, the race of English hunting squires, whom he no doubt points at in these remarks, has much decayed. Is this a circumstance at

which to rejoice? Have their successors become honester or better men?

Lord Byron, in some of the freest and least affected of his lines, has said

"There are now no Squire Westerns as of old,
And our Sophias are not so emphatic,
But fair as then, or fairer to behold;
We have no accomplish'd blackguards, like Tom Jones,
But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones."

Undoubtedly there is something too much of this even in the country, and one is doomed over and over again to see those who ought to know better, sacrificing that heartiness and rustic fervour, which would well become them, to a nice fastidiousness and an aping of the fine gentleman, which is at once absurd and hurtful. Certainly a man may do better than gallop about every day that he does not shoot, and then get drunk and clamorous after dinner. I do not want *that* extreme as a profitable reform of existing habits, but I would have people remember that the country is country, and should be treated accordingly. The indifference, the fastidiousness, and the looking to one's self alone, which grow out of metropolitan habits, where the intrusion of the multitude would be unbearable, and where there is an opportunity, if not a necessity, for hundreds of different sorts of occupation—these things are nothing better than churlishness or effeminacy in the country. In the country, every one is of some importance

to his neighbours, and this he should remember. He cannot get rid of people as in town, nor can people get rid of him, and (if need be) he should be ready to "*suffer* for his *country*." But there ought not to be any suffering in the case; nor would there be, if ladies and gentlemen would be pleased but to cultivate kindness and cordiality of manners, with but half the assiduity which they are willing to devote to artificial pomp and preposterous affectations.

PARKS AND GAME.

BLACKSTONE has another "satiric touch" when he comes to treat of "Parks." A forest, he says, being in the hands of a subject, is properly the same thing with a chase, being subject to the common law and not to the forest laws. But a chase differs from a park, in that it is not enclosed, and also in that a man may have a chase in another man's ground as well as in his own, being indeed the liberty of keeping beasts of chase or Royal game therein, with a power of hunting them thereon. "A *park* is an enclosed chase extending only over a man's own grounds. The word *park*, indeed, properly signifies an enclosure, *but yet it is not every field or common which a gentleman pleases to surround with a wall or paling, and to stock with a herd of deer, that is thereby constituted a*

legal park: for the King's grant, or at least immemorial prescription, is necessary to make it so." Presently afterwards the Learned Judge waxes almost abusive, telling his readers that beasts and fowls of warren, which, as *feræ naturæ*, every one had a natural right to kill as he could, were looked upon after the Norman conquest, and the introduction of the forest laws, as "Royal game, and the sole property of our *savage Monarchs*."

Sir Edward Coke says, that beasts of park or chase are properly buck, doe, fox, martin, and roe, but, in a common and legal sense, extend likewise to all the beasts of the forest; which besides the other, are reckoned to be hart, hind, hare, boar, and wolf, and, in a word, all wild beasts of venery or hunting. The beasts of warren he says, are hares, coneys, and roes; the fowls of warren are either *campestres*, as partridges, rails, and quails, or *sylvestres*, as woodcocks and pheasants, or *aquatiles*, as mallards and herons. Manwood, an old writer of great authority in forest law, says, that the hart and the hind and the hare are beasts of the forest; the buck, the doe, and the fox are beasts of the chase; the hare, the coney, the pheasant, and the partridge are beasts and fowls of warren. The game of free warren he also defines to be such as may be taken with long-winged hawks. Some years ago it was decided in Westminster Hall that *grouse* are not birds of warren.

Blackstone says, there were many instances of keen sportsmen in ancient times who have sold their estates, and reserved the free warren, or right of killing game, to themselves. The practice has so much changed since Blackstone's day, and even within the last five years, that it has become no uncommon thing for persons who keep their estates to sell their game. Not being a favourer of the mercantile interest in such matters, I would recommend that both practices should be avoided, and that the game and the estate should remain in the same hands.

COMMERCE AND TASTE.

Some years ago the President of the Royal Academy (Sir M. A. Shee), in an address to the students of painting, stated his opinion that the application of commercial principles to the pursuits of taste, and the want of a patronage similar to that which the old masters received from the Church, were two of the causes which had checked the ardour of the British students. Herein his Presidentship did, in my humble judgment, rightly speak; and I fear that things even more important than those which come within the limits of "the pursuits of taste," have had a downward tendency, in consequence of the application to them of "commercial principles." So long as commerce is kept within its

proper limits, and greater things are held in proportionably greater honour, it is a wonderful basis of power and intelligence, of wealth, and of liberty. But when the commercial principle grows rank and runs to seed—when it overgrows and chokes up the spirit of the patriot, the enthusiasm of the poet, the devotedness of the artist, or even the humbler feelings, and nobler aims of the merchant,—it becomes a national evil. Poverty were far better than an all-engrossing commercial spirit. When our merchants are as Princes, it is time to halt. Woe to that nation whose Princes and Nobles, or even whose gentry, become imbued with the spirit of traffic and gain—with the commercial principle.

KINDNESS TO THE POOR.

It is strange that the rich should not glory in being the protectors of the poor. It is most pitiful to see them rather hunting for excuses to keep aloof from the poor as from a plague. The end of this, if carried to a great extent, would be the downfall of the rich, for Heaven allows such inequalities as exist, and man submits to them, upon a general plan of those who have more than enough, taking care of those who want. It is beyond question, that many of the poor are very provoking in their improvidence,

and not a little dishonest in their representations; but these things might be much corrected by a frank and patient mode of dealing with them. There are some lines by Robert Southey, supposed to be addressed by a poor woman, as a *remonstrance* to a traveller, which seem to me to be full of most affecting instruction to both rich and poor, as to the heartlessness of one class, and the hasty improvidence of the other.

" WOMAN.

Ay! idleness! the rich folks never fail
To find some reason why the poor deserve
Their miseries! Is it idleness, I pray you,
That brings the fever or the ague fit?
That makes the sick one's sickly appetite
Turn at the dry bread and potato meal?
Is it idleness that makes small wages fail
For growing wants? Six years agone these bells
Rung on my wedding day, and I was told
What I might look for—but I did not heed
Good counsel. I had lived in service, sir;
Never knew what it was to want a meal;
Lay down without one thought to keep me sleepless
Or trouble me in sleep; had for a Sunday
My linen gown, and when the pedlar came
Could buy me a new ribbon. And my husband—
A towardly young man, and well to do—
He had his silver buckles and his watch;
There was not in the village one who look'd
Sprucer on holidays. We married, sir,
And we had children, but as wants increased
Wages did not. The silver buckles went;
So went the watch; and when the holiday coat
Was worn to work, no new one in its place.
For me——you see my rags! But I deserve them;
For wilfully, like this new-married pair,
I went to my undoing.

TRAVELLER.

But the parish——

WOMAN.

Ay, it falls heavy there; and yet their pittance
Just serves to keep life in. A blessed prospect!
To slave while there is strength; in age the workhouse;
A parish shell at last; and the little bell
Toll'd hastily for a pauper's funeral.

TRAVELLER.

Is this your child?

WOMAN.

Ay, sir; and were he drest
And clean'd he'd be as fine a boy to look on
As the squire's young master. These thin rags of his
Let comfortably in the summer wind;
But when the winter comes it pinches me
To see the little wretch! I've three besides,
And .... God forgive me! but I often wish
To see them in their coffins .... God reward you;
God bless you for your charity!

TRAVELLER.

You have taught me
To give sad meaning to the village bells!"

Here is *instruction;* instruction for the hearts of the rich and for the understandings of the poor. Servants, and others in similar situations of personal comfort, and freedom from personal cares, ought to remember how well they are off, and to beware of placing themselves in the condition which the poor woman so forcibly and so pathetically describes. On the other hand, they who by a little help, not only of money, but of advice, and instruction, and sympathy, can keep away such bitterness from the hearts of the poor, why should they not do so? why should they think only of errors

which cannot be reversed, instead of consequences which may be alleviated? Have they no errors of their own to think of, which if similarly visited would make them miserable too? O! it is a shame to be wise above the dictates of humanity, or to harden the heart by way of enlightening the understanding.

INVISIBLE EXISTENCES.

In the lately published life of Mrs. Hemans, there is an extract from one of her letters, in which she describes the life she led when living in Mr. Wordsworth's neighbourhood. "His kindness," she says, "has inspired me with a feeling of confidence, which it is delightful to associate with those of admiration and respect, before excited by his writings; and he has treated me with so much *consideration, and gentleness, and care!* I wish I had time to tell you of mornings which he has passed in reading to me, and of evenings when he has walked beside me whilst I rode through the lovely vales of Grassmere and Rydal; and of his beautiful, sometimes half unconscious recitation, in a voice so deep and solemn that it has often brought tears into my eyes. One little incident I *must* describe. We had been listening during one of these evening rides to various sounds and notes of birds, which broke upon the still-

ness, and at last I said, 'Perhaps there may be a deeper and richer music pervading all nature than we are permitted in this state to hear.' He answered by reciting those glorious lines of Milton's—

'Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep,' &c.

And this in tones that seemed rising from such depths of veneration! I cannot describe the thrill with which I listened; it was like the feeling which Lord Byron has embodied in one of his best and purest moments, when he so beautifully says—

'And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd with prayer.'"

It does not appear that the lines which Mrs. Hemans says were quoted by Mr. Wordsworth contained an apt or close illustration of her remark, but they did better, as carrying the mind into a more natural train of thought with which her remark indicated that his listener was ready to sympathise. The theory of spiritual existences, even in this place of our earthly abode, is one upon which those of an imaginative and pensive cast of mind are prone to dwell; nor is such a theory unaccordant with the general analogy of nature, for since every aid which we can artificially provide to the finer organs of our sense discovers to us new

realms of *life*, new tribes of existing creatures, what may we not analogically suppose would be the discoveries we should make, if new senses were added to those with which we are endowed! Nay, reason leads us rather to conjecture than to disbelieve that existences not spiritual merely, but with finely-organized bodies, are dwelling round about us, for who shall say (judging from analogy) that the fathomless abyss of air, which we call empty space, is uninhabited? The very atmosphere we breathe is a gross and heavy substance compared with another, which we well know, namely, pure hydrogen gas. Now, the more we examine into creation, the more evidence do we find of its illimitable character—nothing is so vast but that something more huge seems yet beyond; nothing is so minute but that it seems to infold something that is more minute; and contemplating this character of creation, we are led to conclude that *there may be* creatures dwelling around us, perhaps, for aught we can tell, of much larger mental endowments than ourselves, possessed of organization so fine that the common air is to them as ponderous as earth and stone to us. If any cunning philosopher should ask me how they get through it, then I must have the honour of informing him that I really don't exactly know, but perhaps the next time he uncorks a bottle of hydrogen gas in the open air he will take the trouble of guessing for him-

self. But what becomes of them in the violent concussions and disturbances of the air which we of the grosser mould call storms? I remember asking that question once upon a time when the moon was full, and "certain stars shot madly from their spheres." There came an answer by the old twopenny post from Mount Parnassus to the following effect:—

O'er the green waves of ocean
We bound away;
With insensible motion
Skim o'er the spray;
When the storm howls loud,
We mount on a cloud,
By the blast
We are cast
Far away! away!

When the thunder is roaring,
And lightnings flash;
When the rain is down pouring,
With ceaseless plash;
In the clear sky
Above, we fly,
Not fearing,
Not hearing,
The stormy crash.

When the hubbub is over,
The sky serene,
In the pure air we hover,
Unseen! unseen!
The rainbow we climb,
From the height sublime,
We descry,
Through the sky,
The smiling land, and the ocean green!

A pleasant occupation enough, that of climbing

rainbows must be, especially when it is not in the least perilous. I know nothing to compare with it down here below, except it be roaming through *chateaux d'Espagne* of one's own building, which happily one may do while reclining *sub tegmine fagi*, and

"Lull'd by falling waters"

in a mild summer twilight.

Coleridge appears to have been partial to noonday laziness, and very odd reveries he indulged in while basking in the sunshine, half asleep, or perhaps something more. But take his own account of the matter:—

"As on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
Whilst through my half-closed eyelids I behold
The sunbeams dance like diamonds on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;
Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
And many idle flitting phantasies
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
As wild and various as the random gales
That swell or flutter on this subject lute!
And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them creeps,
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze
At once the soul of each, and God of all."

The last five lines are surely mystical enough, even for a German taste.

Wordsworth is tolerably plain upon the theory of life everywhere:—

"The stars are mansions built by nature's hand;
The sun is peopled, and with spirits bless'd,

Say, can the gentle moon be unpossess'd?
Huge ocean shows within his yellow strand
A habitation marvellously plann'd,
For life to occupy in love and rest;
All that we see is dome, or vault, or nest,
Or fort, erected at her sage command,
Is this a vernal thought? Even so, the spring
Gave it while cares were weighing on my heart,
'Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring;
And while the youthful year's prolific art—
Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower—was fashioning
Abodes where self-disturbance hath no part."

The question whether the disembodied souls of those who have dwelt in this world ever revisit this scene of their earthly pilgrimage has been always a debateable and debated question, and probably will be so to the end of time. In such a matter it is so hard to decide between what may have been a delusion of the mind and what has seemed to be a reality, of which the existence is independent of the mind that perceives it—(the followers of the Berkleian theory must for the present excuse me)—this point has been so hard to decide, that mankind have never arrived at what may be emphatically called a "*dead* certainty" regarding it, and very likely they never will.

But there are probably not many who have had the misfortune (and well it may be called so, for of all earthly calamities it is the sharpest) to lose those whom they were united to by the dearest bonds of affection and familiarity—there are probably not many such bereaved ones, who

have not, at some time or another, felt a strong impression—half-fearful, half consolatory—that the spirit of the dead in body is actually present with them. As this impression generally comes on in a lonely walk—perhaps in the twilight—or in some chamber from which, through very association of grief, the gladsome light of day is excluded, and *visions* of the departed are, as it were, invited; there is doubtless much reasonableness on the side of the supposition that these visitations are but mental delusions. Yet, for the time, with what a sad reality they are fraught!

There is a translation from a short poem, by a German author, in which the story of an impression of this kind is beautifully told. These are the verses:—

"Many a year is in its grave
Since I pass'd this restless wave,
And the evening, fair as ever,
Shines on ruin, rock, and river.

"Then in this same boat beside
Sat two comrades, old and tried;
One, with all a father's truth,
One with all the fire of youth.

"One on earth in silence wrought,
And his grave in silence sought,
But the younger, brighter form,
Pass'd in battle and in storm.

"So where'er I turn mine eye
Back upon the days gone by,
Sadd'ning thoughts of friends come o'er me,
Friends that closed their course before me!

" But what binds us, friend to friend?
'Tis that soul with soul can blend!
Soul-fraught were those hours of yore;
Let us walk in soul once more!

" Take, O boatman, thrice thy fee,
Take;—I give it willingly!
For, invisible to thee,
Spirits twain have cross'd with me."

There is something sweet as well as sad even in the very abruptness of these lines. Beautifully is the evening scene upon the river brought before us, and full of music is the couplet—

" And the evening, fair as ever,
Shines on ruin, rock, and river."

Then we have the character of the two friends, and their different fate, and upon the events, arise the sad thoughts, which summon, as it were by the mysterious power of strong affection, the souls of the departed to the company of that other soul, still in the body. The last stanza gives us the conviction of the passenger that his friends were once more with him in his passage across the river. Seldom do we find so much, in so few lines, either of narrative, reflection, or simple and pathetic beauty.

GOLDSMITH'S TRAVELLER.

* This being about the time that in England

> "all mankind agree
> With one consent to rush across the sea,"

I remember me of my promise, made not very long ago,† to have some further and more excursive discourse about Goldsmith's simply beautiful poem "The Traveller." I have already touched upon the philosophy of the opening part of the poem—its warm affectionateness, and tender sentiment. Let us, while the attendants are packing our luggage and procuring our passports, have a few more words upon the most general of all questions, which this poem also touches upon, namely, the pursuit and attainment of happiness.

In kingdoms or communities there seems to be, as in individual men, a principle of unsatisfyingness. That which seems good while it has to be sought, is found upon attainment to be either insipid, and rather to be endured than enjoyed, or it bears with it some seeds of evil which cannot be prevented from growing up, and mixing

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* This was written in July.

† In the essay which is given in this collection, under the title of "Reading for Ladies."

a poison with that which had been laboured for as altogether excellent. No man nor community can be happy upon theory, or because upon principles of ethics, or political economy, either one or the other *ought* to be so. The general lot, even in this world, is so far equal, that he who possesses a thing cannot *feel* how good it is, nearly so much as he who has it not perceives it to be. As objects require to be at some distance from the eye in order to be discerned, so it would seem, they must be some distance from actual possession in order that the agreeableness of possessing them may be appreciated.

Thus Goldsmith comes to the conclusion, that, various as are the condition and circumstances of different nations, nature is a mother kind alike to all:—

> "With food as well the peasant is supplied,
> On Idra's cliff, as Arno's shelvy side;
> And though the rocky-crested summits frown,
> These rocks, by custom, turn to beds of down."

But what more concerns us in England is this:—

> "Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails;
> And honour sinks where commerce long prevails."

These are principles not very likely to obtain popular acceptation in an age which is mad with steam and railroads, and with a rage for getting and spending at a rate which casts all moderation

into contempt; but I believe them to be not far wrong, as deductions from experience, and even all the velocity of steam, and all the sublimities of mechanics, cannot carry us beyond that.

But our passports and baggage are now ready, so let us borrow the aid of the muse's wing, and seat ourselves beside the poet, "where Alpine solitudes ascend." The thoughts he has been indulging in about mankind have made him melancholy:—

> "Here for a while, my proper cares resign'd,
> Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind;
> Like yon neglected shrub, at random cast,
> That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast."

Perhaps it might not be very easy to show the particular circumstances which constituted the resemblance between the poet sorrowfully meditating upon the condition of mankind, and the "shrub" above mentioned, nor to defend the strict accuracy of the affirmation that the said shrub was guilty of that pensive expiration which we call a sigh. I must leave these points to the vengeance of the severer critics, and beg of them to supply something better if they can. I acknowledge that in my own opinion, poetry should never be opposed to common sense. But let us hasten to the beautiful lines in which the general features of Italy are brought before the mind's eye:—

> "Far to the right, where Appenine ascends,
> Bright as the summer, Italy extends;

Its uplands, sloping, deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods, in gay, theatric pride;
While oft some temple's mould'ring tops between
With memorable grandeur mark the scene."

He then proceeds to dwell upon the delightful climate and luxuriant vegetation of the garden of Europe, and thus contrasts both with our northern region :—

" Whatever sweets salute the northern sky,
With vernal lives, that blossom but to die,
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil;
While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand
To *winnow fragrance* round the smiling land."

But this luxuriance of climate and of vegetation, is the sole advantage of boasted Italy. The dignity of man, and the virtues of society, belong not to that land which is so rich in nature's gifts. Goldsmith is nowhere happier than in the niceness of distinction, and justness of harmonious expression, with which the Italian people are presented to the reader's view :—

" But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear,
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign :
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;
And, even in penance, planning sins anew."

Here one may recognise that judgment and nice discrimination of character, as applied to masses, which Goldsmith afterwards displayed

with respect to individuals, in his famous poem of "Retaliation," where in so masterly a manner he sketches Burke, Reynolds, Garrick, and the rest.

The poet proceeds to notice the evils which prevail in Italy, as those which are left behind by departed opulence, and shows in a few lines of great force the fugitive nature of commercial wealth, and the splendid desolation which succeeds when commerce has departed :—

> "Till more unsteady than the southern gale,
> Commerce on other shores display'd her sail;
> While nought remain'd of all that riches gave,
> But towns unmann'd and lords without a slave;
> And late the nation found, with fruitless skill,
> Its former strength was but plethoric ill."

It is curious and mournful to see that notwithstanding the distinct lesson which history teaches of the migratory character of commercial greatness—of the certainty that it will not make any quarter or kingdom of the earth its permanent abiding place—still we find legislatures and nations ready to act as if history taught no such lesson. We still find men of great powers of observation and reflection willing to sacrifice every precaution which ought to be taken against the evanescence of commercial superiority, and to make all the higher interests of a nation dependent, not on *its own* resources, but its profitable intercourse with other kingdoms. In this matter even the Chinese are wiser than

we, and the result is that the Chinese empire endures, while others which began their race when it was old, have gone down the stream of time, and exist only in the page of history.

The poet turns his eye to Switzerland, and his language seems to soar like the mountains of the land he contemplates:—

"Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansions tread,
And force a churlish soil for scanty bread."

How exquisite the well-known allusion to their climate:—

"No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter ling'ring chills the lap of May:
No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast;
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest."

After a charming and a much too favourable description of the lives of the Swiss peasantry—(the scoundrel armies of the French Revolutionists had not, however, overrun and polluted Switzerland in Goldsmith's time)—he proceeds with the following noble poetry:—

"Thus every good his native wilds impart
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;
And e'en those hills that round his mansion rise
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies;
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,
But bind him to his native mountains more."

Goldsmith, however, is too keen an observer,

and too scrupulous a lover of truth, to omit the darker side of the Swiss picture. He dwells upon the coarseness of their social enjoyments, and then proceeds to higher matters :—

" But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow ;
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low ;
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son,
Unalter'd, unimproved, the manners run,
And love's and friendship's finely-pointed dart
Falls blunted from each indurated heart.
Some sterner virtues, o'er the mountain's breast,
May sit like falcons cow'ring on the nest,
But all the *gentler morals*, such as play
Through life's more cultured walks and charm the way,
These, far dispersed, on tim'rous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky."

The kinder skies to which the poet turns are those of France, but his remarks are devoted almost solely to the people and not to the climate. The people of France, their circumstances, their manners, their very temper and disposition, have been so changed by the terrible social tempest of fifty years ago, and the events that followed it, that we fear few modern observers of France and the French would subscribe to the accuracy of Goldsmith's sketch ;—

" Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleased with thyself; whom all the world can please."

It is well known that Goldsmith—himself, by the way, one of the easiest-tempered of men —pleased the French by playing on the flute for them. They danced, and fed, and lodged the musician :—

" And haply though my harsh touch, falt'ring still,
But mock'd all tune and marr'd the dancer's skill,
Yet would the village praise my wondrous pow'r,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour,
Alike all ages;—dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze;
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore,
Has frish'd beneath the burden of threescore;
So blest a life these thoughtless realms display,
Thus idly busy rolls their world away."

Revolution, and fierce wars, and shedding of blood, and habits of licensed robbery in foreign kingdoms, *avaient changé tout cela*. Goldsmith lays down "honour" (which he somehow or another seems to confuse with love of applause) as the *primum mobile* of French society in his time. It is now a strange mixture of ferocity and extravagance, which they call *gloire*.

Our poet thus alludes to their excessive itch of praise:—

" For praise too dearly loved, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought;
And the weak soul, within itself unblest,
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast;
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart;
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,
And trims her robe of frieze with copper lace;
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year;
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause."

From France the poet turns to Holland—not rich, one might suppose, in subjects for description—and yet his description of the

country is exquisitely beautiful and strikingly true. Upon the people we think he is more severe than he need have been; but certainly there is little in ordinary Dutch temper with which the graceful and merry mind of Goldsmith would be likely to sympathise.

GOVERNMENT.

THEY who give themselves up to the consideration of politics on a very large scale, especially patriotic porkmen, liberal leather-cutters, and the like, are very apt to think more than they ought to think, of the importance of this or that abstract rule or principle of government. The truth is, that man is a *conformable* sort of animal; and be the rule of government what it may, if it be but distinctly declared, and steadily adhered to, without *fear* or *favour*, the people may get on pretty well. That which most interferes with the reasonable tranquillity of society, and most seriously wars against *real* freedom, is uncertainty as to the conduct of Government. When men know what is to happen they make provision accordingly. If the rule be too hard to bear they remove themselves. But where there is perpetual change, or fear of change, there also there is disquietude, and disquietude begets conspiracy, and conspiracy begets tumult, and society is torn to pieces.

Thucydides says, that "that city which is governed by the worse laws, but those firm and stable, is in a safer condition than the city where the laws are better and more eligible in their original institution, but where they are administered in a loose and fluctuating manner." This wisdom, which is now of the venerable age of twenty-two hundred years and upwards, is, we venture to affirm, quite as sound as any principle which modern enlightenment has exposed to us in the science of government.

Some of our listeners will perhaps by this time be repeating to themselves the well-known couplet:—

> "For modes of government let fools contest,
> Whate'er is best administer'd is best."

With the last line of this couplet I am very much disposed to agree, but the first seems to be rather irrational, and at all events does not lead by a "concatenation accordingly" to that which follows it. The probability of a good administration of government depends very much upon the mode of government. Such a mode of government as affords the best prospect of distinctness in its rules, and mild but unflinching firmness in maintaining those rules, is greatly to be desired. The patriots to whose absurdities I object are those who seem to believe that instability, or what they call "progress" in political institutions, is a grand thing

for human happiness. If they would consider their system—that is honestly and fairly consider it—with reference to their own families, they might soon learn from their own experience that such agitations and shiftings can never come to good.

The mistake of the poet above quoted is something like that of a man who should say :—

> Who digs for zinc or copper is an ass,
> Let him who seeks them be content with brass.

Now, brass being composed of zinc and copper blended together, such a couplet would be very unreasonable, and because the administration of government is very likely to depend upon what the government is, it is, in like manner, unreasonable to indicate that it is the part of fools to contest about the form of government, the administration of it being really the important point.

In an absolute form of government there is every probability that caprice, or enmity, or favouritism, will change or distort those rules which ought to be of general and equal application. If, on the other hand, the sway of the multitude be admitted, some sudden panic or absurd clamour will lead to the violation of general rules, for the sake of gratifying what is hastily and recklessly decided upon as the justice of the moment. The best security (and even the best is but a frail one) for the honest admi-

nistration of declared rules of government is probably to be found in a combination of individual responsibility, with publicity, and liability to popular animadversion and admonishment. But inasmuch as administrators are apt to take advantage of an assumed vagueness, or affected misunderstanding, of the rules upon which they are bound to proceed, *it would be highly convenient if at certain seasons they were bound solemnly and minutely to declare their adhesion to the legally-ordained general rules of the government, whatever they might be*, so that the public might frequently have before them an authentic record of those rules and limitations within which it should be the duty of administrators to keep.

CRABBE AND BURKE.

THERE are very few compositions more interesting in every point of view than the letter written to the great and *good* Edmund Burke by the poet Crabbe, when he was almost sinking under the miseries of a poverty-striken literary adventurer in London. There is a wondrous pathos in its simple detail. Had the young man laboured to be affecting, he would, doubtless, have missed his aim. The pure taste of Burke would have revolted from any exaggeration or extravagance. But Crabbe contrived to unite common sense with modesty, and to appeal

to the feelings of a just and generous man without any attempt to work upon mere sensibility. It is of so much importance to show to all people, and especially to the young, the advantage of a simple and clear statement—a modest and unambitious recital of their circumstances and their wants, in the applications which they may have to make to persons of greater consequence than themselves—that, as the very best pattern I can set before them, I shall borrow some passages of this very admirable letter. He begins thus:—"Sir—I am sensible that I need even your talents to apologise for the freedom I now take, but I have a plea which, however simply urged, will, with a mind like yours, Sir, procure me pardon. I am one of those outcasts on the world who are without a friend, without employment, and without bread."

This was coming to the matter at once, which most people are afraid to do. They weary their correspondent with some long detail, the upshot of which is something like what poor Crabbe at once announced. In this way they take much from the force of their statement. Crabbe, by his simple yet powerfully condensed announcement of his condition, awakens curiosity. He then proceeds with his *justification;* that is to say, the detail of his case:—"Pardon me a short preface. I had a partial father, who gave me a better education than his broken fortune would have allowed, *and a better than was necessary,*

as he could give me that only. I was designed for the profession of physic, but, not having wherewithal to complete the requisite studies, the design but served to convince me of a parent's affection, and the error it had occasioned. In April last I came to London with three pounds, and flattered myself this would be sufficient to supply me with the common necessaries of life till my abilities should procure me more; of these I had the highest opinion, and a poetical vanity contributed to my delusion. I knew little of the world, and had read books only. I wrote, and fancied perfection in my compositions. When I wanted bread they promised me affluence, and soothed me with dreams of reputation, whilst my appearance subjected me to contempt."

After proceeding with many other details equally minute, and almost penitent in the tone of their narration, although he had only to speak of his misfortunes, and not his faults, he says:—"You will guess the purpose of so long an introduction. I appeal to you, Sir, as a good and, let me add, a great man. I have no other pretension to your favour than that I am an unhappy one. * * * * *

"Can you, Sir, in any degree aid me, with propriety? Will you ask any demonstration of my veracity? I have imposed upon myself, but I have been guilty of no other imposition. I know those of rank and fortune are teased with

frequent petitions, and are compelled to refuse the requests even of those whom they know to be in distress: it is therefore with a distant hope I ventured to solicit such favour; but you will forgive me, Sir, if you do not think proper to relieve."

Whether Mr. Burke was "affected," in the ordinary sense of the word, by this letter, we have no means of knowing, but it certainly convinced his heart and his judgment that this was a case worthy of his attention. He stretched out his helping hand to the young man, and saved a great genius from (in all human probability) a speedy and most miserable extinction. It is not possible by any words of mine to do justice to the conduct of Mr. Burke in this matter so fully as by quoting the words of Mr. Crabbe's son and biographer:—"Mr. Burke was at this period (1781) engaged in the hottest turmoils of parliamentary opposition, and his own pecuniary circumstances were by no means very affluent; yet he gave instant attention to this letter, and the verses which it enclosed. He immediately appointed an hour for my father to call upon him at his house in London, and the short interview that ensued entirely, and for ever, changed the nature of his worldly fortunes. He was, in the common phrase, 'a made man' from that hour. He went into Mr. Burke's room a poor young adventurer, spurned by the opulent, and rejected by the publishers:

his last shilling gone, and all but his last hope with it: he came out virtually secure of almost all the good fortune that, by successive steps, afterwards fell to his lot."

How delightful it is to read this record of the private goodness of so great a man as Burke! What a pleasant thought it is to an humble affectionate Christian heart, that the same glorious mind which, by the outpouring of its brightness, showed to the British nation and to Europe the hideousness, and the sin of French revolutionary principles, was in the private concerns of life so active, benevolent, and kind; —that he, the great statesman, could condescend to cheer and encourage the lowly and the almost broken-hearted;—could sympathise with truth and honesty in an humble condition, and pour balm upon a wounded spirit. Oh, that the great and the affluent would consider how beautiful is goodness, and how much more happiness and genuine honour are to be obtained by kindness than by grandeur! How many petitions are there carelessly, if not cruelly, rejected every day, not indeed from such men as Crabbe; for men of such genius, combined with such good character, are extremely rare, but still from men whom it would be a real kindness, and a service to the cause of virtue and humanity, to raise from the depths of misfortune in which they struggle.

But the lesson which Crabbe's success with

Mr. Burke affords, is not merely to those who can give, but to those also who seek assistance. Very justly and very wisely does Mr. Crabbe's son remark, that even had the poems which his father transmitted to Mr. Burke been evidently meritorious, it is not to be supposed that the author would have at once excited the strongest personal interest in Mr. Burke's mind, unless he had during this interview exhibited the traits of *a pure and worthy character*. Nay, had there appeared any offensive peculiarities of manner and address—*either presumption or meanness*—though the young poet might have received both kindness and patronage, can any one dream that Mr. Burke would have at once taken up his cause with *the zeal of a friend*, domesticated him under his own roof, and treated him like a son?

Certainly not; and therefore let every one who has to seek assistance remember that the possession of peculiar genius, or remarkable powers in some particular line of talent, is not enough; but he must join with these a general sense and practice of propriety—he must take care to be, if possible, collected, distinct, modest, and sincere. Especially let him take care to avoid presumption on the one hand, and meanness on the other.

In dwelling, however momentarily, upon the early biography of Mr. Crabbe, it would be injustice to him not to mention *his own* practical

benevolence as soon as that was within his power. Shortly after Mr. Burke had taken him by the hand, Lord Chancellor Thurlow, to whom he had previously sent a poem, but who had taken no notice of him, sent for him to breakfast, and, notwithstanding his Lordship's habitual gruffness, treated the young poet with great kindness. At going away he presented him with a sealed letter, which Crabbe expected to contain a present, but he was greatly surprised at its amount. Lord Thurlow had given him a hundred pounds. The poet was still in pecuniary difficulties, and this was a most grateful supply; but his son tells us that the first use he made of his good fortune was to seek out and relieve some objects of real indigence—poor scholars like himself, whom he had known when sharing their wretchedness in the city; and I must add, continues his biographer, that whenever he visited London in later years he made it his business to enquire after similar objects of charity, *supposed to be of respectable personal character*, and to do by them, as in his own hour of distress, he would have been done by. This practical thankfulness is religion done into action. It deserves always to be mentioned with honour and with praise, for they who escape out of the realms of difficulty and misfortune are but too apt to forget those they have left behind.

DRUNKENNESS.

A SHORT time since the House of Commons debated a Metropolitan Police Bill, clause by clause. One of the clauses was to the effect that any one found drunk and disorderly in any public thoroughfare might be punished, at the discretion of the magistrate, either by fine, or by imprisonment for not more than a week. This clause was opposed, and a division taken upon it, but it was carried; and if it become law,* as most probably it will, I advise the "flash" young gentlemen to look to themselves. It may be a good joke in the opinion of some persons to get drunk, and have a *spree* in the streets, and pay five pounds penalty for the same next day at the police office under a feigned name; but to go to prison for a week will be no joke at all, at least to those who go there. There is no doubt that the power thus given to magistrates may be occasionally abused, and needless tyranny be inflicted, but this is an evil almost inseparable from any corrective of outrage or excess which is entrusted to the hands of the minor magistracy. The probability is, that far less evil to society will result from this occasional abuse than does frequently result from

> "The drunken and swill'd insolence
> Of such late wassailers"

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* It is now the law.

as issue from "saloons" and other nests of debauchery during the night. I should be glad—if it were not inconsistent with the dignity of Parliament to descend to such *minutiæ*—that the magistrate were empowered, or commanded, when he sent such drunken roisterers to prison, to interdict them strictly, during their retirement from public, from the use of wine, spirits, or cigars.

In the remarks which the generally shrewd Dr. Paley makes upon the subject of drunkenness he lays particular stress upon the evils of the *example*. The danger and mischief of this kind he describes as *peculiarly* great in respect of the vice of drunkenness. It is, he says, a social festive vice, apt, beyond any that can be mentioned, to draw in others by the example. The drinker collects his circle; the circle naturally spreads; of those who are drawn within it many become the corrupters and centres of sets and circles of their own; every one countenancing, and perhaps emulating, the rest, till a whole neighbourhood be infected from the contagion of a single example. This account is confirmed by what we often observe of drunkenness, that it is a *local* vice, found to prevail in certain countries, in certain districts of a country, or in particular towns, without any reason to be given for the fashion, but that it had been introduced by some popular examples.

These remarks will, I think, be perceived by Londoners to indicate rather a provincial experience on the part of the worthy Doctor. In the present day at least, though it be true in the main, that festive meetings lead to a certain amount of intoxication, yet much of the more beastly drunkenness which disgraces our streets can hardly be said to have this excuse, poor as it is. Brutal people often make themselves drunk by themselves; and as for those persons of somewhat superior rank or fortune, who make riots in the streets, it rather seems that they deliberately excite themselves by drink to the requisite state of desperate extravagance, than that they are unconsciously betrayed into drunkenness by the unguarded festivities of merry companionship. All sorts of folly and wickedness, however, seem to be very taking in the way of example, and certainly they of a better condition in life, who ought to be patterns of good manners, at all events, to the vulgar crowd, have much to answer for when they set imitative fools a straining after that insolent contempt of decency which they sometimes think fit to exhibit by way of showing their spirit. Gamblers, fops, "sporting characters," drunkards, rioters in the streets by night, and such like, are guilty of far more wickedness than they actually commit themselves, for they may be sure that the devil very seldom allows the advantage of a bad example to be lost to his

cause. Twenty are ready to imitate a vice for one that has inclination and courage to imitate a virtue. Nevertheless the example of the virtuous bears good fruit, as that of the vicious bears bad. The misfortune is that the latter is much more prolific.

In treating of drunkenness, Doctor Paley touches upon a question of much interest, viz. how far drunkenness is an excuse for the crimes which the drunken person commits. In examining this question, he first supposes the drunken person to be altogether deprived of moral agency, that is to say, of all reflection and foresight. In this condition *it is evident*, he says, that the person is no more capable of guilt than a madman, although, like him, he may be extremely mischievous. The only guilt with which he is chargeable was incurred at the time when he voluntarily brought himself into this situation. And, as every man is responsible for the consequences which he foresaw, or might have foreseen, and for no other, this guilt will be in proportion to the probability of such consequences ensuing. From which principle results the following rule, viz. that the guilt of any action in a drunken man bears the same proportion to the guilt of the like action in a sober man that the probability of its being the consequence of drunkenness bears to absolute certainty.

So far Dr. Paley; but I think that, whatever

merit the mathematical strictness of the Doctor's statement may have, it is not altogether a satisfying one. It seems to be too favourable to the drunkard. If we admit that all the guilt which a murderer, mad with drink, has incurred, was the guilt of making himself mad, we are not likely to have that lively abhorrence of his crime which is reasonable and expedient. For, after all, slight forgetfulness, or excessive thirst, or a peculiar state of the stomach or brain, from temporary disease, may cause a man to madden himself, or to become mad from drink. I do not know that if we go into the matter with extreme strictness we should be able to make evident the distinction—the moral distinction—between this state and a state of temporary insanity; but there *is* a distinction, which may be *felt*, though it cannot be demonstrated, and I would hang the drunken murderer when I would only confine the insane murderer. Perhaps the reason of this feeling is, that common experience rejects the supposition of drink making a man utterly mad and absolutely destitute of all notions of consequences, as we find in some cases of disease.

If drunken criminals were visited with all the severity of the principles which obtain in some maxims of our criminal law, the drunkenness would be held to aggravate the crime. If, for instance, a man be going with a gun, intending to commit a felony, and, by misadventure,

shoots any one, say one of his companions, whom he did not intend to injure, he is held to have committed felony, and may be punished accordingly, though the act itself would have have been visited with no punishment had he been carrying the gun with no unlawful intent. Now, drunkenness being itself an offence, any injurious act done in consequence of that state of drunkenness might, by fair analogy, be held to be *more* criminal than if done by a sober person; and thus drunkenness be declared the opposite of an excuse for the crimes which the drunken person commits, or in other words, an aggravation of them.

Paley seems to pursue the notion of drunkenness being more or less an excuse for crimes in treating of the far more common case, namely, that in which the privation of reason by intoxication is only partial. What he says is this: "If the privation of reason be only partial the guilt will be of a mixed nature. For so much of his self-government as the drunkard retains he is as responsible then as at any other time. He is entitled to no abatement beyond the strict proportion in which his moral faculties are impaired. Now I call the guilt of the crime, if a sober man had committed it, the whole guilt. A person in the condition we describe incurs a part of this at the instant of perpetration, and by bringing himself into that condition he incurred such a fraction of the re-

maining part, as the danger of this consequence was of an integral certainty. For the sake of illustration, we are at liberty to suppose that a man loses half his moral faculties by drunkenness; this leaving him but half his responsibility, he incurs, when he commits the action, half of the whole guilt. We will also suppose that it was known beforehand that it was an even chance, or half a certainty, that this crime would follow his getting drunk. This makes him chargeable with half of the remainder, so that, altogether, he is responsible in *three-fourths* of the guilt which a sober man would have incurred in the same action."

It is but fair to mention that the learned Doctor makes a kind of apology for this mode of expounding the matter, saying that he does not mean that any *real* case can be reduced to numbers, or the calculation be ever made with arithmetical precision, but at the same time he alleges that "these are the principles and this is the rule by which our general admeasurement of the guilt of such offences should be regulated."

I confess that I think the arithmetical illustration required more apology, and that the allegation appended to the apology is one which should not be received without much caution and allowance. The Doctor had as well have left the matter at a preceding page, where, after quoting several texts from the New Testament

against drunkenness, he adds, "We are not concerned with the argument; the words amount to a prohibition of drunkenness, and *the authority is conclusive.*"

DOUBTS AND DISPUTATIONS.

It seems to me that a great injury has been done to the cause of *truth*—such truth as, in this imperfect state, man is capable of attaining to—as well as to the peace and contentment of mankind, by the habits of doubt and disputation which modern philosophy has so much encouraged. There is, I think, much practical good sense and sound observation of existing circumstances in the remarks which an eminent theological writer of the present day* has made upon this widely-spread calamity. He tells us that, from our strange preference of inquiry to belief, we, or our fathers before us, have contrived to make doubtful what *really was certain.* We have created difficulties in our path; we have gone out of our way to find ingenious objections to what was received, where none hitherto existed; as if forgetting that there is no truth so clear, no character so pure, no work of man so perfect, but admits of criticism, and will become suspected as soon as it is accused.

* Rev. J. H. Newman, of Oriel College, Oxon.

As might be expected, we have succeeded in our attempt, we have succeeded in raising clouds which effectually hide the sun from us, and we have nothing left but to grope our way by our reason as we best can, our necessary, because our only, guide. And as a traveller by night, calculating or guessing his way over a morass, or amid pitfalls, naturally trusts himself more than his companions, though not doubting their skilfulness and good will, and is too intent upon his own successive steps to hear and to follow *them*, so we, from anxiety, if not from carelessness, have straggled each from his neighbour, and are all of us, or nearly so, in a fair way to lose our confidence, if not our hope. We, or others for us, have asserted our right of debating every truth, however sacred, however protected from scrutiny hitherto; we have accounted that belief alone to be manly which commenced in doubt, that inquiry alone philosophical which assumed no first principles, that religion alone rational which we have created for ourselves. Loss of labour, division, and error, have been the threefold gain of our self-will.

Such is the state of the case which this able writer lays down with respect to the very highest matters which can engage man's attention, and upon which a peaceful and settled state of mind is beyond expression desirable. And if this be the real state of things, well may the same author lament over it as he does in the

following eloquent passage:—"Unhappy is it that we should be obliged to discuss and defend what a Christian people were intended to enjoy; to appeal to their intellects, instead of 'stirring up their pure minds by way of remembrance,' to direct them towards articles of faith, which should be their place of starting, and to treat as mere *conclusions* what in other ages have been assumed as *first principles. Surely life is not long enough to prove every thing which may be made the subject of proof;* and, though inquiry is left partly open, in order to try our earnestness, yet it is in great measure, and in the most important points, superseded by revelation, which discloses things that reason could not reach, saves us the labour of using it when it might avail, and sanctions thereby the *principle* of dispensing with it in other cases. Yet, in spite of this joint testimony of nature and grace, so it is, we seem at this day to consider discussion and controversy to be in themselves chief goods. We exult in what we think our indefeasible right and glorious privilege, to choose and settle our religion for ourselves; and we stigmatize it as a bondage to be bid take for granted, what the wise, good, and many, have gone over and determined long before, or to submit to what the Almighty has revealed."

I may venture to remark that this same spirit of questioning and disputing previously settled points, such as our author shows to be so lament-

able in the highest of all concerns, pervades also the concerns of human government, and society is in consequence distracted with restlessness, disquietude, and uncertainty. No law is so sacred in the eyes of men that we can confide in its being a lasting law; no institution seems to be secure of its existence for twenty years to come. Surely this is a great evil. Surely if the nature of human beings were fairly and practically examined, it would be found that a spirit of rational reverence is more suitable to them than a habit of denial and defiance, until the reason of each is satisfied upon every rule and custom to which obedience is expected.

A moral poet of our time, who was beyond all question the most thoroughly *practical* man who ever wrote in verse, has, with his accustomed force, represented the evil of what is sometimes called "philosophic doubt" or "free thinking" in matters of religion:—

> "From my soul I hate
> This clash of thought, this ever-doubting state,
> For ever seeking *certainty*, yet blind
> In our research, and *puzzled when we find.*"

But the story of the brother and sister in whom this miserable restlessness of mind was brought about, is full of instruction, and told with admirable terseness:—

> "I was a Ratcliffe, taught and train'd to live
> In all the pride that ancestry can give;
> My only brother, when our mother died,
> Fill'd the dear offices of friend and guide;

My father early taught us *all he dared*,
And for his bolder flights our minds prepared.
He read the works of deists, every book
From crabbed Hobbes to courtly Bolingbroke;
And when we understood not, he would cry,
Let the *expressions* in your mem'ry lie;
The light will soon break in, and you will find
Rest for your spirits, and be strong of mind."

There is great skill in this brief narration. How true the remark that the sceptical father did not *dare* to teach the children what his own mind had adopted. Even the boldest and the worst shrink with an instinctive dread and horror from the inculcation of impiety upon minds that are as yet simple and innocent. Even a fallen nature must have experience of sin, in sentiment, if not in action, before it seems anything but a hideously *unnatural* thing to attempt to harbour therein the seeds of impiety. But let us go on to see how the promise of "rest for their spirits" was fulfilled to these children:—

"Alas! however strong, however weak,
The *rest* was something we had still to seek.
He taught us duties of no arduous kind,
The *easy morals* of the doubtful mind;
He bade us all our childish fears control,
And drive the nurse and grandam from the soul.
Told us the word of God was *all we saw*,
And that the law of *nature* was *his* law;
This law of nature we might find abstruse,
But gain sufficient for our common use.
Thus, by persuasion, we our duties learn'd,
And were but little in the cause concern'd.

"We lived in peace, in intellectual ease,
And thought that virtue was the way to please,

And pure morality the keeping free
From all the stains of vulgar villainy.
* * * * *
" Free, sad discourse was ours ; we often sigh'd
To think we could not in some truths confide ;
Our father's final words gave no content,
We found not what his self-reliance meant :
* * * * *
" in ceasing to obey,
Misery and trouble meet us in our way."

This is the true philosophy of human nature. Pride may reject it, ignorance may thrust it aside, presumption may treat it with derisive scorn ; but sober experience will say, " This is true."

I must return to the theological writer already quoted, in order to borrow from him the exposure which he thinks it his duty to make of the inconsistency of many who call themselves philosophical, touching those points of knowledge which are the most important of all. The great mass of educated men are, he says, at once uneasy, impatient, and irritated, not simply incredulous, as soon as they are promised from any quarter some clear view of the original and apostolic doctrine, to them unknown, on any subject of religion. They bear to hear of researches into Christian antiquity ; if they are directed to prove its *uncertainty* and *unprofitableness*, they are intolerant and open-mouthed against them, if their object be to *rescue* and not to *destroy*. They sanction a rule of philosophy

which they practically refute every time they praise Newton or Cuvier. In truth, they can endure a positive theory in other provinces of knowledge, but in theology it becomes practical. They perceive that there, what in itself is but an inquiry into questions of fact, tends to an encroachment upon what they think fit to consider their christian liberty. They are reluctant to be confronted with evidence which will diminish their right of thinking *rightly or wrongly as they please*. They are jealous of being forced to submit to one view of the subject, and to be unable at their pleasure to change. They consider comfort in religion to lie in all questions being open, and there being no call upon them to act. Thus they deliberately adopt that liberty which God gave his former people in wrath, "a liberty to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine," the prerogative of being heretics or infidels.

It would be well, continues our author, if these men could keep their restless humours to themselves; but they unsettle all around them. They rob those of their birthright who would have hailed the privilege of being told the truth, without their own personal risk in finding it. Such troubles of the Christian community would, in a healthy state of things, be silenced or put out of it, as disturbers of the king's peace are restrained in civil matters.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

The science of female education in this country has become far too much the science of mere *behaviour*. Principles are inculcated, but not with earnestness—we look much more to manner. We do not educate the feelings, but we are carefully didactic as to the mode of their expression. We do not encourage independent thought, or love to draw out the earnest expression of natural emotion. Some natures there are so strong and so elastic, as to rebound from the pressure of education into the beautiful region of natural enthusiasm and innocent trueheartedness, but the many are so moulded that everything they do is but a trick of custom. And even this may be—nay, it *is* very often—beautiful, and graceful, and winning; and all that the habits of society demand is gone through with an air so delicately right, so exquisitely as it should be, that one is ready to exclaim, "If this be education merely, let *her* then be my goddess, for nature's self was never sure more lovely." But, alas! this feeling will not stand the wear and tear of life. There must be something fervent—something original—something created, or thrown into new shape, by that mind which would charm for ever, and cast upon the every-day occurrences of life the glow of feeling,

and the interest of novelty. In *mere* behaviour there is a wearying sameness. The mind must expand into generous sentiment, or trace for us with delicate discernment new views of things, if it would hope to interest, and to prolong that delightful feeling of respectful admiration, which is so near akin to love, if it be not indeed the thing itself.

But why all this preachment? Simply because there is too little regard shown to any thing but behaviour in education, and in after life we find there is too little *heart*. Shall I be thought too severe if I say that society abounds far too much with such persons as the Chloe of Mr. Pope?

> "With every pleasing—every prudent part,
> Say what can Chloe want? She wants a heart.
> She speaks, behaves, and acts just as she ought,
> But never, never, reach'd one gen'rous thought."

If there be many of this description, as I fear there are, I would have them, for the sake of their own happiness, as well as that of their neighbours, friends, and any other nearer connections they please, to cultivate something better than the best *manner* of doing what is to be done, though that, too, is of high importance. I would have them consider what it is reasonable to think, as well as what it is correct to say, and to revolve with deliberate thoughtfulness what they ought to do, as well as how they ought to do it. Thus will they soon surpass the votaries of mere behaviour, and rear up for

themselves an internal character, which, like a firm and enduring pillar, they may adorn with the external ornaments of graceful manners and beautiful accomplishments.

But it is not to be forgotten that there are occasions when such a guard as mere behaviour supplies, is of the very greatest efficacy, as checking, opposing, and controlling, the working of sincere, temporary emotion. This is especially the case in regard to quarrels, which are apt to *begin* among all sorts of people, but among the highly civilized and educated they rarely proceed to such storms of passion as are quite common among those who have less habituated themselves to the control of good behaviour.

" Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love!
Hearts that the world in vain had tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied;
That stood the storm when waves were rough,
Yet in a sunny hour fall off,
Like ships that have gone down at sea,
When Heaven was all tranquillity!
A something light as air—a look,
A word unkind—or wrongly taken,
Yes, love that tempests never shook
A breath—a touch like this hath shaken.
And ruder words will soon rush in
To spread the breach that words begin;
And eyes forget the gentle ray
They wore in courtship's smiling day;
And voices lose the tone that shed
A tenderness round all they said;
'Till fast declining, one by one,
The sweetnesses of love are gone,

And hearts so lately mingled seem
Like broken clouds—or, like the stream
That, smiling, left the mountain's brow,
As though its waters ne'er could sever,
Yet, ere it reach the plain below,
Breaks into floods that part for ever."

It is painful and humiliating to think of all this; but it is all very true, though published as poetry, and not in the least exaggerated, unless it be in the similes. Against the spreading of the breach, which an angry look or an unkind word begins, the proprieties of behaviour will present a better barrier than even affection itself (which when rudely touched rebounds into resentment), and therefore are these proprieties to be ever kept at hand for aid upon such occasions.

There are few mistakes more pernicious than that concerning the *amantium iræ*—the quarrels of those who love—as though these storms made the succeeding sunshine brighter, or more perceptibly bright than it was before. Believe it not. The infinitely delicate spell of respectful tenderness, which anger or unkindness has once broken, can never be renewed in its perfect purity and completeness. Something else may come, more fit for bearing the accidents of life, but the original charm is dimmed for ever, and even joy will henceforth cast a shadow like that of fear. And yet it is scarcely to be hoped for that in this world there can be any other fate than that of at least injuring that delicate spell

of mutual contentment, by some rude jar or another, to which the infirmity of our nature is so liable, and, therefore, it is that the pensive mind, when dwelling, as it will, upon this fatal probability even amid the sunshine of beauty and of happy hours, sighs over the anticipations of a too busy fancy. This mood of the mind is described by Mr. Moore, in two stanzas, which are second to none he has written, in those qualities for which the better portions of his poetry are so remarkable—namely, elegance and melody :—

" Whene'er I see those smiling eyes,
All fill'd with hope, and joy, and light,
As if no cloud could ever rise
To dim a heaven so purely bright,
I sigh to think how soon that brow
In grief may lose its every ray,
And that light heart, so joyous now,
Almost forget it once was gay.

For time will come with all his blights,
The ruin'd hope—the friend unkind—
The love that leaves where'er it lights
A chill'd or burning heart behind!
While youth that now like snow appears,
Ere sullied by the dark'ning rain,
When once 'tis touch'd by sorrow's tears
Will never shine so bright again."

ACQUAINTANCES.

Reserved and "exclusive" as the English people are considered to be, there is nothing that they who live in the world seem more anxious about than acquaintances. As to friends, the very word has become rather old-fashioned—the thing it signifies has long been so. But people love to have acquaintances, and the way in which the business of acquaintanceship is carried on, is no doubt eminently curious, and particularly worthy of this age of distinguished enlightenment. He, or she, who would be miserable without acquaintances, would be equally so if it were necessary to meet and talk with those acquaintances in any thing like a familiar way. The intellectual felicity derived from intercourse with acquaintances lies in this—you have leave to knock at their doors, and they at yours, and you may deposit with their servants, or they with yours, certain morsels of smooth pasteboard, on which are engraven your name and address, or theirs, as the case may be. The bliss is heightened if, instead of using those bits of pasteboard, you are called upon to write your name in the porter's book, which you must by all means do yourself. If the porter were to save himself the trouble of walking out to your carriage,

book and pen in hand, and to save you the trouble of writing, and the risk of inking your gloves, by performing the part of your amanuensis, at his own desk, the whole charm of the thing would be lost. Of course this is because your acquaintance, when he, she, or they, examines, or examine, the book, fall into raptures at your hand-writing, heave a sigh over the crossings of your "t's," and experience an effusion of sympathy as they contemplate the dottings of your "i's." This must be the true theory of the case, and the *spectacle* of the tall porter waiting beside your carriage, while you write your name, and the passing world sees what a great personage you are visiting, can have nothing to do with the matter.

One of the curious and convenient things belonging to modern acquaintanceship in London is, that it is by no means necessary that you should have any the least knowledge of the persons of your acquaintances. Your soul-felt intercourse being managed by means of visiting tickets, porters' books, and cards of invitation; any such thing as visual knowledge is unnecessary, and might be inconvenient. Your acquaintance might be disagreeable to look at, although living in a very eligible house, associating, according to the newspapers, with other people who live in very eligible houses, and occasionally paying opera singers and confectioners, to entertain the acquaintances whose names are in the porter's book.

In former times when people invited their friends, there was some trouble in welcoming each, and saying something kind to each, about their peculiar concerns. The modern method has changed all that. You send cards to your acquaintances, who come as to a theatre, with this difference, that they rely upon a better provided refreshment room, and nothing to pay. They jostle you about with a delightful freedom and indifference, not knowing you from your own man out of livery, or perhaps mistaking that respectabte personage for yourself, while you are set down as rather an awkward guest from the country. But what matters that? your acquaintances are too guarded to say anything but what is civil, and your heart dilates with joy as you see them criticising and eating what won't cost you more than four or five hundred pounds. How absolutely unselfish this is! Of course whether it be published in the newspapers that you gave this entertainment, and that two or three hundred fashionables did you the honour to eat, drink, yawn, laugh, talk, and listen thereat, or be not so published, never troubles your head. You seek only the disinterested satisfaction of having helped your acquaintances to pass what you and they know very well was a hot, expensive, tedious sort of an evening.

Perhaps one-third or so of your acquaintances you may know by head-mark, and two-thirds

of that one-third may perhaps know you. In this case the intercourse becomes perhaps less ethereal in its refined abstract delights, but the pleasure of such intercourse is more palpable. If these acquaintances be men, you say to them at the club, "How do you do?" without waiting for an answer; or perhaps, going further into the delights of intimacy, you may inquire "what's the news?" just as you are drawing a newspaper to yourself, to find out what you would not trust them to tell you. If women be in the case, you exhibit your sympathy of soul by raising your hat very deliberately off your head as you ride by in the Park, or if you have had a conversation last night at the Opera, your tender recollections are made known by a certain fluttering of the fingers which none but those who have well studied the connection between mental affections and digitology, can fully and satisfactorily explain.

Such are some of the principal features of that acquaintanceship out of love and respect to which so many costly establishments are kept up in London. The fastidious may object that there is little common sense or encouragement to the play of genuine feeling in this mode of intercourse. Perhaps not; but what then? Do not the Indians of the South Seas tattoo their bodies, and do not the Hottentots ornament themselves with the viscera of the animals they have slain? What common sense or utility is

there in either of these practices? Captain Harris tells us that having brought to a great African King, Moselekatse by name, a splendid present of a duffel great coat, lined with scarlet shaloon, that potent monarch, upon an occasion of more than common grandeur of state, invested himself with the same, placed a red nightcap on his head, commanded two wax candles to be lighted and placed before him, and, seating ing himself upon an inverted calabash, the contents of which he had previously swallowed, he became totally absorbed in the contemplation of his surpassing importance. The exceedingly numerous court and thronging subjects of Moselekatse saw no absurdity in this; and, as we too have our customs, let us bear with patience the exhibition of the finery of rich people for the entertainment of acquaintances whom they don't know, and the bestowal of their especial attentions upon such as would care most particularly little, if they were hanged, shot, or drowned the next morning.

FRIENDS.

To those who are yet of a mood really to look for friends, much may be said in the way of advice. The attainment of a friend was once considered to be a sort of object in a man's life, and there is no lack of scattered philosophy upon the

subject. Shakespeare makes the philosophic Hamlet speak of his friend Horatio as though the main qualification in a friend were steadiness and coolness of judgment:—

"Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election,
She hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and bless'd are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, aye, in my heart of hearts,
As I do thee."

Whether we should attribute this view of the especial requisites of a friend, to the particular character of Hamlet—himself so much wanting in calm steadiness of purpose—or, take it as a piece of *general* philosophy, it is perhaps not very easy to determine. Certainly in a friend from whom we mean habitually to ask advice, a calm judgment is very valuable; but in the intercourse of close friendship, sympathy is perhaps even more looked for than advice, and under the influence of this natural craving for sympathy, there are other qualities which one would seek for with even more eagerness than that calm temperament which takes fortune's buffets and rewards with equal thanks.

Cowper, in his shrewd and witty little poem

called "Friendship," gives us indeed a warning against the passionate; but he puts this fault only as one in the catalogue, and does not seem to consider it as preeminently a bar to friendship:—

> "A fretful temper will divide
> The closest knot that may be tied,
> By ceaseless sharp corrosion;
> A temper passionate and fierce
> May suddenly your joys disperse
> At one immense explosion."

But the whole matter is so well, and at the same time so familiarly, discussed by Cowper, that a table-talker can hardly do better than follow in his track, beguiling the way with his musical philosophy. He begins with the error of youth, which is apt to jump as it were at friendship, and to take every profession for an indication of some genuine feeling:—

> "Candid and generous and just,
> Boys care but little whom they trust,
> An error soon corrected—
> For who but learns in riper years,
> That man when smoothest he appears,
> Is most to be suspected?"

But they are apt then—especially very sensitive or very sharp people—to run into equal errors on the other side, and suppose that no such thing as sincere friendship can be found. It may be called an equal error, for though he will be much oftener right who suspects universal insincerity than he who receives as trust-

worthy all that is professed, yet the former disposition is so much more fatal to generosity and kindly feeling than the latter, that the error of it, although less extensive, is more mischievous. Cowper does not lose sight of this probable revulsion from too much confidence to too little, and very fairly states the common sense of the matter, thus:

"But here again a danger lies,
Lest having misapplied our eyes,
And taken trash for treasure;
We should unwarily conclude
Friendship a false ideal good,
A mere utopian pleasure.

"An acquisition *rather rare*
Is yet no subject of despair,
Nor is it wise complaining;
If either on forbidden ground,
Or where it was not to be found,
We sought without attaining."

The poem then goes on with a variety of hints, of admirable shrewdness, touching those points which interfere with the permanency of friendship. For example:

"A man renown'd for repartee
Will seldom scruple to make free
With friendship's finest feeling;
Will thrust a dagger at your breast,
And say he wounded you in jest
By way of balm for healing."

This rhyme is as true as any prose that ever was written, and the following stanza is not only true, but has a drollery of allusion that even Sydney Smith might be proud of:

" A friendship that in frequent fits
Of controversial rage emits
The sparks of disputation;
Like " Hand-in-Hand ' insurance plates,
Most unavoidably creates
The thought of conflagration."

The following is still more important as a common-sense observation upon rude familiarity, and not less humorously put:

" The man that 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."

But we must come to the decision of what a friend ought to be, and here we have it:

" Pursue the search, and you will find
Good sense and knowledge of mankind
To be at least expedient;
And after summing all the rest,
Religion, ruling in the breast,
A principal ingredient."

This is what your friend should be—now for your own part:

" Then judge yourself, and prove your man
As circumspectly as you can,
And, having made election,
Beware no negligence of yours,
Such as a friend but ill endures,
Enfeeble his affection."

They who are familiar with Cowper will see what strange liberties I have taken with the

order of his stanzas. For this I hope to be forgiven, as I have put them so as best to illustrate (at least in my opinion) the course of the subject under discussion.

DRAMATIC POETRY.

ALTHOUGH it be true that a poet must be born a poet, and cannot be made by dint of labour and study, yet it is no less true that poetry is a thing to be weighed and estimated by the dictates of common sense, and that the powers of common sense carefully directed to the subject of poetry will enable any one to see the difference between poetry and mere extravagance—between imaginative creations expressed in numbers, and the outpourings of merely modulated nonsense. From what one sees, however, of modern publications and the degree of ephemeral popularity —such as it is—which attends them, it may fairly be concluded that not only do readers and listeners omit the exercise of reason in passing their judgment upon performances professing to be poetical, but even the writers of these works permit themselves a similar indulgence. Day after day do we find poems, some of them narrative, some descriptive, some dramatic, presented to the public, which poems indicate that, so far as the authors of them are concerned, Aristotle and Horace have written in vain upon

poetic art. And thus it happens that poems and plays are submitted to public notice, and receive some short-lived public applause, which, though not utterly destitute of bright thoughts, nor of agreeable fancies, nor of momentarily affecting situations, are nevertheless most fitly described by the old illustration—that is to say, they are, taking them for all in all, as destitute of *reasonableness* as the performances of a painter would be, who should think fit to paint human heads upon the necks of horses, or to join together the lovely bust of a woman, and the tail of an ugly fish.

A good poetical taste, which may be defined to be a rapid and just perception of the reasonable and becoming in works of imagination, will immediately recoil from such extravagant and incongruous creations, even without the aid of education in poetic art. They who possess such a taste will be displeased with such productions, although perhaps unable to explain the reason why. They will revolt from them through what is called—(whether correctly or not I cannot now stop to discuss)—an *intuitive perception* of their violation of the natural and just. Such a taste, however, does not seem to be a very general possession. Out of every twenty persons in society some dozen and a half seem to be pleased with that which dazzles and surprises, and to have no judgment—no sense of fitness

and congruity—commingled with their perceptions of the pleasurable, in poems or plays.

It is in dramatic poetry that violations of fitness and propriety are most apt to give offence to persons of correct taste; that is, to those whose sense of the eloquent, the touching, or the beautiful, is under the government of common sense and rational probability. It is not enough that a dramatic poet makes his characters speak in energetic, or brilliant, or affecting language. If they do not speak in language appropriate to themselves, and to the circumstances in which they are placed, that which they say will offend the judicious, by giving rise to a strong sense of inappropriateness. But so senseless is the crowd, and so fond of that vulgar thing, mere *surprise*, that we frequently find the most applause bestowed on that which is most incongruous and unnatural, and which, because it is so, has been least expected. In like manner it is probable that this crowd would gaze with more interest upon a picture of a human head joined to a horse's neck, than upon some well-imagined combination of the harmonies of nature.

I have been led to talk of these matters in consequence of having been presented with a book—a thin smooth book in delicate buff covers, as if made to match kid gloves—which contains two plays, purporting to have been written by

N. P. Willis, Esq., author of several other things too tedious to mention. The first of these plays, called *Dying to Keep Him, or Tortesa the Usurer*, I have read, and find it to be of the same class as Mr. Bulwer's plays, especially that one of which I cannot at present remember the name,* but the principal character was called *Claude Melnotte*, and was played by Mr. Macready. The class of plays to which I allude seem to be written in utter forgetfulness, or perhaps in absolute contempt, of common sense and dramatical propriety. Into the mouth of every character the author thrusts the prettiest and the most surprising words he can think of, apparently without the slightest attention to two points which I hold to be of the highest importance in such matters, viz.—first, that the pretty words convey some distinct intelligible meaning; and, secondly, that they are such as one can imagine, from observation of nature and of life, to have been spoken by persons placed in the situations which the dramatist has conceived, and by such persons as he has placed in those situations.

In Mr. Willis's play of *Tortesa the Usurer*, he presents to our view a portrait-painter, who from beginning to end (and so far he is consistent) talks like a man just broke loose from a lunatic asylum, but he makes him all the while

* "The Lady of Lyons, or Love and Pride."

a very admirable painter. Then there is a glover's daughter, full of the most exquisite and delicate fancies, which she expresses with all the most elaborate finery of tropes and illustrations that any retentive reader of modern poetry could draw together. The heroine of the play, a noble's daughter, raves like a strolling actress who had made her tea far too strong of *cogniac ;* and *Signor Tortesa* himself, the usurer, who begins as a griping devil, grows not only very poetical upon our hands, but brave, generous, infinitely sentimental, and one knows not what beside !

It must be granted that we have in this play a good deal of easiness of dialogue—some striking pieces of abruptness, now and then some lines of beautiful description, and a great deal of very pretty confusion of bright words; but still the play is, taking it as a whole, nothing better, I think, than nonsense. It is five acts of most incoherent extravagance, and no more deserves to be called a play than the fantastic figures painted upon the glass of a magic lantern, deserve to be called portraits.

Tortesa is a griping usurer, who hates the nobility; and the first incident of this notable drama is that of this same usurer redeeming the whole property of a certain extravagant count, and giving it back to him on condition that he (the usurer) shall have to wife *Isabella*, the count's daughter. This bargain being settled,

in comes *Zippa*, the glover's daughter, for whose beauty the usurer had an affection. He says to *Zippa*—

" I marry this lord's daughter
To please a *devil* that inhabits me!
But there's an *angel* in me—not so strong—
And this last, loves you.
Zippa. Thanks for your weak angel,
I'd sooner 'twere the devil.
Tortesa. Both were yours,
But for the burning fever that I have
To *pluck* at their proud blood.
Zippa. Why, this poor lady
Cannot have harm'd you.
Tortesa. Forty thousand times!
She's nobly born—there's one wrong in her cradle!
She's proud—why, that makes every pulse an insult—
Sixty a minute. She's profuse in smiles
On those who are to me as stars to glowworms—
So I'm disparaged! I have pass'd her by,
Summer and winter, and she ne'er look'd on me!
Her youth has been one tissue of contempt!
Her lovers, and her tutors, and her heart,
Taught her to scorn the low-born— *that am I!*
Would you have more?"

Now, usurers generally look and examine before they speak; but as the play goes on, we find *Isabella* exactly the reverse of all that is thus described. She is very beautiful, but not proud at all. She has no lovers, until she falls in love with a portrait-painter, who, besides that he talks like a lunatic, as already observed, is of mean birth, and not worth twopence in the world, besides his pencils and his pallet.

However, to all this scolding of *Isabella*, Zippa answers in one of the few natural speeches

which are accorded to her that such language is "moon-struck madness." Upon this *Tortesa* grows madder still, and says :—

"I'd have her *mine*, for all this ; jewell'd, perfumed ;
Just as they've worshipp'd her at court—my slave!
They've mew'd her breath up in their silken beds—
Guarded *the unsunn'd dew upon her skin—*
For some *lord's* pleasure! If I could not get her ;
There's a contempt in that, would make my forehead
Hot in my grave!"

And this—*this* is the energy of modern dramatic poetry. Is it not more worthy to be called intolerable fustian?

By and by, by a strange accident, about as probable as that Lord Melbourne should take the cowl in the monastery of La Trappe, the mad painter, *Angelo*, is introduced to the presence of *Isabella* for the purpose of painting her portrait. He discourses to her in this fashion :—

"'Tis the *religion* of our art, fair madam!
That, by oft looking on the type divine
In which we first were moulded, men remember
The heaven they were born to! You've an errand here,
To show how look the angels. But as vestals
Cherish the sacred fire, yet let the priest
Light his lamp at it for a thousand altars,
So is your beauty unassoil'd though I
Ravish a copy for the shut-out world!"

Upon this *Isabella* remarks (aside) that to which I can by no means agree :—

"Here is the wooing that should win a maid!"

And then she goes to describe what she thinks of it. She says that such wooing is

" Bold, yet respectful—free, yet full of honour!
I never saw a youth with gentler eyes;
I never heard a voice that pleased me more;
Let me look on him."

And yet but a little while after this same *Isabella* describes these very same " gentle eyes" of the same gentleman, as " light with soul," and as "*fires*" above which his forehead lay in calm tranquillity

" As the *sky sleeps*, o'er thunder clouds!"

That, to be sure, is very tremendous—nonsense.

But the mad painter gets some how or another, the lady *Isabella's* hand in his, and then he discourses thus:—

" Oh God! how beautiful thy works may be!
Inimitably perfect! Let me look
Close on the tracery of these azure veins!
With what a delicate and fragile thread
They weave their subtle mesh beneath the skin,
And meet all blushing, *in these rosy nails!*
How soft the texture of these tapering fingers!
How exquisite the wrist! How perfect all!

Our dramatist requires us to believe that the delicate daughter of a Florentine noble of the highest rank is captivated by such talk as this! Nay, that she was induced to speak *of* him, or rather of his " look," as:—

" Gentle, yet passionate—sometimes *half* godlike
In its command—then mild, and sweet again,

Like a stern angel taught humility!
Oh! when he spoke, my heart stole out to him!
There was a spirit-echo in his voice,
A sound of thought—of under-playing music—
As if, before it ceased in human ears,
The echo was caught up in fairy-land."

Here be glittering words in abundance; but if they do not, in their combination, constitute unmitigated nonsense, I know not what nonsense is.

The lady escapes to her lover by that original device (especially since *Romeo and Juliet* was published) of taking a draught which makes her seem to be dead. Then all the parties are brought before the *Duke* in the manner of a police-office inquiry. The usurer performs some strange antics of generosity, bestowing all the lands and houses of *Isabella's* father upon the mad painter, in order to enable him to settle comfortably with *Isabella* for his wife. The usurer himself, however, does not remain a bachelor—he marches off, having *Zippa*, the glover's daughter, under his arm, and with an understanding that he is to marry her, and retire into the country.

Such is a modern drama by a popular author. I consider the extracts I have given to be rather favourable specimens than otherwise, of the modern school of dramatic writing to which the author belongs.

CONTINENTAL EXCURSIONS.

I AM not among those who think that foreign travel is useless and unprofitable; but much farther am I removed from such as uniformly prefer Continental excursions, and look upon home-tours as a comparatively dull and commonplace mode of enjoying leisure. As for those who run about merely for the sake of the momentary impression made upon their eyes and ears, and without reference to the permanent thoughts that observation should supply, there is not much use in wasting words upon them, further than to hope they may some time or another acquire habits more worthy of rational creatures. As for others, who go to this place or to that, merely because it is the fashion, and that they may be able to say they have ridden over some much-talked-of mountain, or sailed upon some much-frequented river, they may also be classed with the foolish ones. What an immensity of trouble they go to for so very paltry an end! If human beings were like the gnats that one sees of a summer evening, every one apparently with a separate existence, and yet directed by a law of their nature to dance and wheel about in crowds, each preserving his relative position towards each, as follower or leader—if this were the condition of our being,

then were the travellers from compliance with fashion somewhat excusable; but creatures who are endowed with reason—with a sense of duty—with feelings and passions to be at once exercised and governed—with powers of observation and discrimination—with a natural aptness for admiration of the just and the beautiful, and abhorrence of the unjust and the unfit, beings such as these—that is, rational human beings—ought to be ashamed of a mode of existence which is merely imitative of the gnats.

Now as to the pleasure which natural scenery produces, in all its varieties, whether of the richly rural kind, or the sternly and awfully wild, or the picturesque, where all the eye delights in is thrown together with the beautiful irregularity which nature alone can reach—as to all these, they may undoubtedly be found within the British islands in a much nearer approach to perfection than in any ordinary tour upon the Continent. For though you will find higher mountains in Switzerland than you can at home, and a certain freezing awe at the contemplation of those regions of eternal silence, where the snow never melts; and an indescribable charm of contrast when turning from these to the greensward by the brawling brook that dashes through the valley, or to the quiet *chalet* of which the very poverty and humility heightens the contrast by bringing into

play a train of ideas as much as possible opposed to the sense of the sublime, which the enormous mountains create—though this may be found in Switzerland, yet much there will be wanting which might be found at home, and even at home there are mountains sufficiently high, and valleys sufficiently lonely, to make as profound an impression of the sublime and the simple, as most minds are capable of receiving.

But, after all, the great multitude of travellers from England to the Continent, do not go to the mountainous regions, nor to any scenery which will bear one moment's comparison with the best scenery of England, Ireland, and Scotland. France is, taking it in the general, an extremely ugly country, compared with England; and Belgium is even worse, with the exception of the scenery of the Meuse, and the drive from Liege to the frontier of Rhenish Prussia, by the Chaude Fontaine Road. Yet Belgium is very well worth visiting for the sake of the beautiful buildings in the cities, and especially the Gothic churches, which are indeed most magnificent, and rich in the finest works of Reubens and Vandyke. Let it be noticed also that there is one drive in Belgium, that from Dinant to Liege, some five-and-forty miles by the side of the Meuse, which out of our own country cannot be equalled, until the Alps come in sight. The river is of a respectable breadth, but not deep; for the most part

there is a margin, about twice the breadth of the river, of rich land; verdant meadow or waving corn; and then the hill shoots up from three to five hundred feet, or more, exceeding steep, and yet for the most part covered with wood, which comes out in every variety of shape from the irregular surface, while ever and anon the bare crag stands forth, defying vegetation and challenging the storm. These rugged protuberances of cold grey stone, contrast beautifully with the rich green foliage above, beneath, and around them, and frequently assume the appearance of ruins more picturesque in their wild variety than the *real* ruins of the Rhine and the Moselle.

As to the Rhine, the grandeur of "the exulting and abounding river" is unquestionable, and to the erudite, whether in historical or legendary lore, it is exceedingly rich in associations. But the simple and unsophisticated lover of the picturesque and beautiful, is not so captivated with the Rhine as book-makers would have one to be. It has no green margin, with pretty cottages to please the taste, which has been formed in our beloved land. In that part which is most celebrated, the steep bank rises almost from the water's edge, often indeed crowned with ruined castles, beautiful in their decay, but their great number vulgarises them to the mind, and besides these we have nothing but brown bareness, or one of the ugliest crops

that ever covered the ground, to wit—the vine. Let not people be deceived by what they read of clustering and festooned vines of Italy and the far South. There is no uglier crop than the German vines. Long straight rows, of a pale bluish green, with innumerable bare, barkless poles sticking up amongst them to support the tendrils, constitute the outward show of the vine crop. Beans, when out of blossom, rival this crop in beauty, but beans, when in blossom, are, for appearance, and for the delightful odour, a thousand times superior. As to our English hops, to which the vine is sometimes compared, he must have a very different taste from mine who thinks the puny German vine can vie for one moment with our towering and graceful hop.

And then the Moselle—to those who love very high banks covered from bottom to top with very fine and flourishing vines—much finer than one sees on the Rhine—it is indeed most agreeable. Then the strange and (to any one in a hurry) the preposterous windings of the river—and, to tell the honest truth, the extreme beauty of the "castled crags" in the neighbourhood of Traarbarch, might seduce one into admiration, to say nothing of the pleasant inn at Zeltingen, and the grave, good-natured host, with his kind motherly dame, his comely daughters, and his excellent wine, and the placid lake-like character of the river near his abode.

All these, I grant, are well enough, and after the second bottle of wine, even of that country, might dispose a charitable person to very remarkable benevolence; but the Moselle is, after all, monotonous, and the hundred villages by its banks are absolutely hideous. Let these be especially noted and contrasted with England. Their situation is charming—a very little distance from the river, on a sloping ground, with the hill rising up abruptly behind them. But these villages are nothing better than a parcel of horrid looking houses, huddled together as closely as possible, with no attempt at comfort, much less neatness or ornament. Of a garden they never seem to dream. The beach is of dirty gravel, strewed with fragments of wood and old hoops, and bits of straw, the dirty remains of the last vintage, and nothing is there to indicate that the inhabitants have any pleasure in their homes beyond a mere shelter, under cover of which they may sleep and smoke.

Take, as one instance, the little town of Alf, where one stops to drive inland to the baths of Bertrich—the situation is most delightful, and the drive of six miles to Bertrich is enough to set one wild with admiration; but a meaner, nastier, more huddled up, and contemptible place than Alf, no Englishman ever set his foot in. Compare with this one of the villages on the Wye, and then be proud, as an Englishman well may, without a fault in being so.

But, notwithstanding all that is met with, absolutely offensive to an English taste, in Continental touring, it is true, that for the most part our English folk seem to enjoy it more than travelling about at home. This appearance may arise partly from affectation, and partly from a certain self-complacency, which in English nature developes itself more freely abroad than at home. But there is in it something real, and the reason is worth looking into. Perhaps it is that the Englishman, not being *easily* excited, requires something more than mere change of scene, however favourable the change may be, to rouse him into perception—that is, to a vividly and thoroughly-felt perception—of the novelties that surround him. He requires an aggregation of changes—change of language, of costume, of manners, of modes of life—in order to separate his thoughts completely from their ordinary associations, and to make him feel the full tide of novelty pouring in upon his mind. All this he has in Continental travel, whereas at home, though he may indeed see what is more interesting, yet the eyes of his mind not being opened—his powers of observation not being called into action, by the necessity of the case, such as having to eat fish at the end of dinner, instead of at the beginning, or the like—he does not arrive at a distinct consciousness of the interesting and beautiful things which have come within the sphere of his observation.

But he must be dull indeed, or very deficient in a feeling which is more universal in England than elsewhere, if Continental travel do not impress him with a sense of the absence of that *domesticity* to which the English heart so fondly turns. Let it be granted that our Continental neighbours have the advantage of us, perhaps in cheerfulness, and certainly in a greater variety of information, or at all events in a greater facility of talking about what they have seen, or heard, or read. But they seem made for being in public, and among strangers. We are more given to narrow, but at the same time to concentrate, both our attentions and our affections. We are a people made for *home*. We are not, except in a political sense, carers for the many. We regard the crowd with absolute indifference. The few, associated with our homes, are *all* to us. We wish to have a property, even in love and affection:—

"'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark,
Bay deep-mouth'd welcome as we draw near home;
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and look brighter when *we* come."

Yes; this is the dearest of all things which are dear to an English bosom. Let us quote another poet, English to the very core, in feeling, diction, character, habits—every thing:—

"Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise, that has survived the fall;
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or tasting, long enjoy thee! too infirm,

Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup:
Thou art the nurse of virtue: in thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heaven born, and destined to the skies again!
Thou art not known where pleasure is adored;
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist
And wand'ring eyes, still leaning on the arm
Of novelty, her fickle, frail support;
For thou art meek and constant, hating change,
And finding in the calm of truth-tried love
Joys that her stormy raptures never yield."

Of all this, Continental life—such at least as the traveller sees it, however closely he may investigate—suggests almost nothing; and much as there is to observe and to enjoy, and to meditate upon, the healthy English mind will store it all up for use when in the bosom of that *home* which is the attribute of his own country—the land of domesticity, where a man's house is his castle, and his hearth is sacred.

INTELLIGIBLENESS.

Amongst rare capabilities few are more so than that of being generally *intelligible*. It is not enough that one uses the language which is generally understood, and with due attention both to grammar and to idiom. This you may do, and yet classes of men are so various, and so differently educated, or habituated, that the same forms of explanation, and in the same language, will produce very different impres-

sions. This may be observed with respect even to mere statements of facts or narrations, but it is much more apparent in matters of argument, or explanation, or disquisition. Some minds will be found to reject as tedious or incomprehensible that which is alone acceptable to other minds. Thus a lawyer's statement, or his way of laying open and arguing a question, is often insufferable to the House of Commons. He goes, as country gentlemen think, into small points, and he dwells upon nice distinctions which either they cannot see at all, or, seeing them, they regard them as frivolous and vexatious. They do not like to be bound down by exact definitions, or by narrowing points to the precise position in which they stand in the particular case before the House. They like better what they call a broad and general view, in which ordinary presumptions are taken into account, rather than the exact letter of the document; that is, the motion, or resolution, or clause under consideration. A lawyer will be shocked at inconsistencies between one clause and another, which he will forthwith clearly, indignantly, and triumphantly explain to the House. But the House instead of being obliged to him for his pains, will listen to him with impatience, and when he has done will conclude that the Honourable and Learned Gentleman has occupied a great deal of time in merely "splitting hairs."

It is, therefore, of great importance that any

one who desires to make an impression—which in five cases out of seven, depends upon being at once earnest and intelligible—should consider what sort of person or tribunal it is that he desires to impress. If he supposes that he will produce an effect upon a popular assembly, or upon a group of Cabinet Ministers, sitting in Council, by the same sort of intelligibleness as would be conclusive before the judges in Westminster Hall, he will find himself grievously deceived.

Some one or another has given a very clever illustration of the inutility of applying close and refined arguments to ordinary minds, by reminding those who appear apt to fall into this error, that a blunt knife of ivory will cut paper a thousand times better than the sharpest razor. It is even so. We shall be foolish if we use razor arguments where people are more accustomed to such as correspond with the ivory knife. A man who converses with the accuracy and strictness of a logician, is tiresome, if not offensive. The same thing applies to subtle and minute views of any point which views are intended for the general understanding. We must take care not to be confused or contradictory, but when not speaking *professionally*, we must take verbal statements in their broad and general acceptation, having regard rather to the common sense, than to the erudite perception, of the auditory.

POETRY AND PUFFERY.

They who look into the periodical works of criticism, especially those which issue hebdomadally, will every now and then hear of poets whom never by any chance, will they hear of anywhere else. Epics and other "entire poems," as the phrase is, are written, and printed, and lauded exceedingly by some friend in a weekly journal, and then, strange to say, they are as if they had never been. I can only account for this upon the supposition that the *puff* of the good-natured friend is so strong as to send the whole edition up into the seventh heaven of poesy, the proper region of such exalted performances, from which the sheets never find their way down again among the creatures of earth's common mould. I am the more led to this opinion from observation of the fact, that the more *intense* the eulogy of these poetical flights, the more certain it is that the weekly paper being laid by, we shall never hear one word more about the work thus eulogised.

It is to be noted also that poems of the class I allude to, are generally of a very *flighty* character, and, therefore, when set in motion by the vigorous puff of criticism, away they soar, completely out of sight, disdaining to "go off," as booksellers vulgarly term it, over the counter, in exchange for gold and silver.

My own opinion is, that, whoever may be the gainers, the world has no great loss by the mysterious disappearance of the much-be-praised rhapsodies, from which specimen scraps are culled by the weekly critics. As soon as a young man who fancies himself poetical, gets far enough advanced to lose all manner of regard for whatsoever is rational and coherent in thought, and simple in expression, he rushes into print. Then he falls down and worships some weekly critic. Then he gets praised—and there's an end—that is to say of the poem, but by no means of the mischief. The poet does not write again—at least not an "entire poem" for publication—but he becomes a pensive attorney, or a bilious barrister, panting for prodigious change in all things moral, political, social, and literary; but, above all, for "enlargement of the popular mind" as to the merits of those romantic, philosophic, didactic, emanations of poetry, which it is the high destiny and glorious privilege of modern enlightenment to produce. Now, I think that—

> 'Twere well that writers of the school romantic
> Should change their names, and dub themselves the frantic.

But to do that would be to use a plain word to express a simple truth, of which there is, alas! no hope.

The newest specimens I have seen of this

romantic and philosophic school are from what the weekly critic who produces them to public admiration calls "an entire poem on Venice." This is no bad subject for an historical and reflective poem, and any one of strong feeling would be at no loss for passionate appeals to the sensibility of readers. I remember some years ago, when Mr. Pistrucci, the prompter at our Italian Theatre, was exhibiting as an improvisatore in London, some one of the company proposed to him as a subject *Venezia*, when, after some moments of apparently melancholy thoughtfulness, he burst forth into a strain of passionate lamentation which might have moved to sympathy even "a malignant and a turban'd Turk," if there had been one present among the audience.

The new poem, it seems, describes Venice as—

"Wasting in melancholy wanness *there:*"

which may be true enough sometimes; but unless we altogether disregard the account given by a rather celebrated author, in a work called "Beppo," Venice is by no means uniformly *triste*. But let us have some more pretty description from the new poem—

"The stucco peels from every time-stain'd wall,
O'er bridge and quay the grass unheeded grows,
Each palace piecemeal drops * * *
The sluggish water sleeps below
Arch'd windows, ne'er *illumined* now,
Or hangs with green and slimy *tresses;*

The stairs no festive footsteps presses, * * *
List! as the sable water-hearse glides by,
The quiet plash of the *deliberate* oar
Falls like a stifled sigh!"

This is, perhaps, not so much amiss, though rather elaborated; and though the resemblance of "the quiet plash of the deliberate oar," to a stifled sigh might be questioned by those who have minutely studied resemblances of sounds.

The poet becomes historical, and he looks backward through the mist of time upon the city:—

"As when in hoary pomp her doges sought
Shrines roof'd with gold to pour a victor's psalm—
As when Pisani, from a prison brought,
In chains sublimely calm,
Came forth beneath the blue of heaven,
Revenge disdain'd and wrongs forgiven!"

"*Hoary* pomp"—"*pouring* a victor's psalm"—"the calm sublimity of *chains*"—all these phrases show how the poet cannot find, in such language as Milton and Dryden used, words sufficiently expressive for his glowing ideas. And then Pisani cannot exhibit a moral virtue with effect, unless he is brought forth "beneath the blue of heaven" in an unquestionably melodramatic attitude and costume. Surely, to disdain revenge, and to forgive wrongs, were just as fine, though there were hardly as large a patch of blue in the sky as would make a nether garment for a Highlandman; but then the "tableau" would be wanting!

Now for a touch of the poet's philosophy:—

"Some blessing, Venice, in thy fall we see,
And simple maxims take *oracular might* from thee."

Very good; but let us see what these simple maxims are, which have taken an "oracular might" from the fall of Venice:—

"Time saps a race, by stealthy arts and slow:
Close social life—thought, luxury, weaken; air
And soil outworn less stalwart nerves bestow,
And then great hearts grow rare!"

I know not whether the "simplicity" or the "oracular might" of these thoughts will strike most. The notion of the *air* becoming "outworn," and therefore *bestowing* less stalwart nerves, is, I really believe, quite original, and I recommend it to the attention of Professor Faraday. I have heard much erudition from him on the subject of "that air" (to use the vernacular of Saint Mary Axe), but I never heard so much as a hint that the stock belonging to any particular city became worn out by much use. But it seems also that, through wearing out of the *soil*, "great hearts grow rare." This, I presume, must be an allusion to "bullocks' hearts," and the thought is altogether more butcherly than poetical.

Our author's *philosophy* now becomes "deeper and deeper still":—

"From individuals to the whole,
First sinks the body, *then* the soul;

No hope for men until they find
How much the body makes the mind!
What outward links keep flesh, heart, spirit, *akin*,
What lurk in fine spun threads of curious life within!"

Now, if the body makes the mind, as this rhymester doth affirm, when the body dies the mind will die, and until this theory be admitted he contends that there is no hope for men! No hope for men until they become satisfied that in respect of mental existence, beyond the often painful and always uncertain existence of the body, they are no better than "the beasts that perish!" Why, this would be to annihilate hope, and to make us, of all God's creatures, the most miserable.

Here are some more "simple maxims," which have taken "oracular might" from the fall of Venice, and the glowing imagination of our poet:—

"To blend in one the savage and refined—
The charm of each condition to preserve—
Is man's high task: the facile, free-wing'd, mind;
The terse and iron nerve,
The point-blank purpose—range of skill,
The cataract of a mighty will,
All must be kept—no gift refused;
E'en passion's lightnings rightly used—
Restrain'd indulgence—labour, luxury—
Be mix'd, and meted out with cunning ministry."

All this is no doubt equally wise and intelligible, and is to be esteemed accordingly.

I think I have now gone far enough with

these specimens of the frantic, aping the grand and philosophical. I only notice them in order to point out such stuff to the derision which is the proper meed of absolute folly united with enormous presumption. It is not merely one author, or two or three, to whose offences I allude, but a whole tribe of irreverent madmen, who pump out their craziness upon the world, and get praised by persons who some years hence, when experience shall have sobered them, will be very sorry for having recommended to the world such pernicious trash. The specimens given from the poem of "Venice" are taken from a much larger selection which is made by a weekly journal of large circulation and literary credit, and which selection is accompanied with extremely warm commendations!

CASTING REPROACH.

In the ordinary course of life there are few things which tend more to embitter it than a habit of thoughtless upbraiding. Perhaps it would be justifiable to use a stronger epithet, and to call it a *heartless* habit, for so it is; but still so mingled are the ingredients of human character, that many are found in the constant practice of this hateful trick of reproach, without being conscious of the unkindness of which they are guilty, or the pain which they inflict.

People of sharp observation, and a critical turn, are very apt to forget what good nature and delicacy of feeling should teach them in this respect. The vanity of a close discernment, and the promptings of a disposition too eager to teach, will often lead to upbraidings when there is no serious hostility felt to the person upbraided. Nay, this nauseous habit—the root of so much bitterness—leads some people to be continually snarling even at those they love. But let them beware of the result, for few things are so apt to convert love into its opposite. We cannot philosophise when we find those in whom we looked for kindness, and support, and consolation, noting our errors, our foibles, and our short-comings, and drawing them before our observation, not in the manner of kind remonstrance, but with the bitterness of reproach.

Shakespeare brings few characters before us more unloveable than that of the lean and scowling conspirator *Cassius*, but even for him a flood of sympathy rushes upon us when he expresses himself as though the reproaches of *Brutus* had broken his heart:—

" Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,
For Cassius is aweary of the world!
Hated by one he loves! braved by his brother;
Check'd like a bondman; all his faults observed;
Set in a note-book, learn'd, and conn'd by rote,
To cast into my teeth! O, I could weep
My spirit from mine eyes."

Never was the bitterness of soul which reproach occasions, more admirably delineated. Observe, however, how very different a thing this is from an accurate appreciation of the vice and its motives. The account given by *Cassius* of the reproaches of *Brutus* is dramatically true. If any one will put himself in the situation of *Cassius*, then will he mistake and exaggerate as *Cassius* did. *Brutus* did *not* hate him, nor note his faults for the purpose of casting them in his teeth; but *Cassius*, in the bitterness of his heart, feels that his friend has done so, and the great dramatist makes him express himself accordingly. And this is worthy of being observed, not merely for the notion which it affords us of the dramatical propriety in which Shakespeare was above all men felicitous, but that we may see how great is the pain which reproach inflicts, over and above what the mere reason, or the naked facts of the case would warrant. We do not feel merely that certain faults of ours have been in an unkind and unfeeling manner brought before our notice, but our hearts are torn with the suspicion that the watchfulness of hatred is upon us, and that our errors are carefully noted for the sake of the malicious pleasure of casting them in our teeth.

It is not, however, to great occasions of quarrel or bitterness, now and then occurring, that I would call attention, but to the perni-

cious *habit* of finding fault in a fault-finding manner. This is a continual trickling into the cup of bitterness which makes our very life distasteful; and yet no more than a knowledge of the existence of the habit, and an earnest wish to be loved and respected, rather than hated and shunned, are sufficient to put an end to it. It is not necessary that faults and omissions be borne without observation. There is such a thing as earnest and *affectionate* remonstrance; but beware of the spiteful, triumphant reproach, and do not suppose, that because it seems so hateful when your attention is first called to it, that you are innocent of such an offence. There are, perhaps, but few who are wholly so, and there are very many whose most ordinary mode of communication is in that odious form. To such persons a re-form is most essential.

VERBAL CAVILLERS.

THERE is a class of people who acquire a mean reputation for cleverness in this—that they assume that all persons should "speak by the card," and they affect to discover errors, which are in truth not errors, but only that the person represented to be erroneous has not written or spoken for minute questioners and cavillers, but for the common sense of mankind. It hap-

pened lately that the Duke of Wellington, in the discussion of some important matter in Parliament, referred to the great experience he had had in negotiations upon the subject, and thence assumed (as the world will think he very fairly might) that the opinion he offered was deserving of consideration and weight. To this a word-snapper in one of the newspapers answers, that the facts stated by the Duke touching his experience only proved that he *ought* to have been able to give a sound opinion upon the subject, and did not necessarily lead to the inference intended by the Duke, namely, that he was able to give a sounder opinion than most others. Having made this profoundly logical discovery, our word-catcher goes on to show how many people ought to know things who do not know them, as though *that* had anything to do with the probability of the Duke of Wellington's experience having informed his judgment.

This ridiculous questioning and cavilling is only mentioned as an instance of that paltry cleverness which is in fact a vice, but yet is one upon which many persons pride themselves. It is true that the proposition that experience adds to knowledge is not logically universal, but it is sufficiently general to be fairly assumed as truth in ordinary speech. Certainly it is far more reasonable to do this than to do what the critic above alluded to has done, namely, to

argue from the fact that some stupid or silly persons do not improve their judgment by experience, to the conclusion that the Duke of Wellington has no right to assume that his judgment is improved by experience. This, however, is the sum and substance of the word-catcher's argument. By the same species of ingenuity, a moralist who argued upon the assumption that man was a rational and an accountable being, might be controverted by the assertion that all men were not rational—that there were many houses in the land which were confessedly asylums for the irrational or insane, and, therefore, that an argument founded upon the assumption of the rationality of man was unsound.

It is certainly of great importance that every one, whether in public speaking or private conversation, should endeavour to be as accurate as it is possible to be, without stiffness or verbal tediousness. But one would not have a statement made in the manner of what lawyers call a "declaration," or a complaint put forward with the minute verbal particularity of an indictment; and yet, unless this were done, it is certain that word-catchers will find abundant matter for the display of that sort of cleverness upon which they pride themselves. It is but right that such critics, at all events, when they assail persons of great character with such puny weapons, should be regarded with contempt.

"We must speak by the card," says Hamlet, "or equivocation will undo us;" but when he says this he is alluding to a foolish gravedigger, who was anxious to display his skill in equivocation. In general we have a right to expect that men will express themselves correctly, but not that they will "speak by the card."

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

The poet Wordsworth tells a beautiful story of a stag hunted in the olden time for a long day, until at last, after all the dogs were tired, the master of the chase still remained in pursuit, and the stag, making three tremendous bounds adown a mountain's side, drops stone dead by a spring that bubbled up at the bottom. The knight who thus perseveringly hunted the poor creature to death, built a pleasure-house upon the spot in commemoration of his triumph:—

"Ere thrice the moon into her port had steer'd
A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter rear'd,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

"And near the fountain flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

"And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter led his wondering paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song,
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

" The Knight Sir Walter died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale."

The Poet's other tale relates to a journey from Hawes to Richmond, in Yorkshire, in the course of which the traveller came to a well, and three pillars standing in a line, the last on the top of the hill—

" I look'd upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seem'd as if the spring-time came not here,
And nature here were willing to decay."

Standing " in various thoughts and fancies lost," the traveller accosts a shepherd, who tells him the story of Sir Walter's chase in the olden time—that the three pillars mark the leaps of the unhappy stag just before its death, and that the desolation which marks the place is, in his (the shepherd's) opinion, a judgment upon it as the scene of so great a cruelty :—

" There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

" Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood; but, for my part,
I've guess'd, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy hart."

After saying much more about the place, and his belief that the decay will continue till " trees

and stones and fountain all are gone," the traveller, who is the poet himself, replies in a portion of his *philosophy*, the introduction of which has, up to this point, been my object:

" Grey-headed shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine—
This beast, not unobserved by Nature, fell;
His death was mourn'd by sympathy divine.

" The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

" The pleasure-house is dust; behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

" She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But, at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

" One lesson, shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

This is indeed "a lesson" as important as the expression of it in the above lines is beautiful and touching. The stern *uses* of life cannot be pursued without labour and sorrow. This curse fell upon us with the sin of Adam. We cannot supply the waste of existence but by destruction. We must "slay and eat," and we cannot do this without inflicting pain; but that we should blend our "pleasure or our pride" with the

infliction of pain is no necessity of our natural condition, but mere barbarity. People do not think of this as they ought. There are many sports—mere sports—very unfeelingly pursued; not because they who pursue them are wantonly or deliberately cruel, but they forget that they are inflicting pain, or custom has so hardened them that the suffering which they see they do not perceive. I would urge them to open the eyes of their mind to this matter, and

> "Never to blend their pleasure or their pride
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."

IRELAND.

Some of the political journals, which are not only ready but eager to puff into notice any book which seems likely to promote their party views, have lately been noticing, with much eulogy, a book about Ireland, manufactured by a Frenchman of the name of Beaumont. This book is one of a class in which this age of theorising is particularly fertile. The author finds Ireland full of anomalous circumstances, which, so far as observation can tell us any thing about them, appear to arise from peculiarities of moral character and natural disposition, the origin and *rationale* of which have not yet been traced, nor is it in the least likely that they ever will. Who can tell why American Indians are red, or

African negroes black, or answer the question "how an oyster makes his shell?" But this is a time in which certain confident persons will account for every thing upon general principles or theories, and one of these persons is M. Beaumont, about whose presumptuous book, they who ought to know better, are not ashamed to make a parade. M. Beaumont will have it that all the mysteries of the Irish character are traceable to political institutions—to the aristocracy, and so on; and when he proceeds to show why, he not only gives the merest declamation in lieu of argument, but he blunders as to the facts—namely, the laws and customs belonging to the ownership and transfer of property. This is not to be wondered at, since M. Beaumont is a foreigner; nor is his presumption in writing about what he does not know, as confidently as though he did know it, at all surprising, since he is a Frenchman; but it *is* rather too much that people of intelligence here should regard the declamation of this foreigner on the subject of Ireland as worthy of any other notice than that of derision.

The knowledge which in England we want about Ireland is a knowledge of facts—of the common habits of the people—for they who are not at all afraid or ashamed to spend their time and their money in going to Bohemia or Wallachia are both afraid and ashamed to cross St. George's Channel into Ireland, or to cross the

Seven Dials into St. Giles's, which is about seven minutes and three-quarters moderate walking from the statue at Charing Cross. It is quite certain that did one-tenth part as many English visit the country parts of Ireland, as do visit the country parts of Germany, the theorising rhodomontade of such a speculator as M. Beaumont would be held very cheap indeed.

In default of personal observation, the next best thing would be books of a genuine description, that is to say, books which describe men and things as they really are. But these are not easily to be had; for professed book-makers find it much easier to fill their books with speculation of one kind or another, than to observe accurately, and state clearly, what they have observed. Mr. Inglis's book on Ireland was a very honest one; but he had not had time to understand what he saw, when he began to write it down and publish it. He was in such haste to teach, that he did not allow himself time to learn. The Irish are a very difficult people to understand, and no man that has not known them intimately for years, is competent to describe them as they really are.

There are, however, some books written by people who do know the Irish well, and these—when the authors of them have the rare gift of subduing the national tendency to "fine writing" and romance—are, perhaps, as full of interest as any books of the present day.

I will take forth from its nook one, which is somewhat garrulously written, but exceedingly faithful, the author being utterly Irish, with an experience of at least forty years' habitual observation. He is an elderly clergyman, of a fervent disposition, and without a particle of professional stateliness. His book is called "A Tour in Connaught." I have read three hundred weight and seventeen pounds of parliamentary reports on Ireland, but from the whole mass could not cull so correct a *diorama*, or consecutive series of views of Irish circumstances, as will be found in the following detail:—

A young man succeeded to an estate which (it is almost a matter of course) was heavily encumbered, and the rents badly paid. "Then ensued foreclosures of mortgages, *custodiams*, and law-court receivers. Attorneys alighted on the vexed estate, and fastened their claws on it, and fattened as flesh-flies do on a festering sore. In this state of things the owner did what was wise and honest, he broke up his establishment, he let the fire out on his paternal hearth, and went to live poorly but secretly on the continent, leaving the nursing of the estate to a younger brother; perhaps he would have done better had he sold it; but those only who are reduced to the dire necessity of selling their ancestral inheritance can tell how bitter it is to take such a deep plunge downwards; and what way will

not be tried before this last leap is taken? Besides, perhaps he *could* not sell; it is not easy in general to make out a clear title to Irish estates; but, be this as it may, the owner had confidence in the firmness and discretion of his younger brother, and he left him as his *agent;* and *he* honestly, and with diligence, set about to force the tenants that were solvent to pay the rents they had undertaken for, and those who were not solvent, and incapable from idleness, ignorance, and bad habits, of meeting their engagements, he endeavoured to force off the property, giving them every aid that the limited means at his disposal would permit, to remove to some other location. He gave them their potatoes and furniture, and, if they desired it, the materials of their cabins. It does not appear that he did any thing unjust or oppressive, either to those he allowed to remain, or those he evicted. But still he became exceedingly *unpopular*; even those who *could* pay *combined to refuse payment*, either from fear of their neighbours, or from the expectation that they could evade it altogether, in consequence of the landlord's embarrassments, and in the midst of hostile legal proceedings. In all parts of Ireland attorneys are to be found who stimulate tenants to such evasions, and who live upon the differences between landlord and tenant. Such became now the state of this deranged property; some were forced off the estate;

others under ejectment, by advice of their lawyers, were taking legal steps to retain their holdings without paying rent at all."

This is a most accurate description of the actual state of hundreds of Irish properties. In England a man who cannot pay his rent seldom dreams of holding what he cannot, or will not pay for, in defiance of what he knows to be the law. In Ireland it is not so. The people, who are allowed to occupy land upon certain voluntary conditions, seem to have no notion of the moral obligation upon them to fulfil these conditions; nor is that obligation enforced upon them by those whom they look up to as infallible guides in points of moral duty.

The following personal sketch is even more admirably faithful than that of the embarrassed estate:—" In this vicinity, as in many others similarly circumstanced in the south and west, a character is to be found—a fellow from his youth given up to dissolute practices, *with considerable natural ability*, with great vigour and activity of body; a violent temper that never has been quelled, and strong passions that have always been indulged; such a person is given to no regular labour—he will work, it is true, more than any other at certain times, and under strong excitement—he will be found digging out a poor widow's potato field, or his reverence the priest's—and that more especially when whiskey and a dance are to be at the end of

the job; but if inconstant at labour, he is a regular attendant at fair, market, patron, wake, or hurling-match—if there ensue a row—and *his* presence almost ensures such a result—he is at the head of it, the ready promoter of all kinds of 'ruxions'—his skull, shins, and arms are covered with scars of cudgel wounds received therein: you may be sure he does not go near the confessional—he dare not go down and 'whisper at a priest's knee'—and he never marries, but, nevertheless, is the neglectful parent of a multitude of children. In this way he is the cuckoo of the parish—his birds are found in many nests. At times well, and at others shabbily, dressed; he has always the air of a rake and the leer of a profligate—he is *sometimes* sober and good-natured, and would go through fire and water to serve one of his own faction—he is oftener drunk, and that for days together, and then he is a ferocious, dangerous, brute; it is not exactly known *how* he lives, and no one can exactly tell his 'whereabouts,' but he is known to be a good shot—killing wild duck by night forms part of his ways and means; and though so often light-hearted and joyous in his deportment, it is known that he cares no more to shed human blood than he would to stick a pig."

I rather think that this is the most finished portrait—the most correct likeness—of the common Irish ruffian that I have ever happened to

meet with. But no Irish affair can end without a comedy or a tragedy. Let us hear the end of this thorough vagabond :—" The aggrieved party on the estate in question, consisting of fourteen, having resolved to take the agent's *life*, cast their eyes on a man of this character, and they *hired* him, as one whose heart was firm and aim sure, to fire the shot; but, still fearful of their bravo, they determined that one of them should accompany him, and that individual was fixed on by lot. Accordingly the two waylaid their victim at the spot they knew he must pass on his return from dining with a neighbouring gentleman. The scheme succeeded—the bullet was true to its mark—Mr. —— was shot through the heart, and the murderer and his companion walked leisurely away: *known as they were to thousands*, not a man gave information—the event, of course, for a time made a great noise—rewards were offered —the police were on the alert—*and then all blew over*. The bravo for a time kept out of the way. This was not extraordinary in one who had no settled home; but by and by the money he was supplied with was spent, and he returned to give his employers very broad hints that he must have more. The Rockites now took counsel together—they saw the danger they were in from being in such a reckless ruffian's power, and they resolved on their remedy. He was called to their meeting—he got more of

their money—he was then informed that they wanted another cast of his hand, in order to put out of the way another obnoxious gentleman who lived on the other side of the Shannon, and they engaged him, nothing loth, to come along with them to do the deed. On a dark blustry night they embarked in a *cot* on this dreary river, that here steals through bogs and morasses its deep and silent course, and while in the middle of the stream the bravo was suddenly caught hold of, and, before he had time to collect himself for resistance, was tossed overboard; and as he rose after the plunge, and attempted to catch the boat, a heavy oar's blow, aimed with vigour and certainty at his head, sent him again to the bottom, and, as it was hoped, never more to rise. But in this they were mistaken, for by and by he was seen steadily and lustily swimming towards shore, and then it was that one of the party, resting the ruffian's own gun on the gunwale of the cot, fired with sure aim, and sent the bullet through his brain. The fellows waited till they saw that he would *now* rise no more. They then went home, kept their own secret, and all was safe. But some time after, in the usual process of decomposition, the body rose to the surface, and was found amongst the reeds. A coroner's jury was summoned, and after a cursory inspection the usual verdict of 'Found drowned' was about to pass: but while the coroner was writing out the proceedings, one of

the jury passing a small switch through the profuse curls of the dead man's head, found his switch enter, and, as through a hole, pass out at the other side. This, of course, led to a more exact examination, and the man was found to have died of a gun-shot wound, inflicted by some person unknown. Still a year or more passed on, until in the dusk of winter's evening, as the chief constable of the district was sitting by his fire, a message was brought to him stating that one in his hall wished to speak with him. He had him introduced, when, in a way not at all common with the Irish, and in apparently the deepest agony of remorse, he told the guilty story from beginning to end. He said that though he had confessed all to the priest, and gone through many penances, yet he could not find ease for his conscience, that life was a burden, that he desired to die, even suppose it was by the hangman's hand. He named to the constable all the individuals concerned; said that a large portion of them were at that very moment on their way to the gaol of Galway, to visit others of the confederates who were confined for some other crime. By means of this information the constable succeeded in arresting almost every one of them. I do not know what became of the repentant murderer, for *he* was the one upon whom the lot fell to go along with the bravo to shoot the agent. The chief constable declared that in all his experience of Irish

criminality, this informer showed the *only* evidence of genuine and uncontrollable remorse."

The conclusion the author draws from this well-told and characteristic story is, that the "predial" evils of Ireland are in a great measure owing to the pecuniary distresses of the landlords.

Doubtless this distress, and the desperate measures resorted to in consequence, are among the proximate causes of Irish outrage; but the root of the evil lies in the destitution of moral principle. The people are led by their feelings and their passions—they have no sense of duty, except that they are bound to submit to their ecclesiastical superiors. Nevertheless, if one can escape being shot (and, after all, it is only now and then these shooting affairs take place), these Irish are not an unpleasant people to live among.

CAUSALITY.

To understand the reasons why things are as they are in this world's wide domain—*cognoscere causas rerum*—this is indeed the height of wisdom. But this, even in the limited degree in which it is possible, is a thing of much time and labour. In modern times the fashion is to take a shorter method. There never was a period when people were less content to take

things as they find them without troubling themselves about causes, but neither was there ever a time when people in general had less patience for acquiring a knowledge of these causes. The modern method, which is one of remarkable facility, is to *assume* a cause. A man might as well forswear society at once—at all events the delightful *intellectual* society of political economists, geologists, transcendental metaphysicians, and other *illuminati*—as make up his mind to simple facts, such as that eggs are eggs, or that mutton is sevenpence the pound because the butcher won't take less. No; that will never do. You must connect every fact with some profound theory. Eggs are eggs because of some general law—" principle" is the fashionable phrase—which can only be explained by a large quantity of terms derived from the Greek. Mutton is sevenpence the pound, because of some very profound relations between demand and supply, only comprehensible by such as are versed in political economy; and this " principle," upon which the price of your mutton inevitably depends, must be held to be infallible all the same, though you discover that your neighbour on the right hand obtains his requirements of sheep's flesh for sevenpence halfpenny the pound, and your neighbour on the left contracts " all round" for sixpence three farthings.

We have called this fashion of theorising

a " modern" fashion, but it is so only in this respect, that in the present time we apply it to the gravest and most practical matters, whereas when it was last in fashion it was more innocently confined to the province of merely fanciful speculation.

For example, towards the close of the sixteenth century, to wit, in the year 1597, the very learned Dr. Gaspar Tagliacozzi, of Bologna, more commonly known as Taliacotius, published a very elaborate book, of which the fifth chapter is dedicated to a treatise, " on the dignity of noses." In this chapter the author is pleased to acquaint the world, not only with the great dignity and nobleness of the nose, but likewise the reason thereof. He is not quite confident of the exact and only reason, wherein it must be allowed he falls short of the moderns, who have no doubt at all in any thing which they consider scientific. But he seems quite sure that this grandeur of the nose depends upon one of two causes which he takes the pains to specify. " There is," says he, " something august and regal in the nose, either *because* it is the sign of corporeal beauty and *mental perfection*, or *because* it denotes some peculiar aptness and wisdom in governing." This is quite of a piece with many of the " causes" which one sees every day advanced in matters of the very highest practical moment. The illustrations, too, of the erudite Tagliacozzi,

are ludicrously similar in their confidence and their reasonableness to those which we find advanced in support of modern theories. The point to be established is, that the nose does denote, or is considered to denote, peculiar wisdom or fitness for government; "*so*," says the learned man of Bologna, "the Persians admire an aquiline nose in their King; *so* in the Old Testament, those who had too small, or too large, or a distorted nose, were excluded from the priesthood and the sacrifices." He afterwards proceeds to a greater height still, and displays such a degree of theorising eloquence as even a political economist might envy. "Nasus ergo," says he, "tantæ est estimationis, ut ex ejus decore, ornatuque, summa sacerdotia, amplissima imperia, et regna latissima pendere videantur." Of such estimation, therefore, is the nose, that upon the beauty and elegance thereof, depend the highest offices of the priesthood, the most extensive governments, and the largest kingdoms!

This glowing eulogy is only to be equalled in modern times by the panegyrists of free trade in timber and in theology. But as these earnest laudations resemble one another in their eloquence, so do they in their reasonableness, and also in the estimation with which they were, and are, regarded. The pedants of James the First's time were as much enamoured of the reasonings and eulogies of Doctor Taliacotius and the like,

as the more active and loquacious pedants of the present day are of dissertations on the "principles" of this, that, and the other thing, which to simple people, seem to depend on the accidents, caprices, and fashions of human life.

Taliacotius was so very great upon his favourite theme that I suppose his bones must have rattled in his grave when our modern philosopher Coleridge propounded the doctrine that the "final cause" of the human nose was *snuff*—an extreme on the side of mere familiarity, which may perhaps be equally questionable with the more abstruse theories developed by the philosophers both of heathen antiquity and the middle ages. Those very clever persons, the Pythagoreans, as the Italian professor informs us, were of opinion that nature has expressed in the formation of the nose, the *monade* and the *dyade* in connecting the two nostrils by a common bridge; an observation from which they drew some exceedingly sage and profound conclusions touching the power of certain *numbers*. A commentator, who published some time in the beginning of the present century, thinks proper, in allusion to this matter, to call these Pythagoreans "pompous triflers," and describes their learned conclusions as "fantastical notions." I love equal and impartial justice too well to administer such censure. If our modern theorists are to be received with honour and applause, when laying down the

law about the most important practical concerns, I know not why we should accuse the poor Pythagoreans of "pompous trifling." I think that they are "all in the same boat."

Talking of "final causes," it would be a pity to omit the theory of an Irish bully and philosopher, touching that part of the human frame which is chiefly used in the operation of sitting. He did not call it the seat of honour, but the sounding-board of honour, and declared that its final cause was "kicking." Unfortunately this worthy got shot through the head before he had completed the entire circuit of his reasoning. A much greater philosopher, however, than this Irishman, was solemnly of opinion that this part of the frame was intimately connected with the finer operations of the soul. Hence the sitting posture is so favourable to meditation and philosophising. Upon the "final cause" of the sedentary posture, he says, "Homo enim ad sedendi commoditatem, solus nates habet, ut commodé sedere possit ad meditandum et philosophandum. Sedens enim, anima prudentior est." For this last assertion, upon the superior sagacity of man in a sitting posture, Riolanus quotes Aristotle as his authority. I regret that I cannot recollect the exact words of the Stagyrite which are referred to. This conclusion, if well authenticated, would be a great consolation to tailors and shoemakers, and very fully account for the superiority of soul, and astute-

ness of perception, for which these worthy handicraftsmen are so celebrated. Some one* has written an essay on the *melancholy* of tailors. Probably the subject matter of that dissertation is a mistake. The serious cast of thought and expression arising from that posture which is so convenient *ad meditandum et philosophandum* is a very different thing from *tristitia*, or melancholy. But this question is too deep to be pursued further in this place.

PERSONAL PECULIARITIES.

From the philosophy of the sitting posture it is but natural and proper to turn to the subject of *tails*. Nothing political, however, is intended, and certainly no scandal upon the House of Commons. The rich subject of tails is worthy of notice, because I may show that not only were there in former times adventurous theorists of nearly equivalent modesty to those who flourish in our own time, but historians also (Steele tells us of certain persons who could not help telling lies, but thought it more polite to be called "historians" than "liars"), who might come into competition with some modern compilers of "illustrative facts." This word "illustrative" is now a very great favourite; for the

* Charles Lamb.

theory or "principle" being assumed in the first instance, it is highly convenient to have an ingenious illustrator, with a somewhat daring turn for the collection of corroborative circumstances.

There is a writer of the name of Bulwer—not the author of "Pelham," nor, as far as I know, an ancestor of that distinguished individual, though the thing is possible—who was very learned upon the history of the *homines caudati* of curious naturalists. He was not quite so celebrated as Lord Monboddo; but no matter. Well, this Bulwer quotes from historians more ancient still, especially *Johannes Neirembergensis*, a story of certain people in Kent, or some other county in the south, who all had tails, as a punishment for some indignity shown by their progenitors to Saint Augustine. In Bulwer's own time (as he was *informed*) there was a family in Kent having tails, "insomuch," says he, "that you may know any one to be *rightly* descended of that family by having a tail." About this he seems not to be quite sure; but he has very little doubt that the inhabitants of Stroud, near Rochester, incurred the curse of tails by cutting off the tail of St. Thomas à Becket's horse. "You may know," says he, "a man of Stroud by his long tail. And to make it a little more credible that the rump-bone among *brutish and strong-docked nations* doth often sprout out with such an excrescence

or beast-like emanation, I am informed by *an honest young man* of Captain Morris's company, in Lieut.-General Ireton's regiment (how very circumstantial the rogue is), that at Cashel, in the county of Tipperary, in the province of Munster, in Carrick Patrick Church, seated on a hill or rock, stormed by the Lord Inchiquin, and where there were near seven hundred put to the sword, and none saved but the major's wife and his son, there were found among the slain of the Irish, when they were stripped, divers that had tails near a quarter of a yard long. The relator, being very diffident of the truth of this story, after inquiry, was insured of the certainty thereof, by forty soldiers that testified upon their oaths that they were eye-witnesses, being present at the action."

All this is highly curious and interesting. The only point to be regretted in it is, that one bearing the name of the author I have quoted, dear to the public as that of an illustrious modern author, should have been so *illiberal* as to class the Irish among "brutish and strong-docked nations," whereas it is well known that for eloquence, pathos, valour, whisky-punch (since the invention of that classic compound), and all other kinds of civility, the Irish, whether *caudati* or *incaudati*, with tails, or without them, have long been remarkable.

A gentleman named Doctor Guindant, doubtless French, relates that the southern part of the

island of Formosa (*Formosa*, indeed!), the Molucca and Philippine Islands, contain whole races of men with tails; and that in the burning deserts of Borneo the greatest part of the inhabitants are tailed. Of the last-mentioned fact I have no doubt, but I suppose the greater part of the inhabitants have four legs as well.

A judicious person of small imaginative powers has suggested that, in viewing a savage clothed with the skin of a quadruped, a traveller, *intent on wonders*, might mistake the tail of his garment for a natural appendage. This observation to a high order of sagacity.

EXPERIENCE.

It is a strange thing, but true, that in the affairs of life, both great and small, it happens nine times out of ten, that no one will profit by any experience but *his own*. It is in vain you tell the sanguine and the confident that they expect what cannot be. They may admit to you, perhaps, that what they look forward to never has been; but they fondly suppose that *they* will be so fortunate or so prudent as to improve upon all that has gone before. At all events, they are resolved that they will try.

And so they do; and they find, as all have found, that joy is but a will-o'-the-wisp, which only seems to be, and is not—that when they

arrive where they were sure to have found it, it is still in the distance. At length they know that it is never to be found. They have their experience, but this, too, they find to be like counters, which may be of some use to yourself when it is *almost* too late, but will not pass current. They who have a like experience with yourself don't want it from you—they who have it not, won't take it from you.

This is the nature of mankind. It may well be supposed that it is all for the best; and we may ourselves plainly see that no one would ever be conscious of the value of any experience which was imparted to him, and not acquired by him. He would say, "I have followed your advice, and I am not happy—perhaps if I had followed my own inclination I would have been so." He will not be persuaded that all things must have this result, and that to avoid unhappiness, rather than to achieve happiness, is the most that (generally) our condition permits. "Omne experivi," said the Roman Emperor, "et nihil expedit." If he had not tried everything, all the philosophy and eloquence of man would probably not have brought him to so frank and true an acknowledgment.

Cicero says, that "nescire quid antea natus sis acciderit, id est semper esse puer"—to be unacquainted with that which happened before you were born, is to be always a boy. Alas! it is not enough to *know* what has happened before

your time, however accurately. Undoubtedly it is better than not to know it, for you have a wider range of observation, and a better chance of drawing a right conclusion. But, no matter what you may *know*, you will still judge with the buoyancy and sanguine expectation of boyhood, until you have learned to *feel the truth* of your knowledge in your own proper person. I fear that this must be so; but the lesson to be drawn even from knowledge of our own incapacity to take advantage of experience by inculcation, is to receive it with respect, and to pay it all the deference we can, allowing our judgment at all events to acknowledge the probability that what has happened may happen again, and taking all the precaution we can to guard against ill consequences which will probably arise, supposing, however unlikely it may seem, that what our more experienced friends suggest to us should turn out to be correct.

HYPER-CAUTION.

I DO not—never did—and in all probability never shall, like your over-cautious people. There are those who never so far believed in the continued fineness of a summer day, as to omit the burden of an umbrella, nor lent ten pounds without security, nor gave sixpence to

a beggar lest upon due investigation, held by the street-keeper and beadle, he or she should turn out to be more or less an impostor. Such folks may have what are called "old heads on young shoulders," but it is to be feared that of heart, whether young or old, there is not much. Over-cautious people are like those who are always taking such heed to their steps, and looking so closely on the ground, that they lose all the finest prospects in their way. They see nothing but their own insignificant progress. On the other hand, there are those who by an incautious habit of looking always at what is above them, or in the distance, tumble into holes, and are altogether upset in their progress. Both these habits are to be avoided. We should recollect that there are times and seasons when we cannot proceed too considerately and circumspectly, but that it is a mean and fearful thing to be always on the watch, and taking care against very improbable occurrences, like some wiseacres who make it a rule never to walk under a bridge when they can cross it above; "for," say they, "the bridge must fall some time, and we will make sure not to be under it." There is no *must* in the case, and, if there were, such remote contingencies are not worth calculating upon.

HYPER-HUMILITY.

"It is," says the learned and pious Archbishop Usher, "a good observation which we read in Claudius, that, not only in the splendour of bodily things, but also in mournful abasing of oneself, there may be boasting, and that so much the more dangerous, as it deceives under the name of doing God service." It is much to be feared that at the present time, and among those who have much in them that deserves commendation, if not reverence, this dangerous and deceitful boasting may be found. With some it turns into a revolting habit, which is not too strongly stigmatized by the word "cant."

Let it be observed, that there is the strongest possible distinction between humility of spirit and an ostentatious parade of it in words or in actions. It is undoubtedly very right to be sensible of offences, and to be heartily sorry for them; but this "mournful abasing of oneself," as the good Archbishop phrases it, with all the clamour and all the trappings and the suits of woe, savours more of vanity than of a contrite heart, and generally tends more towards offence than towards edification. There are many who, in their "mournful abasement," deceive themselves, while they think they are doing God

service. These are to be pitied, and should be treated with gentle yet earnest remonstrance. Again, there are some, who, by this clamour of self-accusation, try to deceive others with the pretence of that which they do not feel; who insult the Deity and deceive mankind by an outward show of sanctimonious self-abhorrence, which they well know to be deceit. For these the stocks and the ducking-stool are but too mild admonishments. Nevertheless, let us take care that we do not confound *weakness* with hypocrisy.

THOUGHTFULNESS.

Wordsworth somewhere speaks—very finely, as I think—of

"A soul by *contemplation* sanctified."

Of course this is to be understood differently from the being "sanctified" in a biblical or theological sense. It would be carrying the philosophy of "contemplation" much beyond its province, were we to say, that it could stand in the place of religion, or that the soul by much searching, could of itself find out what it ought to know, and become pure and holy in the Christian acceptation of the words. This I premise, to avoid misconstruction. But I would point to the distinction between those restlessly active minds that are for ever buzzing through

the intellectual world, devouring knowledge in a hurry, and flying to a fresh meal before the last is half digested—between such minds and the calm thoughtfulness which leisurely and silently ponders what is before it, and looks even beyond, in the same direction, fearful of the distraction of variety. How odious is the vulgar loquacity and bustle of him who sees indeed, but does not contemplate nor consider, compared with the calmer and milder dignity of one whose range of observation may have been much less, but who has a soul by contemplation sanctified—that is, made meditative, gentle, aspiring, reverential—pregnant with admiration and with awe.

But by such a minded man as this, we are not to understand either an anchorite, or even one unfitted for all that is amiable, and much that is strenuous, in the ordinary business of life. There is nothing more to be shunned than such a habit of severe reflection and abstraction, as will not permit a man to mingle in what is useful and innocently pleasant in the world, even to the trifles which please children and little dogs. Some one tells a story about that delightful writer Goldsmith, that when he was sought by a pompous person at his lodgings in the village of Islington, and was expected to be found severely thoughtful in his study, surrounded by his books, he was, in fact, descried in the midst of a group of little children, making

them infinitely happy, while he was instructing a docile dog how to beg for gingerbread and halfpence.

And the admirable Sir Thomas More (albeit he had such a crooked bend in his mind as to be capable of persecuting and scourging heretics) is very express in acquainting us that after the grave business of his chancellorship was over, and he went home to his house at Chelsea, he deemed it a duty to unbend himself, and be pleasant with his household. "For," says he, " when I come home I must converse with my wife, chat with my children, and talk with my servants, all the which things I reckon and account among business, for as much as they must of necessity be done, and done they must needs be, *unless a man will be a stranger in his own house.* And in any wise a man must so fashion and order his conditions, and so appoint and dispose himself, that he may be merry, jocund, and pleasant among them, which either nature hath provided, or chance has made, or he himself hath chosen to be the companions of his life; so that with too much gentle behaviour and familiarity he doth not mar them, and by too much sufferance of his servants make them his masters."

Certainly these household rules which Sir Thomas More lays down are far too much neglected in these days, and men are truly, as it were, " strangers in their own houses." With

regard to servants, who are, whether one will or no (and why should one *not* will it?), a part of the family, the "sufferance" which they have is of a very anomalous kind, and though they are perhaps not less effectually "masters" than if too familiarly treated, yet the affectionate respectfulness which it is evident the worthy Chancellor aimed at, is not generally attained.

A great household is oftentimes (to my eyes) one of the most melancholy things that can be looked upon. It is a crowd of people living together too luxuriantly, yet without the comfort of family union, or the independence of absolute separation of interests. The habits of Sir Thomas More would make a most desirable reform in such matters.

FRENCH NOVELS.

A PERSON with an English name has lately put forth a book for the ostensible purpose of introducing to the better acquaintance of the English public the fashionable French novels, and other specimens of the light and loathsome literature of France, in the present day. The book is called "Modern Literature of France;" but as a very accurate critic has already said, "those who have recourse to it with the hope of obtaining any idea of the modern literature of France will be wofully disappointed. The

writers mentioned, with little exception, would have been counted among the small fry of literature in the days when there were giants in the land; and in truth the book is little more than a *catalogue raisonné* of the small *littérateurs* of France by the kindred hand of a small *littérateur* of England."

But if the book were as able and eloquent as it appears to be empty and ignorant, still it would not be the less incumbent upon all public advocates of social virtue, and of the useful and beautiful feelings of our English *home*, to hold up to general indignation and scorn, an attempt to reconcile the English public to the modern fictions which come forth in Paris, and are so eagerly read all over France. There is no language too strong to reprobate such an attempt. There is scarcely an epithet sufficiently odious by which to designate a mind that could harbour the wish to pollute our parlour literature—the common familiar reading of our households, with the *enormities* of modern French novels. They cannot be read—especially by the young—without certain deterioration of mind and heart, and without imminent risk of the very worst consequences. It is true that they are hideously unnatural, and that to persons of matured taste and possessing an inward reverence for decency they are absolutely revolting. Still, however, they are skilfully addressed to those mysterious combinations of passion which

are common almost to all, and which in the period of warm youth, may be easily fanned into a flame of terrible excitement.

There is nothing too dreadful for the imagination of French writers. There is nothing of the horrible, the wicked, the indecent, which their rank minds conceive, that they have any hesitation in writing down and publishing. A fearful mingling up of romance and abomination is the daily work of these writers. To excite and startle, no matter by what grossness—no matter by what fantastical exaggeration of the evil thoughts and demoniac feelings which lurk in our fallen nature—this is the business of those novelists whom an English writer dares to recommend to the more general perusal of the British public.

Very well has it been said by the critic already quoted, that when curiosity has tempted him at any time to take up one of these books he has laid it down with disgust, notwithstanding the unquestionable genius and power which they frequently display. "When not actually licentious, and calculated by prurient descriptions to inflame the passions of the young, they generally tend to generate a distaste for the order of society, and the sacred bonds of domestic life; and their degrading pictures of human nature must tend to produce in the minds of those who habitually contemplate them a scepticism as to the very existence of virtue, which must be

anything but conducive to its practice. Can such reading fail to be pernicious? and can the morals and manners of society remain uninjured where such reading is universal?"

Certainly not. It is impossible that domestic virtue can dwell in company with such thoughts as these French books suggest and encourage. Let this be a warning to every English father and mother how they send their children to a society where such books are habitually read. What signifies the outward decorum, or the pretty manners, of those whose inward minds are abandoned to the licentiousness of thought which these novels produce? Intrigues of the most degrading description—wild projects of revenge for subsequent neglect—despair and suicide to close the scene. These are the natural results of the habits of thought derived from modern French novels.

It is not denied in Paris that a fearful aggravation of crime and frightful catastrophes has been caused among the middle classes by these books; and, so far as their influence goes, the same thing happens in England. A young printer was found dead the other day in one of our parks. He appeared to have taken poison, and afterwards shot himself. It was given in evidence, on the coroner's inquest, that some years ago he was religious and industrious, but he had gone twice to Paris. He became irreligious and dissolute. He was still industrious;

but as soon as he had earned a sum of money, he went, in his impatience to increase it, to the gambling table. He is dead by his own hand. Hundreds run the same career, and come to a similar end, whose history no coroner's inquest reveals.

But if other examples were wanting of the corruption of mind produced by reading these books, the author of the work recommending them to the attention of the English would himself furnish an example. For instance, he speaks of, perhaps, the worst author of the worst of these books in the following terms:—"Madame Dudevant is a lady under thirty years of age, beautiful in person as she is *elegant* in mind, and calculated as much to grace a gilded salon, as to shine in a *conversazione* among a number of eminent literati. She is witty and *spirituelle*, as well as philosophic and profound, and as capable of exciting peals of laughter as of drawing the tear of tender sympathy from the eyes. Her style of conversation is not vested with the same boldness or *fearlessness* which characterize her writings; her ideas are invariably expressed with a reserve and modesty *which cannot be traced in her volumes.*"

Is it not strange and humiliating that a man with the name of an Englishman, can bear to write in these favourable terms of a woman whose "most celebrated" novel he himself thus describes:—"*Lelia* is the most celebrated, *be-*

cause it is the most pernicious of the category of volumes the title pages of which bear the *immortal name* of this extraordinary writer. The tale is, however devoid of one single feature to recommend it: it is *a hellish compound of poisonous drugs, combined for the purpose of forming a draught which may instil a slow poison into the veins of those who luxuriate in it!*"

Is not this monstrous? And yet it is perhaps scarcely so bad as the following *apology* for this notoriously dissolute writer:—"This woman of a million passions, when she first entered upon the marriage state with the nobleman whose name she bears, *found that the endearments of her domestic circle were few;* and hers was a disposition which, feeling a perpetual want of something to love and cherish with a *pure* and unvarying affection, was easily led astray so soon as those ties of attachment were, as is *reported, but how truly we know not*—wantonly broken by him who ought to have been proud of the woman whose incipient genius he could not but have perceived. Hence—in an age and a city of pleasure and temptation—exposed to all those dangers which are ever to be encountered by beauty and talent—*and gifted with a soul as full of poesy and love* as her imagination was of richness and originality—did the Baroness *yield to the exigencies of her nature* and of her position, and *seek that consolation with another* which she could not find

with her legal protector. She became an authoress in due time; and, aware that prejudice might attach unpopularity to her writings if issued under the auspices of her real name, she adopted that of 'George Sand,' and, as we before stated, experienced the most complete success ever attained by any female in modern times."

The man who could write such an apology as this, is perhaps but consistent with himself in recommending to the English such "hellish compounds" as the modern French novelists supply. But we hope the English public are not likely to follow his recommendation, and that a manly taste in the one sex, and a feminine abhorrence of impurity in the other, will always keep far from our firesides the beastly literature of the French circulating libraries.

A CONTRAST.

With a pride which I trust is not at all presumptuous—with a boundless exultation, and a refreshment of the spirit, which is altogether unutterable, do I turn away from the foul and feverish writers of modern France, to our own great master of the heart and passions. Hail Shakespeare! A man who could freeze the soul with not unwholesome horror—who could exhibit the most dreadful workings of determined

guilt with a power that leaves us lost in astonishment that words of man can convey so much, and yet who never leaves an impression adverse to what is gentle and good, noble and generous!

Again, and again, and again, may we read Shakespeare, ay, even after the words are familiar to us as our daily prayers, and still do we find some new suggestion of admirable truth —something to soften what is rugged, and to warm and uplift what is good in our nature. Contrast what Coleridge says of his writings with the character of those boldly licentious French writings which are now recommended to the English public. Of course I do not deem it reasonable that these modern works as a whole should be tried by such a standard as Shakespeare supplies, but just see how in respect of the few particulars so accurately pointed out by Coleridge, the contrast runs. "Keeping at all times in the high road of life, Shakespeare has no innocent adulteries, no interesting incests, no virtuous vice. He never renders that amiable which religion and reason alike teach us to detest, or clothes impurity in the garb of virtue. . . . Shakespeare's fathers are roused by ingratitude—his husbands stung by unfaithfulness: in him, in short, the affections are wounded in those points in which all may—nay, must feel. If he occasionally disgusts a keen sense of delicacy, he never *injures the mind.* He

neither excites nor flatters passion in order to degrade the subject of it. He does not use the faulty thing for a faulty purpose, nor carries on warfare against virtue by causing wickedness to appear as no wickedness, through the medium of a morbid sympathy with the unfortunate. In Shakespeare vice never walks as in a twilight. Nothing is purposely out of its place. He inverts not the order of nature and propriety; does not make every magistrate a drunkard or a glutton; nor every poor man meek, humane, and temperate. He has no benevolent butchers, nor any sentimental rat-catchers."

Let it be the glory of England that Shakespeare is especially English. Everything in him that is so great, everything that is so delightful, is but an exaltation of English spirit—English sentiment—English feeling. Honour and affection, therefore, be about his name, while ever and wherever our tongue is spoken, and one drop of the heart's blood of old England shall still remain!

CONTENTEDNESS.

"He that hath a contented mind," says some sage or another, "hath a perpetual feast." But he has more than this, for, however a contented mind may be a blessing to one's self, it is a yet greater blessing to those with whom one lives.

To such as do not think any matter of philosophical speculation worthy of being dwelt upon unless it have the air of originality or novelty, it may appear very uninteresting to discourse of the value of a contented spirit, but the matter is too closely connected with the *utile* and the *pulchrum* in the affairs of life to be omitted in our familiar talk, and I am not of a temper to be scared from anything by the vulgar intimation that it is not new. That may do very well as an objection in a mercer's shop when last year's patterns are put forward to those who are in quest of something "fashionable," but as touching themes of social morality, the objection is nought.

Contentedness, such as we see it in the world —for we sometimes do see it—is, *for the most part*, the result of a natural constitution—of good health—of nerves not easily disturbed—of fortunate circumstances, and so on. But occasionally we shall see the true philosophy of contentment—a meek, cheerful, religious spirit —triumphing over the most adverse and provoking circumstances, and remaining not only serene, but almost sunny, amid oppressions, afflictions, and neglects, which are, indeed, hard to bear. This is a great height of virtue, beautiful to look upon, and worthy of the most profound respect.

But what we shall very much oftener see, is the spectacle of persons totally insensible to the

good things with which they are endowed, and observant only of such things as vex and irritate, and give occasion for complaint. There are many of a quick and ardent spirit who are apt to exhibit considerable bitterness at one time, and considerable exultation at another, according to the circumstances they meet with. They often appear discontented, if you see them only for a time, and under peculiar circumstances; and, on the other hand, when seen under a different aspect of surrounding events, they appear of a particularly amiable and enjoying temperament. It is not of these I would at present speak, but of the habitual murmurers, the fidgetty and fretful, who seem to be hardly ever in a state of comfort themselves, and who never think of studying the comfort of others. This is a deplorable condition of existence; and yet in this country it is the fate of very many who have been brought up without knowing any thing of hardship, and who magnify every little trifle—which is at most a mere inconvenience—into something so serious that it quite puts out of their view all the matters of enjoyment—all the causes of rational thankfulness, which really surround them.

Now, this is frequently so much an affair of habit—it is an evil persevered in with so little self-consciousness of the pain and discomfort which arise from it—with so little perception of its religious undutifulness, that if we could but

induce a knowledge of the real character of the habit in those who are its victims, we might hope that a cure would be effected. They who are of a murmuring, and fretful, and complaining spirit, always think that they are perfectly justified in all the complaints which they make. They are perfectly ready to argue with you that they do not murmur without a cause. I will not dispute that matter with them. Undoubtedly there is so much of wrong in the common habits of the world—so much untruth—so much affectation—so much neglect of obvious duty—so much impertinence and obtrusiveness, that if we choose to look at these things alone, we may complain from morning to night, and from night to morning, without exhausting all the just subjects of reproof and rebuke which exist around us, and touch even ourselves. But where is the sense or value of such an employment of our time? How far is it *just* to observe all the wrong, and to omit all the good done for us, which might have been left undone? Even if we had a right to torment ourselves by choosing the disagreeable circumstances of life for our sole contemplation, that right could only be exercised in a state of solitude. We can have no right to indulge this morbid fancy in the society of others, who would much rather have cheerful and agreeable things brought under their consideration. In the case of those who have the charge and regulation of a house, it is particularly

selfish and wicked to indulge this habit of discontent, because the inmates of that house have a right to expect that their comfort should be studied, which cannot possibly happen so long as a murmuring and discontented spirit possesses the director and manager of the house.

There are some who mistake a *careless* for a contented mind. This should be well guarded against. They who think they are philosophical because they take every thing as it comes, without any effort to make it better, are philosophical at an exceedingly cheap rate. Far be it from me to recommend any such spurious contentment as this. I think it right that every effort should be made to have that which is to be done, done well. Instruction and admonition should be given where they are required, and, if reproof be absolutely necessary, it should not be spared. All this is perfectly consistent with a rationally contented spirit. Our faculties were given us to be exercised, but to be exercised under a spirit of submission, and of cheerful resignation to whatever may happen. We ought to do our best to have things as we would, but if we cannot accomplish this, we should try to make our desires conform with our means. As Terentius says—

> " Quoniam non potest id fieri quod vis,
> Id velis quod possit."

Since what you wish for cannot be obtain'd,
Wish for what can, and then your point is gain'd.

But chiefly let us consider in all circumstances which tempt us to murmurings and complainings, how much worse our case might be—how much we still have to enjoy—how much better we are off than many others who are quite as deserving as ourselves—and finally, how much more cause we have to be thankful than to repine.

STANDARD OF MERIT.

No one has a right to take any merit to himself for his actions, except with reference to the principle from which they flow. And here there is a very noticeable distinction to be taken between self-judgment and the judgment of the public. In general, the public can estimate with but little accuracy the motives which direct men's conduct, and are bound to consider their actions in the abstract. It is absurd, however, to say, (as some do who affect to be exceedingly liberal in their construction of conduct) that we have no right to consider motives. The contrary is the truth. We have every right to consider the motives of all actions, especially if they relate to the public, so far as we have fair and honest means of judging of them. That which we should be cautious of is, not the taking motives into account, which indeed we cannot avoid doing, however we might will it,

but of assuming motives without reasonable authority for the assumption. But with respect to ourselves, we should watch the foundation of our proceedings, and estimate them accordingly; and, if it be our object to learn the true character of any one with whom we have to do, we must consider not merely what he does, but also—so far as we have any lawful opportunity—why he does it.

> "Not always actions show the man: we find
> Who does a kindness is not therefore kind;
> Perhaps prosperity becalm'd his breast,
> Perhaps the wind just shifted from the east.
> Not therefore humble he who seeks retreat,
> Pride guides his steps, and bids him shun the great;
> Who combats bravely is not therefore brave,
> He dreads a death-bed like the meanest slave;
> Who reasons wisely is not therefore wise,
> His pride in reasoning, not in acting, lies."

These lines are full of practical truth. Man is so inconsistent a creature, that we must by no means assume his general character from one action, or even a series of actions, which may seem naturally to arise from such or such internal qualities. Nor is it safe to reason without great caution, and many allowances, from what a man has done in one position, to what he will do in another, and a very different position. The upshot of the whole is, that with respect to others we must be content to go upon general experience, and to make up our minds that we shall often find ourselves very much

mistaken. But with respect to ourselves, we have duties to follow, in which we may assure ourselves there is no mistake; and if the results be different from what we have hoped for, owing to the perverseness of others from whom we expected better things, we have a right to console ourselves with having diligently attended to our own responsibilities. It is indeed often more meritorious to fail, than to succeed, where success could only have been achieved by a sort of knowledge to which virtue and nobleness of mind cannot stoop.

DECEPTION.

Rochefoucauld says, that it is as easy to deceive ourselves without perceiving it, as it is difficult to deceive others without their perceiving it. This is antithetical enough; but the maxim seems to have a fault, not very common to the French philosopher, of being too flattering to human nature. It may very well be questioned whether we really deceive ourselves half so often as we would sometimes be willing to pretend as an excuse for the follies of which we are guilty. It is not so very often that one goes wrong without a consciousness of the wrong-doing. It is often a vague perception, and rather an instinct of wrong, than an account taken by the judgment of what we are

doing and its probable consequences, but still it is enough to remove from us the plea of being self-deceived in what we have done. Perhaps, however, we do not exactly hit Rochefoucauld's meaning, when he speaks *de se tromper soi-même sans s'en appercevoir*. If he mean that when we suppose we are deceiving others we do no such thing, and thus are self-deceived, he may well say that it is easy and common to fall into such self-deception; but we know all the time that we are endeavouring to deceive.

Of this nature are the tricks of vanity. People who take certain airs upon themselves which they have no right to take, are generally very well aware of what they are doing. They have not the excuse of being self-deceived. They know that they wish to cheat by false appearances. The mistake they make is in the supposition that their attempt to cheat is a successful one. In nine cases out of ten, it is not, but only brings upon them contempt and ridicule, instead of the respect for which they have been deceitfully seeking. It is not courtesy to make this known to them, and their tricks are allowed to pass as though they were not seen through; but they are seen through nevertheless, and the point for the attainment of which they have debased themselves is totally lost.

But, even were it gained, must not all *self*-respect be lost, unless in regard to such as are so gross as not to perceive the degradation of

deceitfulness? With such it is not a case of self-deception, but of mere baseness of mind. The tricks of vanity are merely useless toil and trouble. They are tolerated chiefly because they have grown into a system, and people go on pretending that they are mutually deceived, when they are no such thing. Tastes become so vitiated by habit that they lose all relish for truth and simplicity, and for the enjoyments which life can give without parade. But the loss is theirs who have become the victims of such habits. Their ambition is despicable—their enjoyments artificial—their liabilities to disappointment lie thick on every side—their whole life is nothing better than "vanity and vexation of spirit."

MODESTY.

It is lamentable to see how in these days mere worldliness has crept into the very theories of education. Even the young are scarcely instructed to love virtue for its own sake, or because it is the will of their Father who is in Heaven; but they are told—if indeed virtue be recommended to them at all—that it is a useful thing for getting on in the world, and that the reputation of it, at all events, is a considerable advantage towards obtaining power and influence in society. But this spurious recom-

mendation of virtue is soon found to be unsuitable in detail to the ends of mere worldliness, and you shall find after a general recommendation of good and honourable conduct, as the means of acquiring fortune and consequence, some particular inculcation which is totally at variance with either goodness or honour—such, for example, as that it is very politic to practise dissimulation in certain cases, and to throw aside modesty.

This virtue of modesty—for such indeed I consider it—seems to be one which modern worldlings are particularly anxious to advise against, and yet one would think that there was no very especial danger in these times of any young person falling into excess in that direction. Our own belief is, that no one quality of youth is more estimable or more winning than that of modesty, and I therefore look with particular distastefulness, nay, with downright disgust, upon anything in the shape of advice to youth which discourages that eminently Christian virtue.

Judge then, oh, ingenuous listeners, how little pleased I was, when, in a little book lately published, under the title, "Advice to a Young Gentleman entering Society"—a little book having much more pretension to philosophy and erudition than little books of the kind generally have—I found such instruction as the following:—

"For the more politic purpose of prevailing in what you undertake, and having your powers and possessions acknowledged by the world, it is necessary to arrange them according to the ordinary distributions of reputation, and to let it be known that you assume such or such a character, and that you *insist on having it admitted.* Men will always take you at what you declare yourself; and men have only *to choose what title they will have, and assert it usually,* and they will obtain it from the acquiescence of the multitude as certainly as if they had received letters patent."

This is not only very erroneous teaching, but exceedingly transparent nonsense; and I can most sincerely assure my young listeners, that if their ambition be to achieve personal chastisement, as a means of advancement in society, they could not follow a more likely mode of arriving at that *desideratum* than by following the "advice" above quoted. But the adviser of young gentlemen entering into society proceeds with his counsel in this fashion:—

"Modesty is a quality that never profits. To underrate your merit is a certain means of having it undervalued. 'In our bad world,' says Goldsmith, 'respect is given where respect is claimed.' And La Bruyère says, with similar and equal wisdom, 'On ne vaut jamais dans ce monde que ce qu'on veut valoir.' Quiet perseverance in *assumption* through a sufficient

length of time, will bring a man to any situation he aspires to, and give him any epithets he wishes. 'Continual claim,' the lawyers say, 'will keep alive the title to an estate;' if maintained firmly enough, and through a sufficiently long period, it would create a title to anything but an estate—even to the throne of England or the fame of Cæsar!"

Rational advice this to "a young gentleman entering into society," and much calculated, doubtless, to make him thereof a useful and agreeable member! Just as if we had not enough—ay, and rather too much—already, of pushing, hardened assumption, degrading and vulgarising society, which stood in no need of any helps towards such declination. But our teacher is very fond of repeating again and again this favourite theory.

"No one, therefore, is authorized by reason, or by the history of others, to despair of attaining *whatever station he desires* in the esteem of mankind or on the threshold of official honour and profit. *Let him eschew all fear and diffidence*, and simply be resolved *to get what he would have*, and *it is not possible that he should be disappointed.* Society is to be carried by force and determination. The world is like the antagonist of Job: it must be wrestled with ere it will give its blessing."

Was there ever seen such audacity; and to wind it up too with such a perversion of Scripture!

I would advise this teacher of young gentlemen entering society—if he indeed believe that the Scripture is an authority to which respect and obedience are due—to consider how his theory about modesty corresponds with the clear admonition of the greatest authority in Scripture. This worldly teacher inculcates, as we have seen, that modesty is a quality that never profits —that to underrate your merit is a certain means of having it undervalued. But what do we read in St. Luke, as the words of our Lord himself? "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"

This is the wisdom which cannot err. This is the advice of Him who "knew what was in man," to the very innermost parts of his heart and mind; and I appeal to the understandings and feelings of all whom worldliness has not converted into mere creatures of puffery and artifice, whether *conviction* do not come with

these words, and whether it be not apparent that modesty, as well as honesty, is the best policy.

But the policy of the thing is a secondary consideration. Modesty is a Christian duty, and, moreover, it is the very soul of gracefulness—it is the veiled beauty of all good behaviour, the nameless charm that twines itself about all considerate kindness—the sweet spirit of fascination, which makes us love what otherwise we could but at the most admire.

Nor is it at all necessary to this virtue, that it should spring from ignorance of what we are fairly entitled to. The high authority of Scripture, as above quoted, shows that it is not so. Next after Scripture, though it be, like *Salius* in the race, *longo intervallo*, let me quote Milton in that exquisite description which stands matchless in all literature, and probably ever will so stand :

" She heard me thus, and though divinely brought,
Yet innocence and virgin modesty,
Her virtue, and the conscience of her worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won.
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,
The more desirable ; or to say all,
Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,
Wrought in her so, that seeing me she turn'd.
I follow'd her ; she what was honour knew,
And with obsequious majesty approved
My pleaded reason."

BOLDNESS.

In discoursing of boldness, Lord Bacon begins by likening its operation in civil business to that of action, or gesticulation, in oratory. He says that Demosthenes being asked what was the chief part of an orator, he answered, Action. What next? Action. What next again? Action. He said it, continues Lord Bacon, who knew it best, and had by nature himself no advantage in that he commended. Demosthenes it seems had not reached that sublime of modern philosophy which teaches that a man should have no modesty, but commend most that in which he has an advantage.

The Elizabethan sage proceeds to comment upon the practical truth stated by Demosthenes as a strange thing, that that part of an orator which is but *superficial*, and rather the virtue of a player, should be placed so high above those other noble parts of invention, elocution, and the rest, nay, almost alone, as if it were all in all. "But, he continues, "the reason is plain. There is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise, and therefore the faculties by which the foolish part of men's minds is taken are most potent."

From this he proceeds to the subject of boldness. In civil business, he says, what is first?

Boldness. What second and third? Boldness.* "And yet," he continues, "boldness is a child of ignorance and baseness, far inferior to other parts; but nevertheless it doth fascinate, and bind hand and foot those that are either shallow in judgment or weak in courage, *which are the greatest part:* yea, and prevaileth with wise men at weak times: therefore we see it hath done wonders in popular states, but with senates and princes less; and more, even upon the first entrance of bold persons into action, than soon after, for boldness is *an ill-keeper of promise.*"

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* In the second volume of Mr. Alison's History of the French Revolution, is the following passage, "Quid in rebus civilibus," says Bacon, "Maxime prodest? Audacia. Quid secundum? Audacia. Quid tertium? Audacia. In promptu ratio est; inest enim naturæ humanæ, plerumque plus stulti quam sapientis, unde ut facultates eæ quibus capitur pars illa in animis mortalium stulta, sunt omnium potentissimæ. Attamen utcunque ignorantiæ et sordidi ingenii proles est Audacia, nihilominus fascinat, et captivos ducit eos qui vel judicio infirmiores sunt vel animo timidiores; tales autem sunt hominum pars maxima." "Le canon que vous entendez," said Danton at the bar of the Assembly, "n'est pas le canon d'alarm; c'est le pas de charge sur nos ennemis. Pour les vaincre, pour les atterrer, que faut il? De l'audace! encore de l'audace! toujours de l'audace!" It is not a little remarkable, that philosophical sagacity should have inspired to the sage of the sixteenth not only the idea, but the very words which a practical acquaintance with the storms of the revolution suggested to the terrible demagogue of the nineteenth century."—Vol. ii. p. 2.

Herein, as is usual with Lord Bacon, there is a great deal of wisdom condensed. What he says of boldness is applied to the proceedings of a man in gaining favour with the public, and he does not scruple to give the naked truth of the whole matter. Boldness, he says, is the child of ignorance and baseness. So much for its intrinsic worth. He admits, however, that it will prevail, at *weak times*, even with the wise; but it will prevail generally, because there is generally in human nature more of the fool than of the wise—because the shallow in judgment and weak in courage, are by far the greatest part. Therefore if one would condescend to have the favour of the majority, one must needs practise that quality which has no more respectable parentage than that of "ignorance and baseness."

But even as the means of obtaining sway over the multitude, boldness is certainly not enough. It will not do as the sole stock in trade. Let a man prove his ability in several, or even in one point of public action, and then if he would succeed with the world let him push on boldly, obtaining the confidence of others by showing that he has confidence in himself. But this is for mature years, or at all events, for cases in which there is reasonable presumption of maturity of judgment upon the point which is boldly urged. "Surely," says Lord Bacon, "as there are mountebanks for the natural

body, so are there mountebanks for the politic body, men that undertake great cures, and perhaps have been lucky in two or three experiments, but want the ground of science, and therefore cannot hold out."

And for an example of the *manner* with which boldness in conduct may be carried, we may with advantage cite Mr. Pitt, who at the very time he was undertaking far more than ever had been undertaken in the conduct of public affairs in England, by so young a man, answered the violence of General Conway in the words which Scipio applied to Fabius— "Si nullâ aliâ re, modestiâ certe, et temperando linguæ, adolescens, senem vicero." If in nothing else, in modesty certainly, and in temperateness of language, I, a youth, will show myself the superior of the old man.

CIVILITY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the strong appetite for teaching and lecturing which has grown up in these days, threatening to deluge the land with bad chemistry, worse mathematics, and a grotesquely erroneous smattering of *omne quod exit in* ology, I do not find that any progress is made in the inculcation of that most useful and agreeable thing, *civility*. Perhaps this branch of education may be omitted upon the principle that it

comes of itself, along with what is called "science," and that to have learned ever so little about oxygen, electricity, and "the crust of the earth," *emollit mores nec sinit esse feros*—

> From lib'ral arts there comes this pleasing fruit,
> That he who learns them cannot be a brute.

But we should remember that this saying about the ameliorating effect of knowledge upon manners and behaviour, arose at a time when the mode of acquiring knowledge was very different from what it is at present. The general mode was that of repairing to some school, where submission to discipline, and deference to teachers and superiors were indispensable conditions. The only opportunity of acquiring science was one which could not be taken advantage of, without at the same time acquiring habits of civility, and therefore it was very true that to have acquired the ingenuous arts—the accomplishments of learning—was a sort of guarantee that he who had made the acquisition, must at least know how to behave himself, and have practised that knowledge.

In those remoter periods it was not held honourable for professors of science to go about delivering pennyworths of erudition to unwashed artificers, who do not pay their teacher the compliment of putting on a decent garment when going to his lecture-room, but are content

to become "enlightened" even in their dirty shirt-sleeves. Knowledge was not crammed down people's throats immediately after they had done swigging ale at the beer shop. There were in those days poor scholars indeed, and teachers, whose only wealth was in their minds; but knowledge had at least dignity and decency for its companions, and rudeness was the attribute of confessed ignorance. But we have changed all that. We have become "enlightened," as the phrase is, and yet discourteous. Knowledge is said to have made enormous strides amongst us; but, instead of bringing civility along with it, it seems to have emboldened simplicity into rudeness. It is natural that this should happen, when instruction is not accompanied by rules of discipline and habits of deference, which, as regards the multitude, are perhaps the best parts of education.

Some will perhaps dispute the fact as to the apparent want of civility in the behaviour of the people. I have no doubt of it. It is an evil that has increased, and is increasing, and more visibly in the metropolis than elsewhere. Among people who keep shop, it displays itself in a smirking officiousness—a thrusting before you, whether you will or no, what you have not asked for. The very very vulgar, and very very silly, among womankind, the dearest desire of whose souls is to see new things in a shop, are perhaps pleased with this impertinence; but

impertinence it is, growing out of a greedy desire to force a trade—a thing of which the grave and deferential tradesman of former times, would have been utterly ashamed.

If you go among the more substantial and respectable part of the lower orders, such as coal-heavers and canal-diggers, stout porters, and the like, who, in common with the stronger kind of horses, do the ponderous work of society, you find them much the same as they used to be. These fellows have substance in them, and are not easily changed. They are rugged enough, but there is no impertinence about them, and they are even deferential where deference is manifestly due.

But your working tradesfolk, especially tailors, and burnishers of brass—your greengrocers and small vermin of ten-pound householders, who harbour the servants of great folks when out of place—your coach-drivers and cab-drivers, and hangers on upon livery stables, and, above all, the fellows who preside in front or in rear of the carriages called "omnibuses"—the grossness, not to say ruffianism, of these people is manifestly upon the increase. *Knowing* enough they are, and too much so, and many of them can behave well enough when sufficiently sober to bear in mind the probability that they will lose sixpences or shillings by behaving ill; but every one who takes the trouble of observing, must see that they have no notion of the duty of

civility, save in return for coin received or expected; and few can be so fortunate as not to have experienced that when thrown off their guard by drink, or disappointment of any hoped-for advantage, they are more brutal than the brutes themselves. Indeed, to such an extent have habits of extortion, and savageness upon disappointment, grown among this class of people in London, that a quiet man, who likes exactness, and hates brawls, will generally prefer doing all he possibly can for himself, and that to his no small personal fatigue, rather than subject himself to the probable annoyance of employing them.

The ruffians are intelligent enough to be aware of this, but they don't care, for they are also aware that the quietly-disposed are a very small fragment of the people, and daily diminishing; while the hurrying bustling crowd, who seem almost to like noise and wrangling, so as it does not delay them, and to enjoy slang and brutality, as they rush from point to point, in panting pursuit of their over-strained business, are daily increasing, and growing more and more indifferent to sober, discreet, and deferential behaviour.

Certainly these rude people of the lower class may plead the excuse of the example set them by their superiors in fortune, for what they see of these superiors is only their out-of-door behaviour—on public conveyances and the like—

and little civility can be gathered from the example of persons who can unscrupulously puff tobacco-smoke in the faces of others who detest its smell; or who, when they talk, are delighted to show their erudition by quoting slang from the author of the Pickwick papers, or from those weekly miscellanies which disseminate yet coarser stuff, in imitation of that master in modern literature.

Now, without flying away into the sentimentalities of Mr. Sterne, we may plead strongly enough in favour of that urbanity, that civil consideration of the convenience of others, and that unobtrusive zeal to promote it, which so sweetens and elevates the intercourse of life. It is the beauty of humanity—the perfection of reasonableness—the practical use of the better parts of our nature to the exclusion of the worse. It is Christianity exhibiting itself in the social offices. And here we may pause to draw a wholesome distinction between artificial politeness or ceremony—which is good enough in its way, but too apt to be used only on set occasions, where our vanity is concerned—and that habit of civility which grows out of settled principle and real goodness of nature. Rules of behaviour are never sufficient for the common business of life, by reason of the infinite variety of its circumstances; and were it necessary to do every thing *after a fashion* in civility, we might say of action what Horace has said of

speech, difficile est proprie communia *facere*. But no rules are necessary beyond that of acting in conformity with a principle of kindness combined with that good sense which teaches when we should assist and when forbear, for even kindness may be importunate, and then it lacks civility. Principles of benevolence, however, and habits of obligingness, do not often err, especially if accompanied by that modesty which will not put itself forward, nor behave itself ostentatiously, even for the purpose of contributing to the comfort of others.

There is a sort of superficial politeness which sometimes becomes very offensive, being put forward in company with very palpable self-conceit, although the form and phraseology of the putting forward may be that of humility. Shallow persons who live in society, and have a turn for the sarcastic, and also small philosophers of the *poco curanti* school, are the most apt to fall into this kind of disagreeableness. The fact is, that all kinds of artificial civility very soon become disagreeable, because the insincerity cannot be long concealed, and all insincerity, when perceived, becomes offensive. If we love good manners, it is because we believe them to be the outward sign of a kindly disposition. "Mere politeness without principle," a divine of very penetrating sagacity has incidently warned us against, and assuredly it is very little worth. It is not at all to be de-

pended upon. While all goes smoothly and agreeably it may behave itself accordingly; but look at it under circumstances of disappointment and rebuke, and we shall find it not only vanishing away, but giving place to genuine rudeness and intemperance.

An example of this may be seen in a Noble Lord of the present day,* somewhat celebrated for the agreeableness of his manners in society, where he is desirous to please. That Noble Lord, who is obliged to take some part in most public proceedings in the House of Peers, and who spends a very large portion of his time at Court, is reputed to have held his high place so long, chiefly by virtue of an agreeable manner, and an easiness of temper, which will not take offence, or suffer disturbance, in circumstances which generally ruffle those who are subjected to them. But it is notorious, even from the reports of the public prints, that this very nobleman is now and then capable of considerable rudeness and violence, even in the House of Lords, and of using most disrespectful language regarding objects and persons, that no man of genuine and permanent courtesy would ever allude to except in terms of deference. And yet what the newspapers report is but a very small part of that Noble Lord's aberrations from

* The allusion is to the prime minister, October, 1839.

civility and decorum. Such deviations from the path of propriety will ever mark the course of those whose politeness is without principle, and they who wish to teach civility effectually, must inculcate those sound principles from which true civility flows.

I have but a very few words more to say at present upon the subject of *civility*, and they shall be in the form of warning against that conventional politeness which people put on now and then, when they receive company, dinning their guests while they dine them, with a foolish battery of mingled compliments and excuses. But these I leave to the castigation of Swift:—

> "At table now she acts her part,
> Has all the dinner-cant by heart;
> * * * *
> She sits tormenting every guest,
> Nor gives her tongue one moment's rest,
> In phrases, batter'd, stale, and trite,
> Which modern ladies call polite."

This is rather severe; but the Dean was apt to be acrimonious. His point, however is well hit.

ADVERSITY.

"SWEET are the uses of adversity." Who can have lived in the world without finding proof of this in his experience? Who that uses the ordinary faculties of observation but must be-

hold the weariness of spirit that awaits on satiety, and the fretfulness of discontent that embitters the life of the covetous? Can one look at these things, and not exclaim, "Sweet are the uses of adversity?"

Prosperity is said to try a man, but adversity does more, for it improves him, unless he have a deep root of evil in him, which makes him rebel, and grow furious under chastisement. But I may avow, for the credit of human nature, that this is not generally the case. Adversity—as distinguished from dreadful and desolating calamity—has for the most part, a softening and humanizing effect. And, better still, it purges the blindness of the heart, and enables it to perceive, and know, and acknowledge, the gifts and blessings of which, in the hour of thoughtless and thankless prosperity, it took no heed. How fearful is the description which King David gives of the prosperity of the wicked! "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued as other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches."

But the riches which they acquire they do not enjoy. Trite as the saying may be, that he who possesses most is not he who enjoys most, the truth it conveys is one which deserves to be deeply pondered, and to be made the foundation of important resolutions, both as to action and to forbearance. Sweet are the *uses* of adversity. It is not said, that adversity itself is sweet, but it brings out the flavour of such prosperity as may be left to us, or that we may afterwards acquire.

The greater part of enjoyment is from a sense of contrast. How few, how very few, are sensible—habitually so at all events—of the unspeakable blessing of sight. But, suppose we were deprived of it, how much more acute would be our memory of what we had lost, than our perception of the blessing, now, when we have it? Would not our minds dwell with fond yet painful intensity upon the glories of the sky and clouds, bright with the fresh light of the morning, or rich with the glowing tints of evening; or solemnly soft and beautiful when the moon is riding in silent majesty through the heavens? Should we not think of the wild flowers waving in the breeze—of the rich masses of foliage softening and checquering the light as it fell upon the cool green—of the trim gardens, the blushing rose, and the modest violet? Would we not groan in spirit as we felt that we could no longer gaze upon the

towering mountain, with its top hidden amid clouds and storms; or upon the eagle, with out-spread, unquivering wings, sailing about its inaccessible crags—that we could no longer view the dashing river as it leaped in white foam over impeding rocks, nor watch it in its repose, gliding along through green pastures where herds and flocks are grazing; nor gaze contemplative upon

> "the blue smoke from the elmy grange
> Skyward ascending?"

Yes; we should remember then, how we might have enjoyed all these things, and how we ought to have been thankful for the faculty of such enjoyment. And if after this, our sight were restored, would we not—at least for a time—feel in the awakened *consciousness* of the blessing, how sweet had been the uses of adversity? But this is only one instance out of the thousands which might be brought forward to show how forgetful we are made by prosperity, and how wholesome adversity is for teaching us to enjoy its opposite.

But, even when we are not *forgetful*, it often happens that we find we cannot enjoy the blessings which we know we ought to enjoy; or at all events we know this, that deprived of them, we would feel the deprivation to be a great misery. There are times, when although conscious of the hardness and insensibility of

our hearts, we cannot remedy the evil. We feel the fulness of satiety, and loathe that which naturally we should enjoy. It is then that we want the rod of adversity to smite the rock of our hearts, that the waters of thankfulness may gush out, and freshen and invigorate our souls. Let us not at such a time think to pamper ourselves with new delights, or to find solace in gloomy railing at the bitterness of all things—even those which are called good. Let us rather go to the house of mourning—let us view real calamity in others—let us try to impart to those who have them not, but yearn for them, those advantages which we have, but have ceased to be able to enjoy. Thus shall our withered spirits be refreshed, and we shall learn once more to rejoice in the light of the sun, and to be glad in the voices of our fellow mortals.

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Mr. Gray's Ode to Adversity is more known than read—by which I mean that many more know he has written such an ode, than read it, at least with that attention which the subject and his elegant numbers, deserve. As it consists but of half a dozen stanzas, we may as well take them into company, with, perhaps, a remark or two as we go along :—

" Daughter of Jove, relentless power,
Thou tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and torturing hour
The bad *affright, afflict* the best !

Bound in thy adamantine chain,
  The proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple tyrants vainly groan
  With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy sire to send on earth
  Virtue, his darling child, design'd,
To thee he gave the heavenly birth,
  And bade to form her infant mind.
Stern, rugged nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore:
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learn'd to melt at other's woe."

The distinction taken in the first stanza between the effects of adversity upon the bad and the good, is very excellent, and expressed with a condensed brevity like that of Tacitus. In the second we are well taught how adversity forms the mind to virtue, and teaches us benevolence by the force of experience:—

" Scared at thy frown, terrific, fly,
  Self-pleasing folly's idle brood,
Wild laughter, noise, and thoughtless joy,
  And leave us leisure to be good.
Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer friend, the flattering foe;
By vain prosperity received,
To her they vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom, in sable garb array'd,
  Immersed in rapturous thought profound,
And melancholy, silent maid,
  With leaden eye that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend:
Warm charity, the general friend,
With justice to herself severe,
And pity, dropping soft, the sadly pleasing tear."

The third stanza suggests many useful thoughts,

and the fourth line strikes me as eminently just and happy. If sedate leisure be not necessary to goodness, it is certainly very conducive to it, and it is difficult to imagine anything deserving the name, amid the bustle and dissipation of thoughtless prosperity. I should be very sorry to say one word against modest cheerfulness, which is in general the best sort of temper that can be conceived; and this cheerfulness is a flower which commonly grows out of the ground of sedateness; but

> "Wild laughter, noise, and thoughtless joy"

are proper to be scared away, and when adversity does so, it does good service. The concluding lines of the stanza point out a wholesome but painful use of adversity, namely, the test which it affords of friends and acquaintances. It teaches who they are who frequent us for ourselves, and who for the sake of our circumstances.

The fourth stanza is to be prized chiefly for its artistical skill. The objects are grouped with great ability for effect, and the epithets are felicitously chosen.

But there are yet two more stanzas:—

> "Oh, gently on thy suppliant's head,
> Dread goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand,
> Not in thy gorgon terrors clad,
> Nor circled with the vengeful band
> (As by the impious thou art seen),
> With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning mien,

With screaming horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell disease, and ghastly poverty.

" Thy form benign, oh, goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic train be there,
To soften, not to wound, the heart.
The generous spark extinct, revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are to feel, and know myself a man."

All this is noble writing—sound philosophy, fine fancy, and very melodious numbers. Undoubtedly adversity does wear two forms, and we cannot dispute the truth of that which a great writer (I think it is Southey,) has laid down, that the worst consequence of misery is the moral evil which it creates. Such is the nature of man (with all his pride!) that when without faith and without hope—to which awful condition he is apt to be driven by calamity greater than he can bear—he becomes a very fiend: he seems, as it were, delivered over to Satan, and follows his immediate lusts with a dreadful recklessness, which it would be improper to paint in detail. Let us remember, however, that it is " the bad" whom adversity " affrights," and that to the good it can bring only " affliction." He who possesses his mind in the frame that a Christian ought, has no self-experience of despair. In the worst of cases, he

" Waits the great teacher, Death; and God adores."

COMPETENCE.

A REMARKABLY interesting discussion took place lately among the representative sages of the city of London upon the abstract philosophy of income.* The respective merits of eight hundred and a thousand a year were at the same time very brilliantly canvassed. A wonderful circumstance attending this discussion was, that the eloquence of the Commoners was devoted to an exposition of the necessity of a thousand a year, in order to live as one ought, while the Lord Mayor, the head of civic dignity—the top of all gorgeousness—the monarch who sits enthroned at the Mansion House, surrounded (at least for his year) with all appliances of splendour and expense, not only decided for, but condescended to argue for, the superior philosophy of eight hundred a year.

The discussion arose upon the question of the remuneration to be paid to a chief commissioner or director of the City police. Two of the Common Council displayed great powers of rhetoric in favour of the round sum of a thousand a year. One of these councillors declared his opinion that their chief commissioner should be

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* This was in settling the salary and emoluments to be given to the Chief of the City Police.

a gentleman, and should associate with gentlemen; and he the said councillor was at a loss to know how any one could *keep up that character* and provide for his family on less than a thousand a year. As for himself, the speaker declared that if he had but eight hundred a year he could not have entertained his friends in the manner he had done.

Far be it from me to think of deciding the matter which the worthy gentlemen of the City debated so stoutly, the rather as it might be wrong to say anything against economy, especially when backed by a Lord Mayor; and I own my prejudice to run more in favour of large, than of small allowances, for those who are placed in situations of high trust and responsibility; but our business is with the abstract philosophy of eight hundred a year, as compared with a thousand a year. Putting philosophy out of the question, I think I can see which way I myself, were I the party concerned, would decide. But as I am not the party concerned, I can afford to look at the case abstractedly, and with a most impartial view to the benefit of the whole world.

Now, I do not perceive (although the worthy councillor I have quoted seems to have perceived it) that a man's character as a gentleman, and an associate of gentlemen, is dependent upon his ability to spend at the rate of a thousand a year. Were such an opinion broached by any

one of less dignity than a common councillor of the city of London, I might have been hasty enough to call it a vulgar notion. As it is, I cannot but look upon it as erroneous philosophy. The hint of the respectable orator touching his own position and powers of finance, and especially the entertainment of his friends, is highly touching—redolent at once of warm feelings and of hot dinners. But may not the character of a gentleman, and the practice of association with gentlemen, be kept up *without* such entertainments as can only be compassed by means of something more than eight hundred a year? Is it not rather hard to exclude (by ban of Common Council) from the position of a gentleman, and even a City gentleman, those who live with honourable simplicity upon the poor pittance of only fifteen pounds and some odd shillings per week?

Another worshipful councillor was yet more energetic in favour of a thousand a year, and very earnest in showing how reasonable it was that the salary of the new office should bear some proportion to the salaries of other offices, which other salaries he is in the habit of visiting with his patriotic and civic condemnation. It is not very easy to discover what were the abstract reasons operating on this gentleman's mind towards the necessity for a thousand a year. The reasons he offered were unfortunately all relative. He did not hint, like his modest

friend on the same side, that he was aware from his own experience of the necessity of having more than eight hundred a year in order to entertain his friends. I suppose this gentleman's expenditure is chiefly upon his theological library, for I perceive that in another debate he mentioned the important fact (important at least to himself) that he very seldom went to church, in consequence of not approving of the mode in which theology is taught in churches. Of course his private studies must be profound to enable him to be so critical. If, however, he were to honour the churches more frequently with his presence, he might perchance learn (even from the theology taught there) how an honest reputation, and the character of a gentleman, might be kept up even upon eight hundred a year.

But let the citizens of London manage these matters as they may, it is certainly a vice in England generally, that a man's worthiness and right to be respected as a gentleman, is held to be dependent upon his ability to spend a thousand a year or upwards. There is great baseness and vulgarity in this habitual association of a title to respect, with the possession of wealth, or with the expending of wealth, whether honourably or dishonourably come by, in giving entertainments, or in making a great show. In the grosser sort of society, there is no inferiority which a man is so soon made to feel, as an

inferiority in the power of spending money. In a more refined rank, the disdain of inferior wealth is by no means so obvious, but it is perhaps not the less real.

The mischiefs which arise from this are infinite. Not only do people moil and toil beyond what is reasonable, to acquire that grand foundation of personal consequence, wealth; but desperate enterprises are every day entered upon which honesty ought to shrink from, because to be without wealth, is to be without respect, and the ordinary means of obtaining wealth are found to be too slow.

How many feel themselves forced to abandon their country altogether, and to take refuge in a foreign land, because, though they have enough to live upon, and comfortably too, they have not enough to live, (according to the common phrase,) "respectably"—that is, they cannot keep a wasteful establishment, and give expensive entertainments to their friends. *Friends*, indeed! "The *summer* friend, by vain prosperity received," as we quoted from Mr. Gray in our last talk. This bowing down before wealth—this belief that even respectability is contingent upon a thousand a year—is a blot and a stain upon English habits, and every one of good feeling ought to contend against it. If poverty be too commonly driven among us to shifts of meanness, it is our own fault, for we pay no respect to "honest poverty," and even

the poor are driven to put on the false appearances of wealth in self-defence. More moral evil arises out of the wanton waste of wealthy people in London, than I could describe were I to keep talking upon this subject alone to the end of the volume. Let this evil be considered, and let not mere expenditure of wealth be so much honoured.

FEELING AND INTELLECT.

The public men of the present day, of all parties, and of all professions, seem to be wanting in *heart*. They may argue tolerably well, but they argue coldly. They may satisfy the understanding, but they make no vivid impression upon the feelings and sympathies even of their supporters. They may touch this chord momentarily, but it seems not natural to them, and they do not dwell upon it. They are presently back again at their statistics, and their comparisons of facts. That is the way even with the best of them. As for others, they have not even the interest of facts and circumstances in their public argumentations, but keep for ever hammering away at dry dogmas and abstract theories of what they call philosophy, which are not only uncongenial to all strong feelings and warm sympathies, but absolutely and utterly opposed to them. Instead of giving an interest

to their arguments by applying them to those feelings which are common to all hearts, and will be eagerly answered when appealed to, they endeavour to interest the understandings of men against those feelings, and to set up the intellect in contemptuous despotism over every generous and glowing sympathy. It is no wonder that the harangues of such public men should be tame and wearisome, if not irksome and offensive.

Lord Erskine, whose experience in such matters was worth something, tells us, in his letter introductory to the published collection of the speeches of Mr. Fox, that "intellect alone, however exalted, without strong feelings—without even irritable sensibility—would be only like an immense magazine of gunpowder, if there were no such element as fire in the natural world. It is the *heart* which is the spring and fountain of eloquence. A cold-blooded, learned man might, for anything I know, compose in his closet an eloquent book, but in public discourse, arising out of sudden occasions, could by no possibility be eloquent." I do not think that with any study or preparation, any man, continuing to be merely a creature of cold-blooded research, could even write a book, or prepare an oration, calculated to stir men's blood, or awaken their pity or their sorrow. A man must himself feel, however transiently, in order to make others feel. He may produce a discourse

very weighty as to argument, and very elaborately perfect in respect of rhetorical embellishments, but nothing can give it that electric fire which darts through and through an auditory, kindling each heart into enthusiasm, save natural feeling, expressed with the fervour of earnest sensibility.

I know very well how deceitful this is in one respect—how often it has happened that they who were so powerful in awakening the sympathies of those who have read their works or listened to their discourses, have had very little genuine and permanent virtue to boast of. But that consideration belongs to another branch of philosophy. That which we are now considering is the effect to be produced upon the public by public men, and I complain that the effect generally produced in the present day is cold, inefficient, and unsatisfactory, by reason of the want of sensibility on the part of public speakers and public writers—want of that power which touches the heart. I am inclined to think it very true that of all gifts, that of sensibility is the most deceptive as regards the possessor of it. It is too often like the beautiful flowers which cover the surface of rocks, where no plant of sterling value could ever be made to grow. They whose emotions are the most lively are very often the least earnest and persevering in merciful and useful conduct; but their usefulness lies in another direction—it is in inspir-

ing the hearts of others more strenuous and practical than themselves into a desire for well-doing. Persuasion is their natural calling, and no one can persuade effectually, who has not sensibility enough to touch the warm sympathies of those he addresses.

THE FEMININE CHARACTER.

"SIMPLE, sedate, cheerful, elegant, and religious"—such were the epithets by which Professor Wilson, the strangest, most wayward, and most wonderful of modern critics, beautifully epitomised the character of one of the most elegant female writers of our time, Mrs. Hemans. What a delightful picture do these few words conjure up for the mind to dwell upon! How lovely, how worthy to be loved and honoured, far above the beauty that dwells in proud security of admiring homage, or the brilliant accomplishments which dazzle and delight applauding crowds!

First comes sweet simplicity—the gentle yet frank open-heartedness, which seems to make the soul a place of light and purity, like the mild radiance of a spring morning, among budding leaves and opening flowers. Examine it by the force of contrast. Compare it with that hateful thing *artifice*, a weed which often thrives so vigorously even in early life, hardening and

blackening the ground in which it grows. Compare a cunning contriving thing—her quick furtive glances and her readily-changing brow and speech—with the open looks and freely-spoken words of fair simplicity—of that artless being who knows no restraint but that of the delicacy which has grown up even with her inmost thoughts, shading but not concealing them, like the sheath of sheltering green around the exquisite "lily of the valley."

Poor Collins, though with perhaps too much of classical allusion, sang sweetly of "simplicity:"—

> "O sister, meek of TRUTH,
> To my admiring youth
> Thy sober aid and native charms infuse!
> The flowers that sweetest breathe,
> Though beauty cull'd the wreath,
> Still ask thy hand to range their order'd hues."

Yes, "sister meek of truth," thy aid is that of sobriety, and Wilson's thoughts seem to have run in the same channel as Collins's; for immediately after the epithet "simple" he adds that of "sedate." A charming word it is too, though now somewhat out of fashion. It implies the gentleness of sobriety—seriousness without its severity. Nor is it at all inconsistent with the "cheerful" character which is next attributed. They libel cheerfulness who confound it with noisy levity and thoughtless buoyancy of spirits. Cheerfulness is a beautiful

virtue, as unlike the quality which belongs to what is vulgarly called "a rattle" as pure gold is unlike brass.

The next quality, too, is an admirable addition, for who can deny that even to simplicity, to sedateness, and to cheerfulness, there may be added a something noble and graceful, which we express by the word "elegant." In the region of the elegant, nature and art join hands in the happiest mood of friendship, and each does its best to make up what is not so much a combination as a new thing—the abstract opposite of all that is coarse and common—the softened majesty of excellence.

But all is crowned with that which is best of all—without which all the rest were liable at any moment to fall into foul corruption. "Simple, sedate, cheerful, elegant, and *religious*." In religion, simplicity stands firm against all the wiles of artifice; sedateness spreads its roots there, and pious cheerfulness covers the branches with fairest flowers. Religion takes from elegance its pride, and robes it with true dignity. Religion gives energy, steadfastness, patience, forbearance, and love, that dies not even beside the grave, but lives in the anticipation of the future. Who is there, then, that should not strive to be *worthy* of being described as simple, sedate, cheerful, elegant, and religious?"

ORDINARY TALK.

I SUPPOSE that most persons who are in the habit of reading and thinking, will agree with me that few things are in general more tedious than the ordinary talk of society. I hope it will not be thought presumptuous, that I, being professedly a "Table Talker," should venture upon a remark of this kind. I am a monologueist, and my "talk" is a very different thing from conversation, in the which department I aspire to no laurels. It is, therefore, with a full consciousness how much easier it is to detect what is wrong, than to practise what is right, and how much more readily we may criticise the practice of others, than excel in our own, that I venture to address my faithful listeners upon the subject of ordinary conversation.

I purposely avoid taking the most serious view that might be taken of this subject, or dwelling upon the awful warning that has been given us respecting the utterance of "idle words." Neither shall I say anything upon conversation which is positively wicked—which is irreligious or gross—except just to point abhorrence to so great a crime. If any man will but consider for a moment how prone we are of ourselves to run into badness, and how much it

is the business of virtue to resist the natural inclination for evil, he may well estimate how abominable is the conduct of any one who ventures to go as it were into partnership with the devil, by suggesting or encouraging evil thoughts in others who may perchance be of less corrupt mind. It is to be hoped that such wickedness does not often invade upon the ordinary conversation of society.

But such conversation is often tedious, because it is stupid and inane, neither arising from, nor leading to, *reflection;* and it is often provoking because of the evidence which it affords of habits of petty observation, and of general barrenness of the understanding. Such conversation resembles the dock leaves and other weeds which cover the surface of bad uncultivated ground. Were the land of good quality, or turned to good purpose, there would have been no room for such trash.

It is not required that people should habitually prepare themselves with materials for conversation before going into company, as some professed wits and smart talkers are said to do, for such persons are for the most part more intent upon attracting observation to themselves, than upon a courteous promotion of rational entertainment. But it cannot, I think, be said to be wrong, but rather the contrary, that before going into company one should consider what reasonable topics might be started,

supposing that the mere circumstances of the meeting did not suggest enough. In that case it is always better, and more natural, to follow what happens to arise, than to let loose your bagged fox, though it is well to have it, in default of other sport. But he who is provided with the most general intelligence, and the most happy mode of expressing himself, will of course be the best provided for pursuing this chance game with advantage.

Let it be noted here, how very important, in addition to knowledge, is the art of using it; and this consists not merely in the power of imparting to others, that which has been learned, but in two things more besides, viz. to impart it appropriately—that is, in just connection with the occasion, and also to impart what you feel concerning it as well as the thing itself. Qui sapere, et fari possit quæ sentiat—*he* is the man whose conversation is at once delightful and improving. It is the misfortune of many studious persons that they can only *acquire* knowledge, and of many more that they can only say what they have learned, without any indication that they have ever thought upon it more than a bottle thinks about the wine which is poured into it to be again poured out.

Dr. Johnson said, that that conversation was the best which consisted in elegant and pleasing thoughts, expressed in natural and pleasing terms. But this is too general a description to

be of much use. There is much more life and distinctness in what he says of his friend Mr. Hawkins Browne,—that "he was the most delightful converser with whom he had ever been in company; his talk was at once so elegant, so apparently artless, so pure, and so pleasing, it seemed a perpetual stream of sentiment, enlivened by gaiety, and sparkling with images."

It is very useful, or, at all events, a pleasing kind of knowledge, to be in possession of such a man as Dr. Johnson's notion of that kind of conversation which is the most delightful. Very few, however, can expect to come near such excellence. But still they may try to express something like real sentiment, in a cheerful manner, and with some help of illustration. At all events, they may provide something better than the ordinary dross of talk. The weather is an interesting topic enough, but it is mere stupidity to say much about it, and yet nothing more than is palpable to every one's sight at the moment, coupled with some hope which is, perhaps, irrational, considering the state of the sky. If one has no information to communicate, founded on past experience, or on reasonable theory, the poor weather had better be left untalked of.

It is of very little moment to discuss whether Mrs. A.'s bonnet, which she wore at church last Sunday, was a really new one, or only the bonnet of last season trimmed afresh. It is not

very interesting to waste many words in conjectures whether the strange persons seen in Mr. B.'s pew were the C.'s of Clump Hall, or the D.'s of Ditchley. To debate whether Mrs. E.'s little family consists of two boys and one girl, or one boy and two girls, is neither a useful nor an entertaining occupation of time. Whether the ball given by Lady F., or the musical party given by Mrs. G., was the most crowded, cannot possibly deserve half an hour's discussion, nor is it in the least worth while to determine whether the particular attentions paid by Captain H. to Miss J., on both occasions, are likely to come to anything serious. What matters it whether Sir Harry's horse, or Mr. Tomkins's mare, is the best for going across a country with hedge-and-ditch fences? and yet how apt the discussion of the question is to occupy an hour or more. And if you talk politics, what use is it to tell what was in *your* paper, and keep repeating that in parrot fashion as if you had no ideas of your own? Why not discuss the newspapers? Why not consider which is best written—whether this one is earnest, or that one tame? whether that which professes to be argument is really argument, or only declamatory assertion? whether the columns you habitually peruse are graced by literary skill, or disgraced by blundering ignorance?

That conversation is not worth the name, which consists of the utterance of superficial

observation, which those you talk to may have made if they pleased, just as well as you. If you talk at all let it be to impart thoughts—to state the discriminations of judgment, or the combination of wit—the associations of fancy, or the conjectures of imagination. Almost everything we see or hear, gives rise to some impressions in each individual mind, which are wholly or in part different from the impressions made on any other mind. Let us then learn to impart what we *think* upon such matters as come under review, and to remain well satisfied that if we have no information to supply, nor thought to communicate, we have nothing to say which is worth saying.

The Poet Wordsworth has devoted some admirable and very beautiful sonnets to the subject of ordinary talk. These I shall presently quote, and I pray my listeners to remark what truth and shrewdness of observation they contain, combined with those elevating thoughts, and beautiful allusions, which give a grandeur and a grace to even the simplest themes upon which Wordsworth writes:—

" I am not one who much or oft delight
To season my fire-side with personal talk,
Of friends who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly in my sight;
And for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all *wear out of me*, like forms with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,

Long barren silence square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint under-song."

I believe there are some still so vulgar as to think it a vulgar thing to mention a kettle in a poem, and quite beneath the dignity of one who sings the Muse's strains, to acknowledge any sympathy with the kettle's simmering song. But I trust all my listeners have minds above this spurious and ignorant fastidiousness, and I would fain believe that some of them will think, as I do, with the poet, that to sit musing about something or about nothing, in the loved presence of their fire—be it of humble cottage, or of stately mansion—is better amusement than that of talking about their neighbours, and their neighbours' affairs. But Wordsworth admits a little expostulation on this subject:—

"Yet life you say, 'is life; we have seen and see,
And with a lively pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are foster'd by the comment and the gibe.'
Even be it so: yet still, among your tribe,
Our daily world's true worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
And part far from them:—sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a slave, the meanest we can meet."

It would appear as if, in the middle of this

sonnet, Wordsworth broke away impatiently, with a "have it your own way, if such be your taste;" and then begins, for relief, to enunciate some of his favourite theories, especially that one about the minds of children, which I cannot pause to discourse upon now. The last six lines are full of philosophy, which you may put by for future examination, while I introduce you to another fourteen lines of delightful speculation upon the pleasures of thought and of literary study:—

"Wings have we—and, as far as we can go,
We may find pleasure; wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which, with the lofty, sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world, and books we know
Are a substantial world, both pure and good;
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, preeminently dear—
The gentle lady married to the Moor,
And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb."

Had Wordsworth never written a line but these fourteen, he would deserve to be ever dear to the lovers of the poetically wise and beautiful. How admirable the sentiment of the fourth line! How consolatory to the simply and humbly thoughtful! And then the poet introduces us to the personal themes of books—themes meet for intelligent minds and feeling hearts to dwell

upon; and so are we led on and lulled away into the exquisite music of the last three lines, than which there are none more harmonious in almost the whole range of English poetry:—

"Two shall be named, preeminently dear—
The gentle lady married to the Moor,
And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb."

But there is yet another magnificent sonnet, in which the subject is concluded:—

"Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons—hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought;
And thus, from day to day, my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them and eternal praise
Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares—
The poets, who, on earth, have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight, by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be number'd among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days."

Delightful bard! you have yourself accomplished your own desire. Your name *is* numbered among the very greatest of England's poets—among those whose aim is *truth* and *pure* delight. Your lays are the music of philosophy. They present to us wisdom tranquilly floating upon a tide of melody. The mind is elevated and made more pure, the heart is softened and made more gentle, while the sweetly swelling strains of meditative poetry are poured upon the

listening ear—poetry that, while it soars heavenward, does not roam from the realm of quiet, homely, domestic affection,

But, " with the lofty, sanctifies the low."

THE CHURCH.

The present time is rife with disputes about the amount of authority which the Church is entitled to claim in the inculcation of Christian verity. It must be admitted that these disputes are for the most part carried on with so much of political and party feeling, as to make them unpleasant to those sober-minded persons who wish to think as they ought to think upon points of such awful importance. But these questions being raised in public, it is impossible but that the noise of them should penetrate even into the quiet domestic circles of thoughtful and religiously-minded families, and it cannot but be important to supply them, so far as it may lie within the range of one's opportunities, with some trust-worthy opinion, as a resting-place for the anxious yet dutiful mind.

Having this end in view, I shall proceed to quote very briefly from Woodgate's Bampton Lectures for 1838, what seems to be a very admirable epitome of that which is reasonably to be held concerning Christian liberty and Church authority. Very seldom will there be

found more, or even so much, important matter in as small a compass of words. "The union of these two sacred instruments," says the preacher (viz. Scripture and the Church), "in their due proportion, where each retains its relative influence, is, like those happily-mixed institutions in civil matters, which combine, as far as human corruption and waywardness will allow, *protection* and *liberty*. It gives protection against the human heart, with the exercise of such liberty as our nature *can bear;* and by its appeal to Scripture, under certain limitations, it affords liberty, without the licentiousness and lawlessness arising from the undue indulgence of the right of private judgment. Now, of these two instruments, the suppression or weakening *of either* is most prejudicial to the whole fabric of the Christian faith. The suppression of Scripture leads to corruption and tyranny like Popery: the suppression of the authority of the Church leads no less certainly to licentiousness, proceeding through the various grades of heresy to rationalism and infidelity, *and thence back, perhaps, by a different road to* Popery. These will correspond respectively to despotism and democracy, caused by the suppression—in the one case of the *charter*—in the other of the *government.*"

It is perhaps not too much to say, that the whole conclusion of the controversy touching the guidance of the Scripture alone, or the

guidance of the Church, is *satisfactorily* laid down in this passage. The Scriptures are the charter, the Church is the government authorised to rule according to what that charter contains.

And from the above conclusions the Rev. lecturer derives definitions of Popery and Sectarianism, which it may be very well, for the sake of clearness in thought, and in controversy, to bear steadily in mind:—

"POPERY is despotism in religion, effected by the suppression of our CHARTER, HOLY SCRIPTURE.

"SECTARIANISM is democracy and republicanism in religion, brought about by the suppression of the CHURCH."

These are the definitions; the following are the references for the illustration of them:—

"Of the one we have the exemplification and the proof in the whole history of the Papacy, from which the protecting mercy of God, in his own good time, gave us deliverance.

"Of the other, if the history of our own times does not afford the like exemplification, it is because we are in progress to it, rather than have as yet fully arrived at it."

These views are as profound as they are simple, and well fitted to form the foundation of stable opinions.

RELIGIOUS REVERENCE.

Dr. Johnson says, in his life of Dryden, that malevolence to the clergy is seldom at a great distance from irreverence of religion, and that Dryden afforded no exception to the observation. This is a maxim which would probably be mocked at by a mere theoriser, because there is no chain of logical inference to be traced between hatred of certain persons and irreverence of that which it is their business to inculcate. But it is a sound maxim nevertheless, built upon observation and experience. Beware then of that man who speaks scoffingly, or with hatred, of the clergy, no matter how carefully he may abstain from saying anything directly against religion. Though he may not give positive evidence against himself of irreligion, he is nevertheless to be suspected—*fœnum habet in cornu*—let but the opportunity arrive, and the probability is he will go further than malevolence *to the clergy*.

As to Dryden, although he may doubtless have been betrayed both in his life and conversation into irreverence of religion, and therefore have afforded full ground for rebuke to so scrupulous a man as Dr. Johnson, yet it is satisfactory to know that so very great a genius not only thought, but wrote, under powerful impressions

of religious reverence. It is scarcely possible to suppose that a man could write such noble lines as the following—lines which few writers of moral and didactic poetry have equalled, and none have surpassed—without having (at least for the time he wrote them) the most just and becoming sentiments of religious reverence :—

" Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is *reason* to the soul; and as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here; so reason's glimmering ray
Was lent us not to *assure* our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.
And as those nightly tapers disappear,
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere;
So pale grows reason at religious sight,
And dies, and so dissolves, in supernatural light."

The grandeur of thought and of expression—the magnificent melody of Dryden's sounding verse —cannot be better exemplified than in the concluding four lines. Much as one loves simplicity of expression—much as one dreads the pompous circumlocution of some authors, who think that nothing can be said well if said in common words, it is impossible not to delight in the splendid redundancy with which Dryden signifies the idea of the rising of the sun :—

" When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere."

But if the poetry be good, the philosophy of the passage is still better—I mean of the whole passage. Let every line be carefully considered

—each will be found pregnant with thought, and thought upon the most important of all subjects. Reason is but the guide—the help to something above reason, better than reason, and more practically useful than reason in promoting man's peace and happiness, and in leading onward, and upward, the noblest faculties of his soul.

It may be useful, and certainly it will be found interesting, while under the impression of these noble lines of Dryden, to compare the sense and sentiment of them with a passage in the Bampton Lectures for 1817, a book of deep wisdom, which cannot be too generally studied by those who can think as well as read. "The average of solid capacity and knowledge," says the lecturer, "is not to be set high—the true strength of man is not to be sought in any *intellectual* but in a *moral* excellence. Neither in the one, however, nor in the other, can he hope to escape through all the difficulties wherewith he is encompassed, without possession of some sure refuge in the season of pressing danger, which refuge is only to be found in some one simple and unreserved submission to the commands of an infallible guide."

That guide is religion. Our reason leads us to this guide, but in thousands of cases which threaten our peace, can do nothing else for us that is satisfactory. We may pride ourselves as much as we will on intellectual power, but

we find practically its inadequacy. As soon, however, as it leads us to religion, and puts us under her guardianship, then we have a tower of defence wherein we may rest, no matter what storm or battle rages without.

MEDDLING IMPROVERS.

THERE is a couplet of Dryden's, which admirably describes at once and ridicules, the pretensions of certain projectors, who would fain persuade the world that they could better arrange everything, and even change men's nature, if they were but allowed to have their way in re-adjustment:—

> "At once divine and human laws control,
> And mend the parts by ruin of the whole."

The second line embodies a faithful, though sarcastic, description of almost all the great plans of reform which abound in an age of great vanity, because of great shallowness. In proportion as people are sound and thoughtful, they are suspicious of unsettling that which has accommodated itself to existing circumstances. They are more anxious to elevate principles than to adopt new machinery, being satisfied that all the wit of man cannot contrive the parts of a system so that the whole shall not be corrupt, if corrupt people be concerned in it. The men who are for changing everything to fit *their*

present views, are certainly much more likely to "ruin the whole," than to mend the parts of that upon which they lay their adventurous hands.

PERSONAL SKETCHES.

As we have Dryden before us, I may venture to entertain my listeners (for I have too high an opinion of their taste to suppose that Dryden's verse could not entertain them) with a personal sketch or two from his vigorous pen. Perhaps it may be thought that some characters more modern than of Dryden's time are as it were anticipated. But men are not so *very* various that similarity of circumstances should not often produce similarity of character. Let us at all events admire the force of the portraiture, and learn something from the traits which are painted so vividly that we cannot but see at once whether they were well or ill favoured. Let us take the Earl of Shaftesbury, the victim of too keen and fervent intellect, who is drawn under the name of Achitophel:—

"Of these the false Achitophel was first,
A name to all succeeding ages curst;
For close designs and crooked councils fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless—unfix'd in principles and place,
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which working out its way,

Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleased with the danger when the waves were high
He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease;
* * * *
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the State;
To compass this, the triple bond he broke,
The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke:
Then seized with fear, but still affecting fame,
Usurp'd a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves in factious times,
With public zeal to cancel private crimes."

It cannot be said that in these days we could point out any public character to which the above description might be applied, for *energy* of any kind, or on any side, is certainly not the distinction of statesmen. But it is not in statesmen alone that we find such restless and over-anxious beings as "Achitophel:"

The fiery soul, which working out its way,
Doth fret the pigmy body to decay,

may be observed in many conditions of life; and, though sometimes an object of admiration, it is always an object of pity.

Let us now turn to a portrait still more striking, and more admirably painted. It is

Villiers, the gallant and the gay—the man of all accomplishments, and no virtue. See where he stands:—

In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;
A man so various that he seem'd to be
Not one but all mankind's epitomé:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ,
With something new, to wish or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:
So over violent, or over civil,
That every man with him was God, or devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art,
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggar'd by fools, whom still he found too late,
He had his jest, and they had his estate
He laugh'd himself from Court, then sought relief,
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief;
* * * * * *
Thus wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left."

It cannot be said that this picture matches nothing in existing public life. In all save two or three touches it is astonishingly like to *one* public man. The bold dash of the pencil in the last line makes the likeness such as cannot easily be mistaken. But I care not for the personality in this case. The portrait, merely as a portrait, deserves not only the admiration, but the patient study, of every lover of the very highest strokes of genius in this department of art.

LITERARY CRITICISM.

I HAVE observed frequently of late, in literary and dramatical criticism, a something like two streams running from one source—the one being the judgment of the critic according to his own view of the sense and taste of the subject matter under observation; the other a verdict as it were on behalf of the public, a record of *their* judgment, and a corresponding award of praise or blame to the author, actor, or manager under review. There may be a convenience in this, and sometimes it is perhaps the only way in which truth may be told without great risk of giving offence both to the persons criticised and to the public. Nevertheless, I take the liberty of positively objecting to this mode of conducting criticism. It is true that a man may be at once a critic and a historian. I do not object to him for that besides telling us his opinion, and the reasons of it, he also tells us of the different opinion which the public, or the audience, appear to entertain. That is all fair in the way of information. But I do not think it is fair that, besides acquainting us with the fact, the critic should draw inferences, and suggest conclusions, opposed to his own judgment upon the matter, and thus so mix up right and wrong, or at least one judgment with

its opposite, that the reader knows not how to decide. This is not to establish truth, but to promote perplexity.

When a critic forms his judgment he ought to maintain it firmly against all adversaries. He may say, " I think so and so, and " the public" appears to think very differently; but then he should not shrink from maintaining his views even against the public. If he find the public wrong he should not fear to administer the lash, nor should he spare the author or player who panders to a depraved public taste, instead of manfully following truth and nature —instead of doing right, in short, the standard of right and wrong being something very different from the temporary liking of the crowd.

In a much read weekly literary journal, I have found an elaborate criticism which is the immediate cause of these remarks. This criticism is introduced by a theory relating to the signs of the times, political as well as literary, which I have not had the advantage of comprehending. It then goes on to state what is clear enough, and very important, but, as it seems to me, most erroneously and dangerously submissive to a bad public will, which ought to be severely reproved and steadily resisted.

The book under review is one of a vile class, which, taking up certain gross heroes of low life—highwaymen, housebreakers, and the like, with their trulls—invest them with certain sen-

timentalities, and connect them with fictitious circumstances of interest, so as to make a story of more or less interest. This sort of thing, it appears, sells better in the present "enlightened" age, than books of entertainment which aspire to more decency and good taste. Now, what says our critic to the author of the book? "If," says he, "we consider Mr. A. in the usual light of a mere caterer for the public appetite, and as devoting his talents to the production of a popular work either at his own or his publisher's suggestion, we must freely admit his book to be on a level with the usual specimens of the class, and at least as good as the occasion required. It is not his fault that he has fallen on evil days, and that, like other tradesmen, he must subordinate his own tastes to those of his customers. If, therefore, in the remarks which we are about to make, we appear to bear hard on the publication in question, we do not thereby mean to dispute the author's power of producing better things, or even to reproach him too severely with his submission to the necessity of pandering to the prevalent corruption of intellect; a reproach, by the by, to which we all, in our desire to be read, render ourselves in some degree liable."

I earnestly protest against this leniency of criticism in such a case. It is certainly not the fault of any author that he has fallen upon evil days; but it *is* his fault if he ministers to the

evil, instead of contending against it. Even a tradesman—and a literary man *might* take a higher model for his guidance than the practice of tradesmen—is not justified in vending what is deleterious and a public nuisance, because his customers wish to have it. A magistrate will punish a publican for continuing to supply drink to a man evidently intoxicated. It is a shocking disgrace to a man of literature when he "subordinates his own tastes to those of his customers." How can there be "a *necessity* of pandering to the prevalent corruption of intellect?" What makes the necessity? If a man cannot obtain employment for his pen, except in pandering to corruption, ought he not rather to dig for the means of subsistence? Ought he not to die through want of subsistence, rather than be the instrument of feeding and spreading corruption of mind?

But, in truth, there are no such demands made upon the virtue of literary men. It is true that if they will not pander to public grossness, they must submit to live in comparatively humble circumstances If they choose to assume a "necessity," for living luxuriously—for imitating the gross profusion and absurd pomp of those persons who have nothing but wealth to recommend them—then they must submit to the work of shame in order to obtain the means. But ought not conduct like this to be reprobated? Is it not enough to provoke the

lash of the honest critic, when he beholds men pandering to the corruption of the public mind, in order that they may be enabled to corrupt themselves with luxurious living, and flutter their little hour amid vanities which a manly spirit would utterly despise?

The critic whom I am now venturing to criticise, tells us very plainly that the book he is reviewing "is a bad book, and, what is worse, it is of a class of bad books got up for a bad public." He laments over the signs of the times. What sign can be worse, may I take the liberty of asking him, than that which he himself makes with his own right hand? What sign can be worse than that a man who sees the corruption of the public mind—who sees that a bad class of books is prepared to minister to that corruption—who has one of these bad books, and its author, actually grasped in his critical forceps, and yet, instead of manfully crushing both, invents excuses for such an author—tells him it is not *his* fault that he has fallen upon evil days—talks of the custom of his trade—and will not "reproach him too severely with his submission to the necessity of pandering to the prevalent corruption of intellect?" What can be worse than this? Where is the boldness which is needful for rooting out this spreading mischief? Certainly not with those who think, or affect to think, there can be any excuse in circumstances for the man who deliberately takes

hire for the manufacture of a bad book. There may be great differences of opinion as to what constitutes a bad book; but when a critic has made up his mind that a book is bad—that is to say morally bad—tending to promote corruption of mind—he scandalously deserts his duty if he does not rebuke the author with all the force of language which he possesses.

BEAUTY AND PLAINNESS.

Mrs. Southey, late Miss Caroline Bowles, has published a little volume of miscellaneous matters, some in verse, and some in prose, which she calls "Solitary Hours." I need scarcely say that whatever Mrs. Southey writes is written gracefully and in a right spirit, and that the little book is well worthy of a place in every lady's library. But it is not my object to enter upon general criticism: I wish to speak of a certain essay in the volume upon the subject of "Beauty," which asserts what I have not before seen asserted in print, though I do remember to have heard the theory mooted in friendly talk by one who combines wisdom with humour, and simplicity with power.

Mrs. Southey ventures to teach that with which I beg to express my unqualified agreement, namely, that beauty, even in the estimation of sobriety and good sense, is a good and

pleasant thing, for which one ought to be glad and thankful. "Of all cants," says our lady author, "one of the most sickening to my taste is that of some parents who pretend (I give them little credit for sincerity) to deprecate for their female offspring that precious gift as it *really* is, or as they are pleased to term it, 'that dangerous distinction'—personal beauty. They affect, forsooth, to thank Providence that their daughters are 'no beauties,' or to sigh and lament over their fatal attractions, and then they run out into a long string of trite axioms and stale common-places about the snares and vanities of this wicked world, *as if none but beauties were exposed to the assaults of the tempter.*"

There, Mrs. Southey, you have hit the nail upon the head. There's the respect that makes such difference between the hasty conclusions of the shallow and the observations of the wise.

"Now, I am firmly of opinion," continues our authoress—(so am I, good listeners)—"I am firmly of opinion, nay, every day experience proves it is so, that ugly women, called plain by courtesy, are just as liable to slip and stumble in those treacherous pitfalls as others of their sex distinguished by personal attractiveness; and on a fair average, that pretty women are the happiest, as well as the most agreeable, of the species."

It must not be supposed that, in agreeing with this conclusion, I lose sight of the argu-

ments which may justly be urged *per contra.* It cannot be denied that beauty is more subject to the dangerous influence of flattery administered with a bad purpose. I admit that much more importunity will be used (perhaps) to lead it into transgression than would be addressed to such as are personally less attractive. But recollect, on the other hand, what self-respect, or pride, if you will, is inspired by beauty, and how often that will repulse the intruder. Suppose one to be personally of that description that any degree of particular attention must needs be held as a particular compliment. Is there no danger there? Suppose a little further, that personal advantages were so far out of the question as to make the actual, if not the apparent wooing *begin* on the wrong side; how prodigious then is the danger! And from such dangers beauty may in general be said to be free.

Much of the practical truth,—of the substantial reality, belonging to these considerations, depends upon the station in life—the circumstances and education of those whom they concern. With regard to the most numerous class —they who are born to work their own way in the world—the considerations I have just adverted to, do, in my opinion, most extensively apply.

Mrs. Southey, however, very ingeniously points out the advantages of various kinds likely

to attend the attractiveness of beauty in a higher sphere of life. "Let us," she says, "suppose a child endowed with moderate abilities, an amiable disposition, and a decent share of beauty, and other children of the same family gifted in an equal proportion with mental qualifications, but wholly destitute of external charms; will not the fair attractive child be the most favoured, the best beloved, generally speaking, even of those parents who endeavour to be, and honestly believe that they are, most conscientiously impartial? The same anxious care may, it is true, be equally bestowed upon all—the same tender and endearing epithets be applied to all; but the eye will linger longest on the sweet countenance of the lovely little one; the parental kiss will dwell more fondly on its rosy lip, and the voice in speaking to it will be involuntarily modulated to softer and more tender tones. I am not arguing that this preference, however involuntary it may be, is even then wholly defensible, or that, if knowingly, weakly yielded to, it is not in the highest degree cruel and inexcusable. I only assert that it is in human nature; and, waving that side of the question, which if analysed, would involve a long moral discussion, not *necessarily* connected with the present subject, I would simply observe, that if this unconscious, irresistible preference frequently influences even the fondest parents, how far more unrestrainedly does it manifest itself in the

circle of friends, guests, relations, and casual visiters! How many indulgences and gratifications are obtained for the irresistible pleader! How many petitions granted for the remuneration of a kiss! How tenderly are the tears of contrition wiped away from eyes that look so beautifully remorseful! And all this, I firmly believe, *if restrained by right feeling and firm principle* from reaching a blamable excess, is productive of good results only, in the young mind; and that children thus happily constituted thrive best (even in a moral sense) in that atmosphere of tender indulgence, and become eventually more amiable and equable, least selfish and exacting, in all the various circumstances and relations of life. The reason of this I take to be, that they feel the most perfect confidence in the good will and affections of their fellow creatures; and how many of the best affections of our nature spring up and flourish under the kindly influence of that most Christian feeling! The fair engaging girl expands into womanhood in the warm sunshine of affectionate encouragement, and all the delicate and grateful feelings of her heart are drawn out to bud and blossom in that congenial clime—every individual of her family and friends fondly or courteously contributing to her happiness or pleasure. Will not the desire to repay kindness with kindness, love with love, blessing with blessing, be the responsive impulse of her young heart?"

All this I take to be the true philosophy of life, very gracefully expressed. And here I might leave the subject, were it not that I should be very sorry that such as have not the attractive gift of beauty should derive a painful impression from what has been said, and take away with them no balm for the wound. Assuredly it is no fault of theirs that they are not, as others are, beautiful; and they may be certain that the judgment of all who have that faculty, will act upon the conviction that the want of beauty is no fault, worthy of blame, or disregard. It has pleased heaven to make varieties of conditions, without, so far as we can see, while yet in this world, any reference to the merits of individuals thus variously circumstanced. One is born to affluence and indulgence—another to poverty and hardship. We know not why this should be so, but we know what are the respective duties of each, and how the lowly may become dignified, and the lofty acknowledge a sense of their human equality with those of low estate. Difference of personal attractiveness is a difference of condition which a power above us has ordered. Let it be cheerfully submitted to, even though our lot be not the most favourable. Consider how much worse that lot might have been, and let us be thankful for what we have.

Difference of condition in the circumstances of life has probably the object of inducing men

to exert themselves, and improve their faculties. Let us believe that difference of personal appearance may have a similar object. The qualities of the mind are more endurable than the rich softness of rosy lips, or the melting glances of a lustrous eye. If beauty be wanting, let mental accomplishments be all the more assiduously cultivated. A plain woman, with understanding, spirit, and good humour, is after the first five minutes, a more attractive creature than a *mere* beauty, however elegant in feature or brilliant in complexion. Granting the truth of what Mrs. Southey says, that on a fair average pretty women are the happiest, as well as the most agreeable of the species, I yet deny that there is any inevitable decree, any necessity in the nature of society, that it should be so. If they who are not pretty would take care *not* to abandon themselves to malice, envy, hatred, and uncharitableness, but to acquiesce cheerfully in what heaven has ordered, and apply themselves to every virtuous and honest art of pleasing which is available, apart from beauty, they may depend upon it that, taking the whole term of life into account, their lot will not be the worst.

TOWN AND COUNTRY—THE POOR.

The short but simple annals of the poor are too much neglected, though recommended to our notice not only by Christian teachers of our moral duty, but by those who, in serving the muse, endeavour to touch with wholesome purpose the feelings of our common nature.

> "He serves the muses erringly and ill
> Whose aim is pleasure, light and fugitive."

But that is no light or transient pleasure which, while it interests our sympathies, opens as it were new mansions in the heart for the hospitable reception, in all time to come, of kind or tender thoughts respecting the humble poor, whom we have always with us. It is true that in cities, where men are wont to cast their individual responsibilities upon the public institutions which they support, and where imposture is so apt to grow confident from the facility of escaping into the crowd, there is not so much opportunity for taking a practical interest in the affairs of the poor as the habits of the country present. This, though it be thought by many a relief, is in truth, at least so I believe, one of the greatest, if it be not the very greatest of the evils that attend upon constant residence in a great city. We cease almost to know any class

but our own. We are indeed *aware* of the existence of other classes, but it is not a practical direct knowledge. It comes to us by tradition, or by casual brief observation, which leaves no permanent impress upon our minds. We see labouring men employed about new buildings, or carrying burdens, and we know that they work hard, and live but poorly, and there's an end. More about them we do not care to know. We have never seen where or how they live, and we have no wish to do so. We have a vague impression that when they are at home they are somewhat noisomely crowded together, that they feed rather disgustingly, that they often get drunk, and not seldom have quarrels and fights among themselves. This we learn partly from newspapers, partly from servants, partly from a glimpse of observation now and then at the corner of some shabby street, where something is seen, and more guessed at. But we are not a jot concerned about the matter. What is it to us?

Alas! we consider not how much we ourselves lose in this, as well as the poor. I do not say that in a great city the practice of life could be otherwise, for delicacy and safety forbid habitual intercourse with the crowded, obscure, and unwholesome haunts where city poverty finds a shelter or a hiding place, where the criminal, skulking from justice and the open day, seeks the same lodging with the poor

labourer who can afford no better abode than that of dirt and darkness. This is the condition of city life, and by it we are shut out from much valuable sympathy and really useful knowledge; knowledge of others and of ourselves, seeing that we are but human creatures, even as the meanest we can meet. And yet how apt men are to boast; and men, too, who lay claim to the title of philosophers, of the superior intelligence of those who live in large towns. What is the real value of that intelligence? They are more ready in speech, more sharp in discussion, more quick to act upon the suggestions of fancy, or the impulse of party; but with the best sort of practical knowledge; that of the lives, habits, wants, thoughts, feelings, of various conditions of men, and of the general principles which conduce to bind the whole together in peace and security, they have no practical opportunities of becoming acquainted.

Nor do I mean to say that in the country, where the in-door circumstances of the cottages of the poor, and considerable practical acquaintance with their way of life, are part of the familiar experience of every one, there are philosophical principles deduced, or any general theories of conduct which they who have such experience could explain, or have ever recognised. But the useful knowledge may be there, and the useful habits, though the people under

their influence have never philosophised about the matter. There is such a thing as philosophy without philosophising, just as a man may have all the beauty of a picture deep in his heart, with no more knowledge of the artistical effects of light and shade than he has of the way noses are kept from being frostbitten in the planet Saturn.

Who can venture to say the influence upon men's characters and conduct of those personal histories which in country life stand out before the community individualised; a daily monition, or awakener of the heart? In cities these are lost in the crowd, or, if seen distinctly for a moment, presently lost sight of. Take, for example, such a poor crazed creature as Cowper so touchingly and admirably sketches, conveying a whole history in a few expressive lines; let us just place the sketch before us, and reflect upon what the reality would (unconsciously, perhaps,) teach to the neighbourhood where she was daily seen:

"There often wanders one whom better days
Saw better clad, in cloak of satin trimm'd
With lace, and hat with splendid riband bound.
A serving maid was she, and fell in love
With one who left her, went to sea, and died.
Her fancy follow'd him through foaming waves
To distant shores, and she would sit and weep
At what a sailor suffers; fancy too,
Delusive most where warmest wishes are,
Would oft anticipate his glad return,
And dream of transports she was not to know.

She heard the doleful tidings of his death—
And never smiled again! And now she roams
The dreary waste; there spends the livelong day;
And there, unless when charity forbids,
The livelong night. A tatter'd apron hides,
Worn as a cloak, and hardly hides, a gown
More tatter'd still; and both but ill conceal
A bosom heav'd with never-ceasing sighs.
She begs an idle pin of all she meets,
And hoards them in her sleeve; but needful food,
Though press'd with hunger oft, or comelier clothes,
Though pinch'd with cold, asks never. Kate is crazed."

This, (thanks to the delightful muse of Cowper) we, who read books may, perhaps, have more vividly presented to our fancy, than actual sight of such an object presents it to the minds of those to whom it is habitually present; our feelings are, for the moment perhaps, more touched. But the book is shut, the impression is gone; or, if it remain, it is but as a literary impression. It does not come home to our business and bosoms as a practical thing, nor do we apply the short and simple history as suggestive of advice, or consolation, or reproof, in the daily exercise of our social duties. We look at such histories as matters existing collaterally to ourselves and separate. We do not regard them as a part of our own concerns, an incident in the circle to which we belong. Would it not be better if we did?

FRENCH DISCUSSION.

French writers, even of the most flippant class, have a way of laying down general propositions which is somewhat startling at first to an English reader. It is so little our habit to affirm a general theorem, unless upon scientific points capable of demonstrative proof, that we are scarcely prepared to question the absolute principles with which a Frenchman opens his disquisition, if it were but upon the most eligible construction of a shoe-tie. A certain M. Jouy, who used to write sketches and essays, in which he showed great ingenuity by directly borrowing from English writers, and disguising their thoughts in a French style, tells us that "on ne corrige pas les mœurs ou le governement avec de beaux discours, mais avec de bonnes lois." It is easy to "lay down the law" in this way (some people might call it setting up the law), but is it true? May we not take leave on behalf of ourselves and all other "talkers," whether of the "table" or otherwise, to doubt that the manners of society can be so readily corrected by laws as by "discourses" which people may be disposed to receive in a friendly manner? As to matters of government, I admit that good laws are the first consideration, though very much will still depend upon the spirit and manner in which they are

administered, and this spirit and manner again are very likely to be affected by discourses of various kinds. Whether "*beaux* discours," in the sense in which Frenchmen use the term, be very expedient I am not quite sure; but honest and earnest commentary has unquestionably a great effect upon the course of government, and will often operate as a correction, where the making of good laws may not be found practicable.

But manners :—we apprehend, *they* are much more apt to mould and to assist the laws than the laws to mould and fashion them :—

> "Quid leges sine moribus
> Vanæ proficiunt?"

It belongs to the delusion—may we not say the quackery—of the present time to refer all manner of improvement to public instrumentality. It seems as if men expected that *laws* were to do everything for them—as if public and general arrangements could be made so to take the place of all other influences—the influences which bear upon us not merely as members of a civil community, dwelling under one government, but as beings with private responsibilities, social affections, feelings of kindred, and aspirations of too high and fervent a description to become the subject of general laws. Do not our manners more depend upon those influences than upon any other; and are not such influences,

supposing the existing laws not absolutely hostile to their operation, more likely to be awakened, encouraged, strengthened, by affectionate discourse, written or oral, than by the institution of new laws?

But when I plead in favour of *beaux discours* as more influential upon manners than *bonnes lois*, I beg to be understood as not saying anything in favour of the *lecturing* which has now got into fashion, as if people wouldn't do better to sit by the fire with a good book, or engaged in rational and affectionate talk, than to go off to this society, or that, to hear somebody *lecture*. This is all very well now and then, by way of variety, and when the matter to be learned cannot be learned at home; but the system which is arising in so many neighbourhoods of getting up "scientific institutions," and bringing people out of their houses after dark, that they may imbibe lectured knowledge in the lump, is a vile affectation, which ought not to be encouraged.

HARSHNESS TO THE POOR.

THE irreligious spirit which seems to inhere in the modern morality of convenience—which morality we assert to be, in any and in every aspect, a mistake, and arising out of ignorance of the nature which is in man—this irreligious

spirit is painfully manifested in the greater part of the advice which is given with respect to the poor. The counsel given almost uniformly amounts to this—that men should harden their hearts. Compassion is not only condemned as impolitic, but ridiculed as absurd. We are taught to square our conduct with reference to political and statistical considerations, and not with reference either to the impulses of the more tender parts of our nature, or the direct precepts of revealed religion. The favourite theme of those who profess superior wisdom and *enlightenment* is the folly of being pitiful and compassionate. It is undoubtedly true, that there be many impostors, who cheat the kind-hearted; and it is right that they who give, should be cautious; but to be kind and compassionate one towards another, and to relieve those who really appear to us to be in misery, is a religious duty, from which no considerations of human policy should turn us aside; no, not for a single moment.

It was but the other day that a journalist, who is one of the adorers of "modern progress" and "amelioration," thought proper to notice, for the purpose of turning into ridicule, the conduct of two farmers, who made a practice of giving some relief in bread to their poorer neighbours, that kind of relief being denied by the poor law guardians of the district. Some of that bread it seems found its way to the beer-

shops. That may be; but the vice lies not with these farmers (who deserve to be mentioned with honour by every one in whose breast there beats a kindly human heart), but with those who abet and encourage those traps for the unwary—those gross and gaping temptations for the weak—the beershops.

But these votaries of modern "enlightenment" never take into account the *religion* of showing mercy and kindness to the wretched. Let us entreat them to be instructed upon this point, not out of my imperfect criticism, but by the pious Bearcroft. "To do good," he says, "and to distribute, and to give alms for the *sake of God*, is the most acceptable of praise. It is a sure mark of a willing, grateful, and obedient mind, and it is accepted according to what a man hath, and becometh both the height of gratitude and the excellence of virtue too. It is the height of gratitude, because it is the best return we can make; and the excellence of virtue, because it is to imitate God in his goodness, the most glorious, amiable, and excellent of all his perfections. It is very possible to be grateful only in show, and thankful barely in appearance, and, with the Jews of old, to honour God with our lips, while our hearts are far from him, and very much estranged from a due sense of the great duty of praise. But when we honour God with our substance, it is beyond appearance; we are grateful in reality, and be-

yond contradiction prove we have a tender sense of the divine favours deeply impressed upon our souls."

MR. GAY'S "TRIVIA."

In our December days of dampness, darkness, and discomfort, when "miror magis" (I rather add-mire) seems to be the motto of the weather-ruling powers that preside over London, it is worth while to find out any association with such circumstances which may prove of interest enough to moderate for a brief space the expression of one's ill humour. To me, thus meditating, it has occurred that a *talk* about that very ingenuous poem by the author of *The Beggar's Opera*, upon the subject of walking the streets of London in winter, might not prove wholly unacceptable to such as sympathise with the realities of life, and have no objection to the theme of dirty streets, when sung in decent numbers.

Mr. Gay begins in the usual epic manner by a courteous invocation of supernal aid:—

"Through winter streets to steer your course aright,
How to walk clean by day, and safe by night,
How jostling crowds with prudence to decline,
When to assert the wall, and when resign,
I sing: thou Trivia goddess! aid my song,
Through spacious streets conduct thy bard along.
By thee transported, I securely stray,

Where winding alleys lead the doubtful way,
The silent court, and opening square explore,
And long perplexing lanes, untrod before."

This opens the large purpose of the poem, and my listeners will not fail to admire the force and appropriateness of the epithets, and the harmonious vigour of the verse, even in the small part they have already heard. It would be doing injustice to the author not to observe how street, lane, alley, and even the more general term "way," have each their separate and well-fitting adjective, and even court and square are equally provided with epithets harmonious in respect of sound, and faithful in regard to description.

Our author proceeds with general directions as to the preparations which the wise will make for walking the streets in winter. That he is very forcible in this part, as well as minute, may be collected from one couplet respecting shoes:—

"Let firm *well-hammer'd* soles protect thy feet
Through freezing snows, and rains, and soaking sleet."

But he is particularly great upon the subject of the cane, breaking off into some reflections upon the excellence of walking, which the worthy Dr. Jephson, of Leamington, (the greatest among modern advocates of pedestrian exercise), ought to have engraved upon the back of all the slips of paper upon which he writes his prescriptions:—

"If the strong cane support thy walking hand,
Chairmen no longer shall the wall command;
Even sturdy carmen shall thy nod obey,
And rattling coaches stop to make thee way.
This shall direct thy cautious tread aright,
Though not one glaring lamp enliven night.
Let beaux their canes, with amber tipt, produce;
Be theirs for empty show, but thine for use.
In gilded chariots while they loll at ease,
And lazily ensure a life's disease,
While softer chairs the tawdry load convey
To Court, to White's, assemblies, or the play;
Rosy-complexion'd health thy steps attends,
And exercise thy lasting youth defends.
Imprudent men Heaven's choicest gifts profane;
Thus some beneath their arm support the cane;
The dirty point oft checks the careless pace,
The miry spots the clean cravat disgrace.
Oh, may I never such misfortune meet,
May no such vicious walkers crowd the street;
May Providence o'ershade me with her wings
While the bold muse experienced danger sings."

Before entering into the heart of his subject, our author takes a rapid glance at foreign cities, and at his own in former times. Who can forbear admiration of the sturdy English abhorrence of Italian elegance and crime expressed in the four following lines?—

"Let others Naples' smoother streets rehearse,
And with proud Roman structures grace their verse,
Where frequent murders wake the night with groans,
And blood in purple torrents dies the stones."

He then refers to the silence of Venice, and thence bursts away into a bold condemnation of effeminate habits, of luxury and of vice, which is worthy the reputation of one of England's boldest and honestest authors. Let not the

homeliness of the subject deter any one from affording the full meed of praise to such good writing. The following lines are worth a wilderness of the affectations which in these times pass for literature :—

"Thus was of old Britannia's city blest,
Ere pride and luxury her sons possess'd,
Coaches and chariots yet unfashion'd lay,
Nor late-invented chairs perplex'd the way;
Then the proud lady tripp'd along the town,
And tuck'd-up petticoats secured her gown;
Her rosy cheek with distant visits glow'd,
And exercise unartful charms bestow'd:
But since in braided gold her foot is bound,
And a long training mantua sweeps the ground,
Her shoe disdains the street; the lazy fair
With narrow step affects a limping air.
Now gaudy pride corrupts the lavish age,
And the streets flame with glaring equipage;
The tricking gamester insolently rides,
With Loves and Graces on his chariot-sides;
In saucy state the griping broker sits,
And laughs at honesty and trudging wits.
For you, O *honest* men, these useful lays
The muse prepares; I seek no other praise."

The glimpses of the *modern antique* afforded in these lines, and indeed throughout the poem, are of no slight interest. "Chairs" were, it seems, then but lately brought into use for street travelling, and their course is already run, for who now dreams of going about in a chair? The "braided gold" for the foot we no longer know anything of, but we seem in a fair way to revive again the "long training mantua," unless ridicule of its absurdity shall prove of more avail than it generally is in matters of fashion.

I know not how the "proud lady" of ancient date may have looked, tripping it along, with tucked-up petticoat to secure her gown; but I rather fancy that, except under peculiar circumstances, not necessary to be accurately detailed, such a mode of making progress *might* look quite as modest and as graceful as riding *supine* in an open carriage, while it is quite certain that the much-to-be-desired consequence of "rosy cheeks" and "unartful charms" would more frequently arise.

Our author next dilates upon the signs of the weather, which should guide the walker in the choice of habiliments, and condescends to describe these habiliments themselves, devoting an especial episode to the *patten;* but all this I must pass over, and proceed to some of the directions for philosophically walking the streets.

You are told to avoid the chimney-sweeper, the dustman's cart, offensive to clothes and eyes; the chandler, with his basket, you are warned against; and the "surly butcher with his greasy tray." I may mention also, that the "small-coal man" is pointed out as a person to be avoided; but it is necessary in saying this to affirm that Mr. Gay could not have intended, and I do not intend, any personal allusion to a celebrated ex-Governor-General.

But I must give a few lines of extract to show the morality of the poem in respect of its inculcation of kindness:—

"Let due civilities be strictly paid,
The wall surrender to the hooded maid;
Nor let thy sturdy elbow's hasty rage
Jostle the feeble steps of trembling age.
And when the porter bends beneath his load,
And pants for breath, clear thou the crowded road;
But, above all, the groping blind direct,
And from the pressing throng the lame protect."

The giving and taking of "the wall" seems to have been held in very high importance in Gay's time. The discrimination to be made between the treatment of the fop and the bully, with respect to this matter, is admirably set forth:—

"You'll sometimes meet a fop of nicest tread,
Whose mantling peruke veils his empty head;
At every step he dreads the wall to lose,
And risks, to save a coach, his red-heel'd shoes;
Him, like the miller, pass with caution by,
Lest from his shoulder clouds of powder fly.
But when the bully, with assuming pace,
Cocks his broad hat, edged round with tarnish'd lace,
Yield not the way, defy his strutting pride,
And thrust him to the muddy kennel's side;
He never turns again, nor dares oppose,
But mutters coward curses as he goes."

The minuteness with which street disasters are observed and recounted may be inferred from the following passage:—

"When waggish boys the stunted besom ply,
To rid the slabby pavement, pass not by;
Ere thou hast held their hands, some heedless flirt
Will overspread thy calves with spattering dirt.
Where porters' hogsheads roll from carts aslope,
Or brewers down steep cellars stretch the rope,
Where counted billets are by carmen toss'd,
Stay thy rash step, and walk without the post."

The poet admits the consequent dirtying of the shoes, but comforts the walker that the boy shoeblack is at hand, who will repair all this mishap. Curious is the mixture of things still common, and things worn out of use, which Gay's description of London streets affords. Having mentioned the shoeblack, he falls into an episode respecting him, which is quite in the epic manner. He considers him to have sprung from the embrace of

> "Cloacina, goddess of the tide,
> Whose sable streams beneath the city glide,"

with a certain useful functionary—

> "A mortal scavenger she saw; she loved
> The muddy spots that dried upon his face,
> Like female patches, heighten'd every grace."

A son is the result, who for a long time was sadly off for something to do. At last his mother obtains for him sundry gifts of various gods and goddesses to set him up in his trade of shoeblack:

> "Pleased she receives the gifts; she downward glides,
> Lights in Fleet-ditch, and shoots beneath the tides."

Then the boy is described:

> "Now dawns the morn, the sturdy lad awakes,
> Leaps from his stall; his tangled hair he shakes;
> Then leaning o'er the rails he musing stood,
> And view'd below the black canal of mud,
> Where common-shores a lulling murmur keep,
> Whose torrents rush from Holborn's fatal steep.
> Pensive through idleness, tears flow'd apace,
> Which eased his loaded heart, and wash'd his face."

He breaks forth into a lamentation, of which I can give only the concluding lines:

"Had I the precepts of a father learn'd,
Perhaps I then the coachman's fare had earn'd;
For lesser boys can drive. I thirsty stand,
And see the double flagon charge their hand,
See them puff off the froth and drink amain,
While with dry tongue I lick my lips in vain."

But the finest thing of all, which rises, indeed, to a very great height of epic magnificence, is the appearance to him of the goddess, his mother:

"While thus he fervent prays, the heaving tide,
In widen'd circles, beats on either side;
The goddess rose amidst the inmost round,
With wither'd turnip-tops her temples crown'd;
Low reach'd her dripping tresses, lank, and black
As the smooth jet, or raven's glossy back;
Around her waist a circling eel was twined,
Which bound her robe that hung in rags behind.
Now beckoning to the boy she thus begun:—
'Thy prayers are granted; weep no more, my son;
Go thrive; at some frequented corner stand;
This brush I give thee; grasp it in thy hand;
Temper the soot within this vase of oil,
And let the little tripod aid thy toil;
On this methinks I see the walking crew
At thy request support the miry shoe;
The foot grows black that was with dirt embrown'd,
And in thy pocket jingling halfpence sound.'
The goddess plunges swift beneath the flood,
And dashes all around her showers of mud."

I have now said enough, or rather quoted enough, to show the excellence of this poem, in which common sense and shrewd observation are curiously mingled with satire and burlesque.

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE.

Mr. Pope, with his usual felicity of expression, gives us in a single line the sum of *human* wisdom, in its most abstract form :

"'Tis but to know how little can be known."

There were few more knowing personages alive than he who said this; a man with many faults, however, (as who has not?) and vanities too, and some ill-humour, being apt to forget, as every philosopher occasionally does, the use upon his own behalf of that philosophy which he taught so admirably to others. But the judicious mind, and humble because judicious, cannot but recognise with sober satisfaction that the very superior and sharp-seeing intelligence of Pope came in its more serious moods to a Christian view of human infirmity—infirmity not merely of the flesh, but even of that which we are too apt to regard with a sort of idolatry, the mental powers of man. It is no inconsiderable thing, we must allow, even to know how little can be known in this mortal state; because, from the fact of our being allowed clearly to conceive how vast the realm of knowledge is beyond the reach of our present powers, we may reasonably infer that it is intended we should, under more favourable cir-

cumstances, have the means of penetrating into that realm. And doubtless the more religiously humble we are, in the estimation and in the use of such knowledge and wisdom as we have, the more fitted shall we be, as well as the more deserving, to make use of such measure of larger power as in a more exalted state of existence may be awarded us.

Probably there never was a time when the pursuit of knowledge, or the appearance of that pursuit, was more the fashion than it now is. Have we any thing to regret in this? No; not in the thing itself, so far as it is sincere, and not affectation merely; but we have to regret that along with this pursuit of knowledge, there is not that pervading sense which Pope has so happily expressed—that honestly humble feeling that though very much may be learned, yet the sum of the whole will be but to know how little can be known, and how much will remain for a clearer and more extensive vision than that of the earth-bound mind to fathom.

May it not be safely affirmed that, from a want of that abiding sense, the inquirers after knowledge greatly fail of obtaining their own happiness. They begin, as all begin, with expecting too much. They welcome to their hearts vain delusions respecting the wondrous things they shall achieve. All this is natural, but experience and reason ought ere long to teach them the truth, and a religious humility

would make it palatable to them. They ought in reason to have "a proprietor's delight" in what they have acquired; but, so long as they look to human knowledge for giving more than it is in the nature of things that it can give, their fate will be disappointment, fretfulness, strife, envyings, and so on. Thus in effect we find it to be, and, to the disgrace of knowledge, it frequently turns out that they who have devoted themselves to it are very little wiser and not at all happier than they who have not done so. Could they be satisfied that the end of knowledge and wisdom is but to know how little can be known, the weariness of the spirit, which so often afflicts them, would not be felt.

Cowper, in his delightfully easy, contemplative manner, discusses the sundry pursuits of the *unphilosophical* knowledge-fanciers, and describes them with admirable fidelity. But first he speaks of himself, and in a strain so simple and touching, that it cannot but be pleasing to all gentle hearts to listen to his pensive and yet no way dispiriting account of his position:

> "I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
> Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd
> My panting side was charged, when I withdrew,
> To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
> There was I found by one who had himself
> Been hurt by th' archers. In his side he bore
> And in his hands and feet the cruel scars.
> With gentle force soliciting the darts,
> He drew them forth, and heal'd, and bade me live.

Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, and not wishing more.
Here must I ruminate, as much I may,
With other views of men and manners now
Than once; and others of a life to come."

Such is the critic—an honest, serious, feeling, meditative man. Now behold his views, and consider his ruminations:—

" I see that all are wand'rers, gone astray
Each in his own delusions; they are lost
In chase of fancied happiness, still woo'd
And never won. Dream after dream ensues,
And still they dream that they shall still succeed,
And still are disappointed. *Rings the world*
With the vain stir. I sum up half mankind,
And add two-thirds of the remaining half,
And find the total of their hopes and fears
Dreams, empty dreams."

Alas! for poor mankind, always expecting from the world what the world cannot give. How many miss the object for which they contend, and envy those who gain it. Yet scarcely more fortunate is the lot of those who succeed, for the triumph of success and the pleasure of it last but a few days. The highest enjoyment soon wears out. We become more keenly sensible of what we have not, we lose our relish for what we have. But let us return to Cowper—first he dismisses the enormous crowd of the unthinking and frivolous in three lines and a half:—

" The million flit as gay
As if created only like the fly,
That spreads his motley wings in th' eye of noon,
To sport their season, and be seen no more."

The knowledge-fanciers are dealt with at more respectful length, and with the most admirable critical acumen :—

" The rest are sober dreamers, grave and wise,
And pregnant with discoveries new and rare.
Some write a narrative of wars, and feats
Of heroes little known ; *and call the rant*
A history: describe the man, of whom
His own coevals took but little note,
And paint his person, character, and views,
As they had known him from his mother's womb.
They disentangle from the puzzled skein,
In which obscurity has wrapp'd them up,
The threads of politic and shrewd design,
That ran through all his purposes, *and charge*
His mind with meanings that he never had,
Or, having, kept conceal'd."

Is not this the very picture of five-sixths of the laborious affectations which are called historical biographies, or (since poor Sir Walter died) historical novels and romances. Who can wonder that the perpetrators of such things soon fall into public neglect or contempt, and have to sustain the bitterness of disappointment?

Now for a touch at geologists and astronomers :—

" Some drill and bore
The solid earth, and from the strata there
Extract a register by which we learn
That he who made it, and reveal'd its date
To Moses, was mistaken in its age.
Some more acute, and more industrious still,
Contrive creation ; travel nature up
To the sharp peak of her sublimest height,
And tell us whence the stars ; why some are fix'd,
And planetary some ; what gave them first

Rotation, from what fountain flow'd their light.
Great contest follows, and much learned dust
Involves the combatants, each claiming truth,
And truth disclaiming both. And thus they spend
The little wick of life's poor shallow lamp,
In playing tricks with nature, giving laws
To distant worlds, and *trifling* in their own."

And the end of this—unlike the trifling of "the million" before described, from which a sort of moth-like happiness is derived—the end of this *laborious* trifling we generally find to be arrogance and discontent. These labourers commonly acquire a great many facts, and very little *philosophy*. But hear the comment, where wisdom is expressed in sweetest numbers:—

"Ah! what is life thus spent? and what are they
But frantic who thus spend it? all for smoke—
Eternity for bubbles proves at last
A senseless bargain. When I see such games
Play'd by the creatures of a power who swears
That he will judge the earth, and call the fool
To a sharp reck'ning that has lived in vain;
And when I weigh this *seeming wisdom* well,
And prove it in the infallible result
So hollow and so false—I feel my heart
Dissolve in pity, and account the learn'd,
If this be learning, most of all deceived.
Great crimes alarm the conscience, but it sleeps
While thoughtful man is plausibly amused.
Defend me, therefore, common sense, say I,
From reveries so airy, from the toil
Of dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up!"

The exercise of plain common sense (which folks that affect "science" are so apt to despise)

would in thousands of instances defend mankind from the preposterous delusions into which they are led by ill-understood knowledge and spurious theories.

ERRONEOUS PREACHING.

THERE is a great evil under the sun, which I wish to talk about, in the hope of making some sort of commencement towards its mitigation. Perhaps even this feeble remonstrance may be the beginning of such efforts for reformation as will hereafter prove of great benefit. The matter I allude to is a certain sort of preaching which I sincerely believe to be mischievous, and therefore, with all humility, will venture to speak my mind concerning it.

Most of my listeners probably know that in the numerous parochial and district-parochial churches of this great metropolis, the sermon in the morning is preached by the rector or minister; in short, the principal ecclesiastic belonging to the church; while in the afternoon the sermon is generally preached by an assistant, either permanent or occasional. Whether this be just as it should be, it is not intended now to discuss; but it is necessary to mention the fact. Now, it frequently happens that there is a marked distinction in the character and tone of the preaching between the morning and evening,

and it almost universally happens that the character and quality of the congregation are very different. In the morning the congregation consists of the gentry of the neighbourhood in the pews, while a few servants and a great many old and poor people occupy the open sittings. This will not be in all cases a true description, but generally it is so. In the afternoon there are comparatively very few of the gentry, but in their place a very great number of servants, who, somehow or another, get out much more abundantly after their early dinner than before it.

So much for the difference as to the congregations; now for the sermons preached to them.

In the morning they are generally well-prepared discourses, of which the doctrine harmonises tolerably well with the doctrine of the thirty-nine articles taken *as a whole*, and, for the most part, they combine doctrinal exposition with practical exhortation. In the afternoon, when, from the changed character of the congregation, it would seem but reasonable that the conduct of life and the practice of religious and moral duty should be at least as much dwelt upon as in the morning, one finds but too often that it is not so. Whether it be that the assistants are younger men, and more full of controversial heat; or that they are no more than assistants, because they have been found wanting in sober moderation and practical good

sense; or that they are more anxious to impress the few *serious* families of the gentry that attend in the afternoon, than the great body of the congregation, consisting of servants and unlettered people, certain it is, that too often, the sermon is throughout in a high-flown doctrinal strain, as though, of all the thirty-nine articles of religion, none were worthy of being enforced but the XIth and the XVIIth. And even these, are not expounded and maintained in a sober strain, and with reasonable precision, but in a ranting, ejaculatory manner, with heaps of quotation from the most mystical parts of scripture.

This is the sort of sermons, also, which, at any time of the day, one is apt to hear in four out of five of the "proprietary" episcopal chapels which abound in London, and which bring the "voluntary system," so far as Sunday teaching goes, in aid of the parochial establishments. Whether the Dissenting chapels chiefly promulgate rhetoric of the same peculiar doctrinal stamp, I have no experience to inform me; but I suspect it is so, because such preaching is the easiest and the most popular.

But what I desire very deferentially to advert to, is the probably mischievous effect of these discourses upon the crowd of domestic servants and other unlettered people to whom they are so often addressed. They are told commonly in such sermons that the great body of "professing Christians" must be divided into two

parts; that the one, and by far the smaller, part is to be regarded as in a peculiar manner the people of God, having their every thought, word, and action, spiritualized, and made holy, by a particular change which has taken place in them; that by far the greater part must be regarded as peculiarly of this world, the children of Satan, and totally lost in a religious sense, especially if they take pains to be morally correct, and deem *that* a source of confidence as respects the world to come. The preachers who discourse in this strain allow of no medium. Either, they allege, you must be wholly spiritual, religious in every thing, and utterly converted from the world, or you must be the property of Satan now and for ever. It is impossible, they say, that any one can belong partly to God and partly to the world: and much more they say to the same purpose.

I am neither able nor willing to enter into religious controversy upon these points; but I submit that simple people, engaged in the ordinary duties of life, are liable and likely to draw from such discourses very dangerous conclusions. For, in point of fact, they are, and they themselves cannot but know it, in the condition of being very much given up to their own worldly affairs, or the affairs of their employers, thinking perhaps solemnly enough upon their religion for a short time, night and morning, and going to church once, or perhaps twice, on

Sundays, to join in public prayer and worship. But this is pronounced by such preachers as I have been describing, to be a state of sin and spiritual death. If they are to be believed, such people are, in respect of a hereafter, no whit better than the most profligate and wicked men in existence. Will not, then, the probable conclusion of the greater part of the congregation be something of this sort; since I have no better chance of heaven, because I am honest and diligent, and prudent, and pains-taking, and give all the help I can to those worse off than myself, where is the use of continuing to be so? Why should I not take my fill of this world's pleasure, by any means within my reach, since I and the wickedest are upon equal terms as respects the life to come?

I shall not insist that this is the sort of conclusion which people *ought* to come to, far from it; but I suggest that it is a very natural and likely conclusion, from such preaching as may be heard in scores of churches every Sunday.

I look upon this as a great evil; and should be, for the very highest of all considerations, very glad if some effectual means were resorted to for mitigating or removing it altogether.

DISTINCTIONS OF ETIQUETTE.

RATHER a curious and not unentertaining instance of the refinement of ceremony in a somewhat serious affair has lately been recorded in the newspapers. Two young noblemen went from London to the coast of France to fight a duel, in consequence (as had been stated) of a quarrel in a place where neither of them ought to have been. After each had fired a loaded pistol at the other, without any death or wound ensuing, one of the parties made some explanation which rendered further appeal to the pistol unnecessary. Upon this the explainee was marched up to the explainer for the purpose of shaking hands with him. The latter begged leave to decline the honour proposed to him, but had no objection to *take off his hat* to the Noble Lord whom he had just before been saluting with a pistol-bullet; and accordingly he did take off his hat, but did not shake hands.

There is a delicacy of distinction exhibited here which shows that civilization in the present day has arrived at a very high pitch of perfection. At a less enlightened period, or even now, among persons of a coarser grain, the combatant who would not shake hands would not probably think of any intermediate courtesy

between that familiarity and no acknowledgment at all. And such want of delicate perception, or coolness to act upon it, with deadly weapons yet smoking in their hands, might lead to renewals of battle, when otherwise, as in the case now cited, a simple elevation of the hat one inch and a quarter from the top of the head would settle the matter.

It is to be hoped that so brilliant an example of the philosophy of gradation, in matters of intimacy, will not be lost upon this discerning generation. Many a man would do well to remember how much better it is merely to take off his hat than to shake hands. For instance, when the dice-box is seen upon the table, inviting a more intimate acquaintance, gentlemen would do well to take off their hat to such a friend rather than *shake hands.* When a man "well known on the turf" marks what you say of some horse that has caught your fancy, and offers you a large and tempting bet, retreat gracefully two steps, and take off your hat, but do *not* shake hands. Or if you are so unfortunate as to take bets and lose them—to find yourself completely "done," and absolutely "cleaned out," and, in your despair, a loaded pistol suddenly comes in sight in a lonely room —recollect yourself, take off your hat to it, but by no means shake hands. If a blackguard Jew offers to lend you money at fifty per cent. take off your hat to him, but by no means shake

hands. If an undertaker for embarrassed young men introduces you to a vulgar vixen with fifty thousand pounds, who wants to be married, take off your hat to her, but do not shake hands. If "the most charming woman in the world," who happens to have "such a brute of a husband," is so obliging as to hint to you the practicability of running away with her, take off your hat most particularly, but be very careful that you do *not* shake hands. Finally, if you go to the Zoological Gardens, and the large Bengal tiger purs most lovingly in your face, take off your hat by all means, but be very sure that you do not attempt to shake hands.

There are thousands of matters in which this philosophy might be applied; and in pointing out these few, I have done only faint justice to one brilliant discovery among the many for which this age is, and will be, so celebrated.

GOVERNESSES.

The publication of Lady Blessington's novel, giving an imaginary sketch of the ills which a "governess" is heiress to, has produced, on the part of sundry critics, a good deal of what they mean for philosophy on this interesting topic of domestic life. One gentleman goes exceedingly deep into the matter, ushering in his remarks

by something about the "constant analogy or parallelism between the laws of the natural creation and those which govern the moral world." This is rather tremendous for a beginning, and takes away one's breath; but the writer winds his way out of this sublimity to the subject of governesses in the following ingenious manner:—

"A striking parallel to the heavenly movements may be found in the tendency of moral causes to form vicious circles" (vicious circles!) "in which a perpetual effect is produced by the action and reaction of combined forces, which forces, if acting singly and alone, would exhaust themselves and disappear. In this there is no mystery" (I think there is); "it is but the working out of that law which renders good the parent of good, and evil the author of evil. A striking example of the *pernicious efficacy* of such a vicious circle occurs in the position and character of domestic instructors. The ill-treatment to which this class of persons is too frequently exposed in private families has lowered their attainments and moral bearing, and the lower character and pretensions of instructors, by an inevitable reaction, has diminished the respect in which they are held by parents, subjecting them to a still more galling ill-treatment."

My listeners will by this time, perhaps, have

begun to entertain some suspicion of the good sense of this critic;* and I confess, that I have introduced his observations rather for the purpose of showing how sadly a plain matter of much interest may be perplexed by too much learned speculation, than with the hope of throwing much useful light upon the subject. It is true that he afterwards "condescends upon particulars," but his practical view is a politico-economic view, and therefore, *ut mihi videtur*, it fails to touch the real point of chief interest. The abstract philosophy being concluded, he says:—

"Applying these remarks to the case of the domestic governess, they acquire a still more painful interest. The first *guarantee for her incapacity*—the first injustice to which she is exposed—is the utter *disproportion* of her remuneration. Setting aside her *agency* upon the morals of her pupils, the acquirements usually demanded from her can only be obtained by a considerable pecuniary outlay. We speak not of the probability of one poor head mastering, so as to teach, drawing, singing, instrumental music of one or more kinds, two if not three

* It is but justice to say, that a correspondent much more capable of pronouncing judgment in such a matter than I am, sees nothing beyond needless pomposity of phrase, to find fault with in the passage I have quoted. The "vicious circles" he interprets as an action and reaction of wrong, which produces a perpetual round of mischief, and this he shows to be a practical truth.

foreign languages, ornamental needlework, geography and the use of the globes, &c. &c.—that is another question; but we ask how such knowledge is to be obtained for a sum of which some 20*l.* or 25*l.* a year is even the bare interest? Is it likely—is it possible—that such acquisitions can be in the market at such prices? Persons possessing them are to be found daily, but to promise and to perform are not often precisely the same. Supposing, however, the necessities of the individual prevail, is it generous, is it just, is it honest, either to the instructress or the pupils, to repay such services at a standard below that of the lady's maids and the footmen of the family?"

However profoundly important this view of the matter may be, I must own that it affects me not. I do not sympathise with it. Gladly do I turn to the views of a critic less ostentatiously scientific, and of far more intelligible humanity. He says:—

"The true misery of the governess class, we conceive, is shown in the isolation of heart and the depression of spirits which their situation is liable to induce; in the chilling monotony of their existence; the cold and forced civility which others throw to them, rather than pay them; and the necessity they are often placed under of suppressing all the spontaneous emotions till they eventually dwarf, or wither away."

The condition of the governess as drawn in Lady Blessington's novel is neither that so scientifically censured by the political economist, nor that so gravely and forcibly depicted by the critic last quoted. She makes her governess the victim of gross-minded upstart vulgarity—of ridiculous and fantastical selfishness—or of intriguing weakness, on the part of her employers, while the victim also suffers persecution from men on account of her beauty, and insolence from servants on account of her propriety of behaviour.

All these things are possible, but not likely; allowable enough in order to make up the interest of a fictitious story, but not doing much towards the "diffusion of useful knowledge" upon the position and circumstances of domestic governesses.

I incline to think that all the views we have adverted to of the circumstances of the governess, are too gloomy. Not but that their situation is very often—alas! too often—very cheerless, and wearing to the tender spirit of a young and well-brought up woman. I grant this; but still in the position of the governess, as in so many other positions, about which much moan is made, the case, for good or for evil, very much depends upon the individual herself. If she be what Lady Blessington describes her heroine to be in her first situation—mild, and yet firm—ready to help herself in every way

she can, without mental or moral degradation—reasonably observant of the temper of others, and reasonably powerful over her own—if she join to these qualities, or earnestly try to join them, a religiously dutiful and cheerful spirit, it is not credible that, save in extraordinary cases, her position can long be a painful one. I prefer taking this view of the matter, not only because I incline to the belief that it is the truest one, but because it is the most hopeful. The command that governesses can have over that portion of society where their services are required must be but little. They must submit to take their employers and their households as they find them; but in the commanding and ordering of themselves they may do very much, and win that confidence, respect, and kindness which the philosophy of sullen acquiescence in a dismal fate would never obtain, nor obtain anything else worth half so much.

Let it be remembered, however, at the same time by those who employ governesses, that a habit of exaction and unkindness, is as wicked, as it is base, vulgar, and odious; and that even civility, if "cold and forced," is only not quite so bad. Common sense as well as Christian feeling, should dictate that, to the person who stands so much in the place of a parent towards their children, the deportment of parents should be confidential and kind.

SHELLEY'S ESSAYS.

Two volumes of essays, letters, and translations, by the late Percy B. Shelley, have lately been published by his widow. As usual in Shelley's works, one finds in these volumes a good deal of the bad, mixed up with the beautiful. They were either very injudicious or very false friends who counselled Mrs. Shelley to publish the unfinished pieces of ill-directed daring which are to be found in this publication. If she took no counsel, her own rashness is very much to blame. Her preface is written in a masculine manner, but not well written. There are many things in it of a nature to offend well regulated minds. The late Mr. Shelley is spoken of with a sort of idolatry, which is not easy to be excused, even on the part of his widow. I suppose it is sincere, and therefore regard it with pity. Were it hypocritical it could not be more extravagant. Besides all this, it is in a great degree nonsense; a thing exceedingly common indeed, and much more common than the opposite, but still proper to be censured. It is notorious that Shelley's works, while admired by many for their imaginative and descriptive beauty, are nevertheless abhorred by many of the purest minded for their impiety. Now, it is of this man, and with reference also to a tract

of his, in which he argues against the credibility of a future state of existence, that the writer of the preface says—"To me death appears to be the gate of life, but my hopes of an hereafter would be pale and drooping did I not expect to find that most perfect and beloved specimen of humanity on the other shore." It is not blamable that Mr. Shelley's widow should thus feel, but it is very irrational that she should thus write and publish. It is said also in the preface, concerning a fragment of a speculation on morals, in the first volume, that "it is remarkable for its subtlety and truth—it was found on a single leaf disjoined from any other subject—it gives the true key to the history of man, and, above all, to those rules of conduct whence mutual happiness has its source and security." It is offensive that any one undertaking the office of editor should pronounce such extravagant eulogy upon what is submitted for the public judgment. Moreover, the panegyric is absurdly erroneous. The fragment it refers to is not intelligible, and does not possess even the ordinary merit of grammatical English. That this is true may be judged of from the opening sentence, which is this—"The internal influence derived from the constitution of the mind from which they flow produces that peculiar modification of actions which make them intrinsically good or evil." This, O intelligent listener, is an honest specimen of that brief

fragmentary essay which, in the wild extravagance of irrational praise, is called "the true key to the history of man!"

But that which is most greatly to be condemned in the book, as a public offence against reason and piety, and an injustice even to the unhappy author, is the publication of a fragmentary essay "on a future state," in which the most dreadful and hopeless doctrines of mere materialism are plainly advocated. The author, after contemplating the circumstances of material organization, and also the circumstance of death, proceeds to the conclusion that the common observer of such things must lose all hope that the dead do not cease to be; and he has the awful temerity to add, that "the natural philosopher, in addition to the sensations common to all men inspired by the event of death, believes that he sees with more certainty that it is attended with the annihilation of sentiment and thought." This is very dreadful, and reason and justice at once pronounce that under no circumstances should such statements be published as the writing of one who, were he alive, would possibly have resisted such publication. Think how fearful the result would be if every idle thought of a daringly speculative man's mind were published. Some there are so wanting in inward delicacy that they scruple not to write down whatever they think, though they have enough of delicacy towards others to shrink

from the publication of what they have written. It is very ill treatment of the memory of such persons to publish the written fragments of their worst thoughts. But in the case of Mr. Shelley, it seems clear that he repented him of his impious materialism; for in another tract, that "on life," which precedes that "on a future state," in the compilation of the book of Mrs. Shelley, but which appears to have followed it in the history of the author's mind, he says— "The shocking absurdities of the popular philosophy of mind and matter, its fatal consequences in morals, and their violent dogmatism concerning the source of all things, had early conducted me to materialism. This materialism is a seducing system to young and superficial minds. It allows its disciples to talk, and dispenses them from thinking. But I was discontented with such a view of things as it afforded; man is a being of high aspirations, looking both before and after, whose thoughts wander through eternity, disclaiming alliance with transcience and decay, incapable of imagining to himself annihilation; existing but in the future and the past; being not what he is, but what he has been, and shall be. Whatever may be his true and final destination, there is a spirit within him at enmity with nothingness and dissolution."

What can be a greater outrage upon common sense and common justice than to publish, *fol-*

lowing this, as the work of the same hand, a tract full of the worst common-places of materialism as applied to the subject of life beyond the grave? Is it not evident, from the above passage, that the mind of the man had outgrown this pernicious folly? And is it the part of a friend to drag such offensiveness from some nook where its author had perhaps forgotten it, and thus to thrust it before the public, bringing the scorn of the wise upon his judgment, and the abhorrence of the pious upon his irreligion? Such a publication does Shelley grievous wrong; and he, alas! with all the enthusiasm of his feeling for the beautiful, and all the taste and elegance of his scholarship, was not a man whose life and writings can afford to bear more of reproach than is their just due.*

Having said thus much of the new volumes of her late husband's writings which Mrs. Shelley

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* Compare with Mr. Shelley's reflections on man as a mental being the stately and dazzling Christian eloquence of Sir Thomas Browne:—"The sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death makes a folly of posthumous memory. God, who only can destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or our names, hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustration, and to hold long subsistence seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave; solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature."

has published, it is fair to add, that they contain some translations from Plato written with much spirit and elegance, and in far more correct English than the original essays. And, besides these translations, there are many letters from Italy, of which the descriptive parts are more delightful than any other prose writing I have seen respecting the beauties of nature, the remains of antiquity, and the treasures of art, in that sunny land.

MATHEWS, THE COMEDIAN.

THERE is really not less instruction than entertainment to be derived from a view of the life and character of Mathews, the comedian, such as has lately been exposed to the beholding public.† But the public rushes on, considering nothing. It is not here intended to maintain that four volumes about the late worthy comedian may not be about four times as much as should in reason have been said upon the subject; nor can I pretend, O most excellent listeners, that for your benefit I have read these four volumes, seeking amid the chaff and straw

† Four volumes of memoirs of the late C. Mathews, have been recently published by his widow. The execution of the work is generally admitted to be very creditable to the abilities of that lady.

for grains of wisdom, or of innocent mirthfulness, to lay before you. No; I am about to talk to you concerning an essay in the December number of *Blackwood*,* upon the last two volumes of the published memoirs of Mathews—an essay written in a spirit most congenial with the subject—for it combines sensible, judicious observation of real things, with a humorous turn of mind, and a ready sense of the ludicrous.

Poor Mathews was wanting in that sort of intelligence and discretion which enables a man to retain the fruits of singular talents, considerable industry, and a fair portion of good fortune; but in other respects he appears to have added a great deal of good sense, good feeling, and good conduct, to his wonderful genius for extracting the ludicrous out of ordinary materials, and his extraordinary ability in conveying these impressions of the ludicrous to others. Mathews was a man fit for any society, having in him that true spirit of the gentleman which accommodates itself to the regulations and proprieties of every class. In the highest society he could be deferential without being abject; and in the lowest he could be natural and kind, without rude familiarity or grossness. In short, he had common sense and good taste, and was, there-

* Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine for December, 1839.

fore, above *affectation* of any kind, though, of all men that ever lived, probably none could put on the manners of another with such complete success as he.

It is curious to observe the difference between the exaggerations of Mathews, and of those in the present day who attempt the same mode of surprising and pleasing. He throws his exaggeration into the right place. He imagines a hot-tempered man in a fidget, and when by the force of his genius he puts you in sympathy with that sort of being, on he goes, and any amount of exaggeration appropriate to that mood becomes really natural. We are heartily amused because it is so natural. This I say in reference to his letters, which abound with descriptions and allusions most pleasantly ludicrous, even when the matters under narration are anything but agreeable in themselves.

And here is the philosophy worthy of being observed. No doubt much depends upon natural disposition, and not one in five thousand could manage to extract the humorous out of the unpleasant, and to *behave accordingly*, as Mathews did; but surely it would be exceedingly worth while to try. If, instead of allowing peevishness or sullenness to gain possession of us under circumstances of annoyance and wrong, we could contrive to be patient with it—to do all that common sense and moderation suggest by way of redress—and, failing that, to try to make

merry even with the unreasonableness that we might not unreasonably complain of—this would be worthy of a philosopher. This Mathews did from a felicity of nature. Not that he himself was within himself always cheerful. Alas! poor Mathews enjoyed no such perpetual sunshine. He often suffered deep depression, but he had a manly elasticity, by means of which he rose from this at once upon the wings of his mirthful genius. He neither whimpered nor whined, as some poor creatures do who pretend to genius and low spirits. He took another method—he *worked.* Mathews was an Englishman, every inch of him.

The writer in *Blackwood* says—"To add to the other discomforts of this man of pleasantry, he was almost a constant sufferer from bodily indisposition. When he had not a broken arm he had a rheumatism; when he had cured a fractured leg, he got a fever to supply its annoyance; when all else was well, he was regularly visited by some strange torture of the tongue, which swelled to an unusual extent, and alternately threatened dumbness and strangulation. At last he broke his hip for a permanent occupation; and it employed him during the rest of his days." Even under the torment of the tongue he wrote cheerfully, and made merry with the curiously contradictory opinions of his physicians.

"Mathews," says the *Blackwodian*, "reminds us of the story of Carlini, the memorable mimic,

who, going to a physician to complain of a desperate dejection, received for answer that if he wanted to recover from it he ought to go and laugh at Carlini! He seems to have been singularly assailed by mental depression at a time when he was amusing the world. In Dublin he writes to his wife—" your letters are a great solace to me, for in my blue devil fits my fiend is ingenious in tormenting, and I am sure to brood on all sorts of imaginary evils."

Mathews had a queer sort of quick sagacity (which is often found in humorous people) in discovering that some trouble or perplexity was at hand, and bearing down upon him. He did not then begin to curse and swear, or fume and fret, but used to say that he " smelt a misery;" and he had an odd lachrymose sort of attendant at the theatre, who, it seems, *loved* " a misery," and used thereby to provoke the mirth of his master.

But the blessing of Mathews's mirth was, that it had nothing cold or spiteful or rancorous in it; and, better still, it was never reckless, never sneering at what religion venerates or decency respects. His was a kindly humour, one of the greatest of gifts, and far better than wit, which is in a great measure an art, and is seldom unmingled with bitterness or pride of some kind or another.

GARRICK.

As an example of the good sense and proper feeling of Mathews, apart from his profession as an actor and his character as a humourist, it will be worth while to quote a part of one of his letters respecting Garrick. He is defending him against the imputation of having been a mere money-maker and parsimonious. "So much," says he, "for contemporary biography. Davies, Murphy, and others, have all endeavoured, but with affected candour in their statements, to leave an impression of his meanness, vanity, and various other despicable qualities. Here (in the Garrick correspondence) we have evidence clear as the noon-day sun to the contrary. And observe the comments on the character of his future biographers (or libellers) from the great and good. I allude to the various observations on Murphy and Davies, two wretched actors, whose vanity induced them to believe that Garrick alone prevented their success. Yet even those men, while he was alive, repeatedly add their testimony to the universal admiration which he excited. Look at the repentance of those who quarrelled with him; observe the death-bed recantation of proud Mossop, an open foe to David, whose enmity he repaid by relieving his distresses—he dies, calling on God to bless him."

Better still than this is the commentary upon it of the writer in *Blackwood.* Here it is:—

"All this is well said, and justly said. It is true that Garrick's fame is now not much to any one. A man who has 'slept well' for three-fourths of a century may fairly henceforth sleep in peace. Yet there is some satisfaction in believing that soon or late, justice will be done to every one. A race of feeble authors and needy actors who continually begged from Roscius during his life, attempted to make money of their own bitterness, by scribbling memoirs of him when he was in his grave. His reluctance to pamper these paltry people with money, was his crime; and Foote, and other profligates of the same school, who never kept a shilling nor deserved to have had one, employed themselves in railing at the parsimony of a man who by his mere talents had made a handsome fortune—lived like a gentleman, while they were swindling every body—kept up a rank for his profession which it had never known before—associated with the first men of the land for ability, learning, and station—was the friend of Burke, Johnson, the great Chatham, Earl Camden, Reynolds, and a crowd of others, forming the best society of Europe—and, after all this, at his death left an opulent establishment to his widow. The man who did these things might be prudent, but he was the reverse of mean or parsimonious; in fact, he was evi-

dently liberal where liberality could be well placed. Johnson and Goldsmith knew this by long experience, though coxcombs and swindlers, drudges and drones, might have felt that his purse-strings were too tight for them to dip their hands in."

There is something very wholesome in this kind of writing, and it is very applicable to many persons belonging to what is called "the literary world" at the present time. This commentator might, however, have gone further than to say merely that the man who did as Garrick did "might be prudent." He must have been prudent, or he never could have enjoyed such eminent respectability as a member of society, along with such prodigious applause as an actor. There are wretched people who affect to despise this prudence, because they have not the virtue to practise it. There are some who appear to think that, because they have rather more genius and learning than the common crowd, and a knack of writing, they are therefore to be absolved from all those rules of prudence, punctuality, and justice, which govern grocers and the like, who desire to be respectable. This is mere impudence at the best, and very often but a flimsy cover for mere swindling. There are people who habitually try to get money beforehand on a specific promise of work to be performed, and then totally neglect the work, upon the plea that their spirits

are so harassed, and their genius so troubled by the vulgar wants and difficulties of life, that they cannot do what they undertook to do. These people are swindlers; and the fact is, in nine cases out of ten, that they have, by pampering themselves with indulgence at the expense of others, created that incapacity for work which they attribute, forsooth, to the peculiar irritability of mind which attends on genius! These are the people who become calumniators of the prudent who have refused to comply with their unjust and preposterous requests, and these are they who, on the other hand, pour out their nasty adulation upon one another as a matter of trade, while in their private talk they treat with ridicule and contempt that which they cheat the public into buying by their praise. Thus it happens that in London a certain sort of swiftly-produced literature and of systematic swindling go on continually, hand in hand.

LIVING ABROAD.

After having had so many talks with my much-esteemed listeners, I doubt not that they have found out that laborious laugh-makers are no favourites with me. I love intelligent seriousness, and artless cheerfulness, believing the latter to be the greatest blessing, after a dutiful

and religious heart, that a human creature can possess. But what is commonly and coarsely esteemed under the name of fun I do not relish, but rather detest. These things being so, it will excite no surprise when I say that such things as "Comic Annuals," "Hood's Own," and other toilsomely constructed incentives to "broad grins," are to me, very irksome, and even distressing. I have, however, chanced to see some specimens of a new book by Mr. Hood, the public jester, which book gives an account of a family journey up the Rhine, and I have found therein matter both agreeable and instructive. I find, indeed, the usual vice of exaggeration, which seems to pervade and permeate all our lighter literature of the present day, even as chemists were wont to say the caloric fluid pervades and permeates all material substance; but, waving that, which appears to be an evil hopeless and incurable, there will be found much common sense and shrewd observation along with the jocularity of the journey "up the Rhine."

With respect to living in Germany, or rather in the towns upon the Rhine, for the sake of retrenchment, one of the persons introduced says, very sensibly, that "on the same plan" retrenchment might be almost as surely effected in London. "Lodge," says he, "in a second floor, dispense with a carpet, have as little and as plain furniture as possible, burn wood in a

German stove, keep a cheap country servant, buy inferior meat, *chats* (a sort of potato), and rye bread, drink cape and table beer, see no company, dress how you please, *above all, go to market, as you must do here*, with your ready money in your hand, then sum up at the year's end, and I verily believe the utmost saving, by coming to such a place as this (Coblentz), would be some 10*l.* or 20*l.*, to set off against all the deprivations and disadvantages of expatriation."

There is no doubt that this is the rational and true account of the matter respecting residence abroad generally, so far as the matters brought under observation are concerned. But the fact is that the "deprivations and disadvantages of expatriation," great as they are, are held as nothing in comparison with the mortification of honest retrenchment at home. To live as above described, is endurable at Coblentz, because pride is not hurt by it. They who thus live have no more comforts than they might have in England at almost the same expense; but they are not afraid of being pitied by their friends. They do not suspect, when they see two persons talking in an under tone in their company, that they and their *retrenchment* form the theme of the discourse. It is not so much, then, to arrive at cheapness, as to escape *the shame of poverty* (that preeminently British absurdity), that people whose object is merely retrenchment go abroad. But very many have

that object mixed up with others, such as the desire to see new scenes, to enjoy a finer climate, to study foreign languages, or to escape from cares and anxieties which have a local root. *Cœlum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt* is generally a true rule, but the mind is sometimes the prey of external circumstances, from which it is deemed prudent to flee.

TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES.

Among the various new-fangled devices with which people divert themselves to the prejudice of what is simple and honest, homely and just, and well adapted to the wear and tear of humanity, may be classed Temperance Societies and Total Abstinence Societies. These artificial substitutes for the wholesome restraint, and decent yet comfortable moderation which religious morality enjoins, are becoming so rife in the land, and take such hold even upon very well meaning persons among the unwary, that I conceive it is high time for all who exercise a wise forethought to lift up their voices in the way of warning against this extravagance. Temperance is an excellent thing, but of almost all excellent things there are spurious imitations, and I am afraid that the abstinence which arises from pledges made to a "society,"—especially when accompanied with all the parade and

affectations, of these new associations—the medals, and ribands, and processions, and congregational tea-drinkings, and so forth—is an exceedingly spurious imitation of that rational and manly forbearance which is taught in the Bible, and ought to be observed as a Christian duty. The fact is, that the abstinence about which so much parade, of a very gaudy and effeminate character, is now made, ought to be looked upon as the mere "Brummagem ware" of morality. It is a thing for show, and not for use—at least, for that permanent use which alone is worthy of being cultivated with reference to the moral habits of mankind.

Temperance is an excellent thing, but chiefly so as one of the fruits of a Christian reasonableness. We must look to the root of the matter. We must see whence temperance springs, and if we find it to spring from a spirit of vanity, and *combination*, and excitement of the imagination, we may be quite sure that it is very little to be depended upon. The temperance of the "societies" is, in my judgment, like the corn in the parable, which fell in stony places, and sprang up quickly, because there was no deepness of earth; but when the sun was up it was scorched, and because *it had no root* it withered away.

Temperance is an excellent thing, but it is to be recollected that extremes meet, and the excess even of temperance becomes intemperance.

Drunkenness is indeed a very gross and abominable extravagance, but in *unreasonable* efforts to avoid it, we may run into an extravagance of mind and manners, which, if not so gross, is yet not unlikely to be even more deleterious to the general powers of the mind, and more subversive of that Christian truth and soberness, wherein alone the moral virtues can safely anchor. Moreover, we know from experience of the nature of the human frame, both of mind and body, that all violent extremes are prone to react into their opposites, and no rational man of mature sense, and much observation, can behold the ostentatious restraints and fantastical self-denials of the " total abstinence" gentry, without a reasonable suspicion that this will ere long recoil into reckless indulgence of the degrading appetite for drink.

Temperance is an excellent thing, but abstinence is not temperance. Our very enjoyments are permitted to us, more or less, as trials, and we show weakness rather than virtue in running away from that which we should meet and master. It is in some sort a duty to partake temperately and thankfully of that which Providence has bestowed upon us, and among other things, of wine, which maketh glad the heart. And if we would make men what they ought to be, we should teach them to *govern* their natural desires, and not to pretend to extinguish them; for as to doing so truly, and in earnest, it is a

sheer impossibility, as much as by taking thought to add a cubit to one's stature.

Temperance is an excellent thing, but idolatry of temperance is not only folly, but sin; and it so happens that of the multitude many are weak, and can retain but one strong mental sentiment and occupation of thought. Now to such weak persons, who have bound themselves by an "abstinence pledge," it is so great a matter that it engrosses every thing. It is, for the time, their faith—their religion. They worship their own self-imposed restraint. This is not so bad as the worship of pieces of wood, or stone, or oxen, or insects; but it is a species of idolatry nevertheless, and adverse to Christian piety. This is no fanciful view of "abstinence" fanaticism. I have been assured that a set of people in America have become so wrapt in the glorification of abstinence from spirits, that they have changed their hymns so as to answer to that new religion, and instead of singing

"Salvation 'tis a joyful sound,"

as they used to do, they sing

"Tee-total 'tis a joyful sound."

This is very shocking, but they who have looked earnestly upon poor human nature will allow that it is not unnatural.

No rational person can, we think, considerately read the accounts of the "temperance

progress" which reach us from Ireland, without the apprehension that the poor people of that country, who flock in thousands to the Rev. Father Mathew, the "Apostle of Temperance," as he is somewhat irreverently called, are merely the victims of a new superstition, whereof they had but too much before. Except from America, where they have no religious system, guarded and enforced by regulated authority, and from Hindostan, where awful and appalling rites of blind superstition are still observed, we have not heard in modern times of any such *multitudinous* extravagance as has been lately witnessed in the Irish cities of Limerick and Waterford.* Many thousands assembled in these cities, who, having prepared themselves, by getting shockingly drunk, set off to the Rev. Father to take the temperance vow, and receive the Priest's benediction, and some sort of medal or token, which each abstinence devotee is supplied with, and doubtless looks upon as a kind of charm, according to the common delusion of that sensitive and superstitious race, the Irish Romanist peasantry. Who can suppose that anything like rational temperance has taken root in the hearts and minds of these poor benighted creatures? No one. They have rushed upon the "temperance pledge," as upon their little pilgrimages, and processions round "holy

* Written in January 1840.

wells," and penances of various kinds, from walking with peas in their shoes, to hair shirts, and self-inflicted flagellation. But as all these penitential exercises but give them courage to commence a new set of sins, to be similarly expiated in due time, so will the "abstinence" be probably succeeded (for the most part) by a yet greater desperation of drinking than they have yet ventured upon. Very soon there may be expected to be two sets in operation, one drinking deep to make amends to their appetites for the late abstinence, and the other vowing and refraining in order to make amends to their souls for past and future sins of intoxication. Alas! in all this there is no sound root of virtue.

There are not a few who look upon these abstinence associations as a capital device, an excellent trick for bringing in the people to good habits of sobriety. Surely this is somewhat odious as well as unwise. Why is it that they who pretend to religion, and sense, and honour, will yet condescend to crooked paths, and stratagems, and cunning ways of doing that which it is meet to do openly and without disguise. Many things there are very good if obtained in the right way, but which are tainted by an ill mode of obtainment. Why are people to be tricked into that which they ought to do out of a serious sense of duty, and which is chiefly valuable because it is an exercise of duty founded upon rational and durable principles.

It seems to be lamentably forgotten in these days that there are two kinds of wisdom, both of which seem intellectual and fit for human purposes, but of which there is but one that does not immediately corrupt and turn to evil. Mere cunning and dexterous delusion, may produce a seemingly good change, but it is no more than appearance. It has not in it the wholesome life which keeps away corruption. "Who," says St. James, "is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you, let him show out of a good conversation his words with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is *earthly*, *sensual*, *devilish*. For, where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first *pure*, then peaceable; gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and *good fruits*, without partiality, and without *hypocrisy*."

The earthly and sensual wisdom (for wisdom or ability it is admitted to be) may be considered as represented in the ordinary affairs of life by cunning and trick, by management and *tours d'addresse*, while the nobler wisdom which begins in purity, and is full of good fruits, is that which addresses itself to the best faculties of mankind, which appeals to men as beings conscious of what is religious and what is rea-

sonable, having a sense of duty and a sense of honour, and capable of being persuaded towards what is good by an appeal to the first principles of good, which few are so depraved as not inwardly to respect, however they may pretend otherwise. O that men would treat their fellow creatures as men, capable of good and worthy of being respected for such capacity, instead of using them as tools, and imposing upon their folly, or taking advantage of their vices, for the accomplishment of selfish purposes. Man is a strangely-mingled web of good and evil, but the habit of those whose wisdom is "earthly" is to give exercise to the worser part, by constantly operating upon it, for the effecting of their own ends, until at last the nobleness of men's nature is lost through desuetude.

THE VULGAR.

Not often will there be met with a livelier description of the vulgar, than that given by a French tourist, who has lately published his observations. The unhappy traveller finds himself in a diligence in Brittany, and proceeds to say that never—no, never—was he in such vile company. "These people talked continually of themselves, and what belonged to themselves —their wives—their children—their pocket

handkerchiefs, *in the buying of which they had cheated the mercer by a franc in the dozen.* The sign characteristic of a man of this class is, that whatever has the honour to belong to him must needs be super-excellent. His wife is worth all the other wives in the world—his dozen of handkerchiefs is the first dozen in existence. Never had I seen the human species in a baser light: these people *rejoiced in their own vileness* as a pig does in his mire. In order to be a deputy one must pay his court to fellows like these. Are these the Kings of America?"

And this is the feeling of people of genteel taste in France, where, with double our British population, they have about one eighth part of the number of electors! What a nice affair it must be to ask to be made a Member of Parliament in Finsbury or in Glasgow? Some civet, good apothecary! Nevertheless let no man be deterred from doing what is honest, and likely to be useful, through the impulse of mere disgust. Perhaps these people may be taught better, even by that process of solicitation which alone a real gentleman will adopt. But to return to our Frenchman, and his companions in the public carriage.

In the hope, he says, "of extracting some *facts* from them, and thus diminishing my disgust, I touched on politics: they all began in praise of liberty, and this in a style sufficient to sicken one with the name, making it to consist

in *the power of hindering their neighbours from doing what they themselves don't happen to like.* Hereupon they had discussions among themselves of an unutterable meanness. I should renew my disgust by detailing them. I would have consented to be in prison for a fortnight for the pleasure of giving each of them a hearty drubbing with my cane. They explained to me that when the elections came round, they *certes* will not send to Paris an *orgueilleux*. I understand that they gave that title to Deputies who are not over zealous about getting their boots and breeches for them from the tradesmen they employ in the capital."

All this *Matthew Bramble*ish vexation and disgust is very amusing, and so is a little further touch at politics. It is fine sport, says he, that "in order to have a voice in those great questions that are to decide the fate of Europe a hundred years hence, it should be necessary to begin by cultivating such animals. As to the pleasure of my journey, how different had I fallen in with five legitimists. Their principles could not have been more absurd—more hostile to the general weal—and, instead of being wounded every moment, I should have enjoyed all the charms of a polished conversation."

My judicious listeners will not fail to have remarked in these observations something eminently French, and not a little repulsive to the moral sense, even amid amusing liveliness and

vivacious description. The soul of all that this gay observer says is selfishness; and his sentiments of absolute contempt appear to be unsoftened by any touch of sympathy, or any wish to improve and elevate those whose narrowness of mind and coarseness had offended him. The key to this may be found in the fact that this French hater of vulgarity is not a Christian, but a disciple of *Voltaire*—one who makes *the agreeable* his God, and thinks that the habits of Greek and Roman heathens, and even of brute beasts, in the last awful scenes of life, are much wiser than the vulgar devoutness which still prevails, at least in some degree, in the French provinces. The Parisian method of dying alone, and in an inner chamber, without shocking one's acquaintances, or being shocked by their presence, is in his opinion not only more *à la mode*, but far more philosophical, and, in short, *better*.

Thus it is that very often in France the best manners are coupled with principles the most dangerous and detestable. In happier England we shall seldom meet the courtesy, the good nature, and the good taste which constitute gentlemanly manners, apart from a decent reverence for Christian faith and principles.

The grossest of all English vulgarity is to be found in the large towns, and more knowingly and impudently offensive in London than in any other place. It is not often, indeed, that the

man who is not of the vulgar class is led, or forced into contact with it, unless voluntarily, and this perhaps constitutes the great difference between the metropolis and towns of less multitudinous enormity. But there are occasions when the full tide of coarse, loud, glaring, vulgar impudence, comes down upon a man as it were unawares, and very revolting it must be allowed to be. A frosty Sunday in the London Parks is a hideous and sickening sight. Ice seems to have a special attraction for the thoroughly vulgar. On comes the enormous mass, tramp, tramp, *sans* intermission, the whole day. Everything that one would wish to see kept trim and neat is wantonly crushed, battered, smashed, or ground into dust, by the innumerable feet that come pounding along. And then such a horrid gabble—such utterance of slang, such swagger, such puffing of filthy tobacco smoke from those caves which seem the natural homes of what is nasty, namely, the mouths of the tobacco-smokers; and then the over-dressed young women too, with their horrid voices, and their cumbrous flirtations! It is too bad.

The truth of the matter is, that the mob ought to be kept out of the Parks on such occasions. Great would be the outcry doubtless, and enormous would be the noise of Radical spouters; but the mob itself has enough of common sense to know that it ought to be kept out of

the Parks, and would really respect the authorities more on account of the restriction than on account of the license. The mob knows its own coarse and destructive habits, and takes for granted that the authorities know them too, and that an indulgence of coarse, destroying propensities *is intended* when admittance of the mob is granted. The damage done to the Parks is very great. The frost, which hardens all alike, and obliterates distinctions between walks and garden ground, seems to invite the mob into shrubberies, where it breaks and tramples down, like any other destructive creature. Then it crosses the ice to the "islands,"* which are at other times protected by the surrounding water, and there, too, goes on the same process of smashing and trampling down. All this is mere license in evil, and ought not to be allowed.

At the least the parts of the Parks which are not thoroughfares, should be closed during the hours of morning service on Sundays. It is not only revolting as a matter of taste, but shameful on much higher grounds, to see the masses of people trooping and trampling along to the ice in the Parks, and absolutely obstructing

* The interior or garden of St. James's Park is referred to, one of the most beautiful public walks that any city in Europe can boast. I could wish there were flowers, as well as flowering shrubs, but, that I fear, nothing would prevent mischievous people from plucking and stealing them.

the way of more sober and decent people who are going to church. There ought to be order and government in these matters. The people would like the ruling powers all the better for it. They despise the rulers who allow them to do mischief, and mischief they will do if not restrained.

In this respect matters are rapidly getting worse and worse. Some years ago the vulgar torrent in the Parks on Sundays was chiefly composed of shopmen, 'prentices, young Jew dealers in quills and old clothes, and the like; but now hulking fellows in greasy jackets, who will not pay "the west end" even the compliment of a shaven beard, or a clean face, when coming to visit it, tramp along, some with skates, and some without them, to the ice in the Parks. This is an exercise of their *privileges*. The Parks are public property. They forget that public property has not been decorated in order to be destroyed.

There ought to be places provided for the mob to amuse itself in, where it might seek its heart's content, without annoying the minds and senses of those who are not of the mob. It is (even upon economical grounds) perfectly absurd to ornament a place for the benefit of those who delight in what is smooth, and trim, and elegant, and then to let in upon it a barbarian host, whose delight is to deface, and tear down, and smash, and destroy.

What is most strange and anomalous of all in this eventful history is, that some human creatures, whom education and habits of decent intercourse ought to have civilised, frequent these places even when the mob has obtained possession of them, and seem to have a kind of insane satisfaction in exhibiting upon the ice, in the very midst of the prodigious gabble, and trampling, and pushing, and smoke-puffing of ten thousand mannerless boobies and blackguards of all sorts, sizes, and complexions. How inconceivable is such a taste! Far rather would I betake myself to Avamska or Popova, a thousand miles northward of Tobolsk, or fix my dwelling amid the eternal ice and howling storms of Cape Ceverovostochnoi, within a hop-step-and-jump of the North Pole. Solitude, silence, cold—existence like that of ice or adamant—were better, far better, than the jangling and the jarring, the rude, trampling, roaring, smoke-vomiting insolence of a London mob.

But I would not have this mob left to its violence, and grossness, and *want of respect* for any thing and every thing. Formerly it had some respect for government—too much dashed with fear—but that is now almost all gone. It lacks a wholesome but still kindly restraint. It should be taught reverence. Institutions and rules should be devised, to create and publicly mark a distinction between such as paid respect to the decencies and proprieties of life, and such

as did not. The mob should be made to find out that ruffianism is bad policy. It should be taught that it is wicked. These things are too much neglected, and swaggering impudence becomes more and more the fashion, because, in these bustling, puffing, noisy times of physical force and mechanical impetuosity, swaggering impudence is for the most part more esteemed than modest merit.

I had rather, with William Wordsworth, contemplate a quiet old beggar, by the way side—so he were but quiet—and extract philosophy from his use and occupation, than look on at any mob, well-dressed or ill-dressed, that ever crushed through an assembly room, or crowded upon Cockney ice. Regard, for a moment, the "Old Cumberland Beggar:"

"Him from my childhood have I known, and then
He was so old, he seems not older now;
He travels on, a solitary man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering horseman-traveller does not throw
With careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops, that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old man's hat; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the rein,
Watches the aged beggar with a look
Sidelong and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him, that he may pass.
The postboy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind; and if, thus warn'd,
The old man does not change his course, the boy

Turns with less noisy wheels to the road side,
And passes gently by—without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.
*** * * * ***
But deem not this man useless," &c. &c. &c.

Useless! no, by all that's gentle, and suggestive of gentle thoughts, the "old man" is anything but useless. At present he has served as a tranquillizer of the mind, which had grown passionately fretful with contemplation of the noisy coarseness of a London crowd.

BRITISH MACHINERY.

Sir George Murray, who, although a soldier, is not only one of the most graceful and elegant, but also one of the most ingenious of our public speakers, has lately been addressing the Manchester people with infinite skill. Of course, when a gentleman who has the gift of eloquence wishes to ingratiate himself with the good folks of Manchester, he must praise the wonderful achievements of steam, and steam machinery, in the manufacture of cotton goods, and this has been done by Sir George in the most felicitous manner. "I have gone round, "he said, "with my friends to various mills and manufactories, where the industry and intelligence of the community are exercised with so much advantage to themselves, to the country, and to every portion of the globe. I have seen much to

interest, and still more to instruct. I have seen in operation the greatest and most gigantic power with which we are acquainted, acting with the most perfect smoothness and regularity, without noise and without vibration, extending in various directions, governed by reason and guided by ingenuity, operating upon the nicest, most delicate, and even flimsiest fabrics; and yet acting with equal success upon the rudest substances, upon the most heavy and apparently impenetrable masses. I have seen and traced that great power operating in every direction in which it is conceivable that motion could be guided, and I have seen it acting for nothing but good, always working out the same end—the comfort and convenience of the human race, uniting the interests of the remotest nations with those of the British empire, and conveying to China, to America, and to every quarter of the world, the productions of this great and mighty power."

It may be surmised that the steam-engine machinery which Sir George visited had been not only fresh fed with oil just before his arrival, but had also been given a soothing and sedative draught for the occasion. Smoothness and regularity such as he describes, must have been witnessed and admired by all who have inspected our really wondrous machinery, but in finding its action to be without vibration and without noise, Sir George was singularly fortunate. He

is very happy, however, in expressing that which really does strike one with the utmost marvel in these great manufactories, namely, the simple action of a great beam, moving up and down, which is all that the expanding and contracting faculties of steam effect in the first instance, distributing motive power in every direction, and in every variety of complicated form, circular, elliptical, perpendicular, sloping, or even zig-zag; in fine, as Sir George says, in every direction in which it is conceivable that motion could be guided.

There is something very lofty and noble in the idea of these wondrous operations of art, uniting Great Britain with the comforts and conveniences of all parts of the earth, and thus giving to the whole world an interest in the continuance and prosperity of our industrious ingenuity. This is the finest view of the subject which eloquence can take; but surely it is something too much to say that in these operations of machinery, and all their attendant circumstances, there is nothing but good. Perhaps Sir George felt that it was not judicious for him to dwell upon any but the more elevating and pleasing views of manufacturing industry, considering the object he had in view;* but it cannot be doubted that, if cir-

* That of being returned to Parliament as member for the town.

cumstances had led the accomplished Baronet to look at the subject in another and not less true aspect, no man in England could have described with more persuasive pathos than himself, the injurious effects of the manufacturing system upon the moral health and the domestic happiness of the working people of this country.

No one, I am sure, would be more likely than the eloquent speaker I have been quoting to feel and to deplore the complete alteration in all the feelings and habits formerly attached to home, which has grown out of the practice of spending all the long day from morn till night in these huge factories, and then going to the dingy dwelling in a dingy town, rather as a mere shelter and brief resting place from toil, than to the seat of a family, with family duties to be performed, and family affections to be enjoyed. If the mother be at home the daughters are sure to be at the mill, earning some money indeed, and providing for themselves the means of being much better dressed; that is, dressed in more finery, on Sundays than otherwise they could pretend to; but alas! for their minds and morals. And then the sons—the hardy, blithsome boys that used to be—what of them?

"The boy, where'er he turns,
Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
Among the clouds, and roars through the ancient woods;

Or when the sun is shining in the east,
Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the school
Of his attainments? No; but with the air
Fanning his temples, under heaven's blue arch.
His raiment whiten'd o'er with cotton flakes
Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
Creeping his gait, and cowering, his lip pale,
His respiration quick and audible;
And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
Could break from out those languid eyes, or a blush
Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,
Is that the countenance, and such the port
Of no mean being? One who should be clothed
With dignity befitting his proud hope;
Who in his very childhood should appear
Sublime from present purity and joy!
The limbs increase, but this organic frame,
So gladsome in its motions, is become
Dull; to the joy of her own motions dead;
And even the touch, so exquisitely pour'd
Through the whole body, with a languid will
Performs its functions; rarely competent
To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
The gentle visitations of the sun,
Or lapse of liquid element—by hand,
Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—perceived.
Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
On such foundations?"

But this nicely-observing poet is not insensible to the glories which attend upon the great triumphs of art in assisting the operations of human labour.

In the following passage, he will be found expressing exultation like that which Sir George Murray appears to have felt at the triumphant achievements of machinery, but he accompanies this exultation with views befitting a high moralist:—

" Yet do I exult,
Casting reserve away, exult to see
An intellectual mastery exercised
O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,
A perseverance fed; almost a soul
Imparted—to brute matter. I rejoice,
Measuring the force of those gigantic powers,
That by the thinking mind have been compell'd
To serve the will of feeble-bodied Man.
For with the sense of admiration blends
The animating hope, that time may come
When, strengthen'd, yet not dazzled, by the might
Of this dominion over nature gain'd,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need;
Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes—
Tyre, by the margin of the sounding waves—
Palmyra, central in the desert—fell;
And the arts died by which they had been raised.
Call Archimedes from his buried tomb
Upon the grave of vanish'd Syracuse,
And feelingly the sage shall make report
How insecure, how baseless in itself,
Is the philosophy whose sway depends
On mere material instruments; how weak
Those arts and high inventions, if unpropp'd
By virtue. He with sighs of pensive grief,
Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
That not the slender privilege is theirs
To save themselves from blank forgetfulness!"

If, indeed, we could attain to such a point of excellent arrangement in society that all the wonderful arts devised in modern times for the assistance of manual labour, might go in mitigation of the toil of the labouring community, without taking away the means of their subsistence—if thus they might be enabled by greater

mental cultivation, and by a study of what is *good* in thought, word, and deed, to rise above the condition of mere human animals, and to become religious, reasonable, and refined—it were indeed a glorious consummation! But alas! the temper of the present time affords no hope of this. A pert, prying, small conceited littleness, preys upon the public spirit, like vile animalculæ on a noble body, at once degrading and enfeebling it. *Machinery* in these times may be great, but *mind* is frittered away upon mere contrivance—it is drivelling: and manners have become an unpleasing compound of the frivolous and the dull.

Let us gather from the forcible, yet gentle exposition of Sir George Murray himself, what he thinks of the working of the present popular spirit upon the public mind in Manchester, and the remedy for the moral evils which exist among the people. After describing, as we have related, his admiration of the power of the steam-engine, he proceeded thus:—

"But I have seen another power in operation, which does not work with smoothness and regularity, nor under the guidance of reason, but with a jarring and a discordant noise—which does not work always for good, but often for mischief—which does not effect the close union of distant nations, but disturbs the tranquillity of our own—which does not bind together interests that have a common, just, and natural

connection, but exerts a force which, when used for an ill purpose, is sufficient to tear asunder the British empire. The power to which I allude, is the power of agitation. No words are more dangerous to the welfare of the country and the interests of the people, than the words ' agitate—agitate—agitate.' I complain not of agitation in connection with such a subject as the Reform Bill, but I complain that it should become the constant habit of the people. Nothing can be more injurious to the British empire than this agitation, which some individuals, far more for their own interest than for that of the country, exert themselves to prolong. No man can be more strongly impressed than I am with the value of education, but it must not be a one-sided education. The principles of religion must be entwined with those of intellectual improvement, in order that education may be complete and successful. Unless sound religious impressions are conveyed, education cannot be advantageous, either to the individual who receives it, or to the community of which he is a member. By withholding, or by weakening, sound religious impressions in early life, the foundation is laid for impressions of a superstitious nature, whenever the individual encounters misfortune or sickness, and when death approaches. Without religious impressions early conveyed, the great precepts of our divine religion, which require a man to reve-

rence his Maker, and love his neighbour, have no sufficiently strong hold of the soul to carry him through life with satisfaction to himself, or with advantage to others."

I wish there were reasonable grounds for hope that the people of Manchester would lay such remarks as these to their hearts.

MATRIMONY AND DIVORCE.

A WRITER who describes himself as a barrister of Gray's Inn, has put forth a tractate upon the subject of divorce, herein imitating the somewhat renowned John Milton, but not quite coming up to the force and picturesqueness of that poetical republican's style. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the Gray's Inn gentleman possesses those qualities as a writer which are likely enough to make him popular in the present age, and in the present state of the public taste. He is very confident, very impetuous, and very liberally disdainful of all the "prejudices" which ecclesiastics and people of that sort have gathered out of an ancient book, called the Bible.

Our Gray's Inn philosopher divides all the married couples in England into three classes—not that he does this formally, for any such methodical statement of his case would be inconsistent with the impetuous flow of his de-

clamatory style—but persons of lower genius may be permitted to use the formality in humbly pursuing the business of analysis. The first class he describes are those who are perfectly content in their wedded condition; the second are those who are dissatisfied with their matrimonial lot, and thereupon—at least so far as the husbands are concerned—act with the same license as if they were bound by no matrimonial engagements; the third are the conscientious, who have made "mistaken matches," cases in which, as our philosopher has it, "the society of his legal wife affords the husband no gratification, and conscience keeps him from violating the law in search of it" (the gratification, it is to be supposed) "elsewhere."

Our moral philosopher being a barrister, it is to be understood, doubtless, that he uses the term "legal" wife for the greater caution; but it would have gratified natural curiosity had he explained what sort of distinction he had in his mind when he used this epithet. What sort of a wife is it that is not legal, especially where bigamy is certainly not intended to be alluded to?

But now to apply our philosopher's notion concerning what he calls "the law against divorce" to these three several classes. With respect to the first, the law, he modestly assures us, is a superfluous impertinence; with respect to the second, a mere nullity; and with respect

to the third, an edict for the oppression of the unfortunate.

This conclusion he arrives at *per saltum* in the third page, and feels so sure about the matter, that he repeats it more emphatically thus:—

"Viewed with reference to those who do not wish to separate, it is a command where none is wanting; viewed with reference to those whom neither human nor divine laws can bind, it is ludicrously impotent; and viewed with reference to the conscientious and ill-matched, it is a piece of absurd tyranny, inasmuch as it denies redress where redress would really prove a blessing."

This is a triumphant and most logical settlement of the question, and arrived at within three pages; for if the whole of the people to whom the Divorce Law can apply be divided into three parts, and if it be superfluous as regards the first part, impotent as regards the second, and absurdly tyrannical as regards the third, then it is most clear that, as regards the whole, it is a law worthy of condemnation.

But to us, much meditating upon all subjects of domestic interest, it may appear that our philosopher is considerably too hasty in his assumptions, and that he knows less of the genuine state and condition of mankind than even prejudiced ecclesiastics, who deduce their opinion of that state and condition from their

own observation and from those maxims of holy writ which apply, not to anything visionary, but to man as he really is.

The law of England which makes marriage indissoluble is not by any one held up as a thing so perfect but that inconvenience will occasionally arise from it. This is an accident of all law, and of every human device upon every subject. But it is very rash to conclude that it is superfluous to those who are content with their married condition. Who shall presume to affirm that this very contentment is, as to its steadiness and permanency, not very much dependent upon the inevitableness of the marriage tie when once entered into? It is true that the arbitrary imposition of a restraint often causes a wish for license which would not, perhaps, otherwise have existed; but—(such is the mingled texture of man's moral nature)—it is equally true that a voluntary adoption of a restraint, especially when believed to be on the side of virtue, keeps the desires from straying, and ensures, as far as may be, the constancy even of the will. Great as the blessing of regulated freedom undoubtedly is, and dreadful as have been the sufferings from its privation in certain great and notable cases, yet it may be taken as a truth which observation and experience will confirm, that in the general proceedings of mankind, small and great, domestic and public, the sum of fretfulness, discontent,

indecision, and remorse, arising from "the weight of too much liberty," is far greater in amount than that which restraint has ever inflicted.

> "Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
> And hermits are contented with their cells;
> And students with their pensive citadels:
> Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
> Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
> High as the highest peak of Furness Fells,
> Will murmur by the hour in fox-glove bells:
> In truth, the prison, unto which we doom
> Ourselves, no prison is."

In the ordinary practice of life there are thousands upon thousands who go on satisfied with their matrimonial condition because it is *settled* so, and cannot be unsettled; whereas, if there were a facility in the law for effecting a change, that change would be present to their thoughts, and they would long for it, and their contentment would be broken.

Next, with regard to those who violate their vows in disregard of laws both divine and human. It is rash, if not untrue, to affirm that the law of indissolubility of marriage is to them "a nullity." Are there no such things as repentance and amendment? Is human character so uniform that it must be *altogether* rebellious or *altogether* obedient? Certainly not. In the practice of society it is notorious there are many who, in respect of marriage vows, amongst other things, are partly faithful and partly unfaithful.

So strong is the impulse sometimes of erring passion and ungoverned licentiousness, that, did the law allow of dissolving matrimonial bonds, *that* would be done, and there could be no going back to that restricted domain of old love and duty, even were it desired. But as the case stands, though criminal license be indulged into the temporary violation of the matrimonial bond, yet, as that bond cannot be dissolved, it not only continues to be maintained in outward appearance, avoiding public scandal, and the consequences of notorious ill example, but it is oftentimes returned to, and maintained with honesty and comparative inward peace, though the unsullied consciousness of purity be gone. They who consider these things will not agree that even to the licentious, the difficulty of divorce, as by law established, is a mere "nullity," or "ludicrously impotent," as the Gray's Inn gentleman says it is.

As to the third class, or conscientious but ill-matched persons, it may certainly be questioned that the indissolubility of the matrimonial bond is "absurd tyranny," or that it may be fairly described as "denying redress." If a man be really conscientious, it is morally impossible that he should consider it *tyranny* to be obliged to keep the vow into which he has voluntarily entered. If he be disappointed, he may feel that he is unfortunate, but there is no tyranny in the case. Who complains of tyranny

when he suffers from ill health, or finds the residence disagreeable which he had deliberately chosen for the sake of enjoyment? But he wants "redress." This word is generally used to express amends or relief from wrong; but there is no wrong to complain of, unless the man complains of himself. Let it be that he wants relief—does he *deserve* to have it, in the form of dissolution of his matrimonial bond? That may well be doubted. What says the Church, that reviled adviser, who is yet so admirable in her wisdom? Marriage, says the Church, is not by any to be enterprised nor taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. Now, if this rule be followed, the indissolubility of the union follows in the train of consecutive reasonableness. The good of caution and discretion in contracting marriage is obvious, and it is certain that, even with the conscientious, nothing more tends to the exercise of this caution and discretion than the knowledge that the matrimonial union cannot be broken. Were there any facility for breaking it, how much *more* frequently would it not be undertaken "lightly or wantonly."

The really conscientious man, even if unfortunate in his married estate, will rest satisfied that the law to which he submits is not a tyranny, but a self-invited obligation; and that his just remedy lies in endeavouring to make the best

of his condition, and not in seeking to break through the restraint to which he has with righteous purpose bound himself.

So much for the three positions of our divorce-patronising philosopher. My apology for saying what I have ventured to say upon the subject is, that it so intimately concerns the *utile* and the *pulchrum* in the conduct of life and the practice of society.

REASONING AND RATIONALITY.

When one was at school, and learned logic, it was taught that the "essential difference" distinguishing man from other creatures was rationality, and man was defined a "rational animal." But surely it were more nearly to hit the truth if we defined him "a reasoning animal," for all men (not being in a state of idiocy or delirium) do reason in some sort, more or less; but comparatively few are rational. Rationality is one thing, and, if it were a general quality of mankind, then all who had equal knowledge would possess the same judgment of all things; but the ways and degrees of reasoning are infinitely various, some taking one set of circumstances into account, and some another, and seldom any two persons allowing exactly the *same* weight to all the circumstances which they weigh and balance in their process of

reasoning. But still they all, rightly or wrongly, in some fashion or another, obtain their notions, and govern their actions by the reasoning process.

If man were indeed uniformly a rational animal, it might be supposed, without excessive folly or extravagance, that society should be so arranged as to act in different parts with the discipline and regularity of soldiers, to the attainment of an admitted end, namely, the general benefit of the whole. In short, if the thing to be acted upon, or made use of in a new construction of society, were uniform, a uniform system might possibly be set in action. We calculate upon a great machine acting steadily, because we know that certain pieces of wood and iron, shaped in a certain way, and set in motion in a particular direction, will inevitably go on producing the same results, while the substance, the form, and the motion continue unaltered. But man is a reasoning animal, and reasoning is not uniform, and thus it is not in the nature of man that he should be moulded into the part of a regularly acting aggregate, to be called "a society."

As to those things which are left to men to determine for themselves, independently of positive instruction from a source above themselves, there must ever be a positive difference, if not opposition of opinion, amounting to different or opposite views of good and evil. "One man's

meat is another man's poison," says the proverb; and truly it does happen (and wisely no doubt it is so ordered) that in the working of society that which gives pleasure to one, gives disgust to another, and *vice versa*. Nor is there any good sense or sound deduction of experience in attributing this to a want of similarity in training. This may have some effect; but the original constitution of each creature is in so far different, that no similarity of training will make any creatures, human or not, exactly alike. There may be instances now and then, such as the Siamese twins (if they can be called separate individuals), which form exceptions to the rule of uniform diversity; but this general rule has perhaps as few exceptions as any other that can be mentioned.

Mr. Hobbes, when treating of good and evil (which he does as if man had no instructor save himself), says, that "every man, for his own part, calleth that which pleaseth, and is delightful to himself, *good*, and that *evil* which displeaseth him: insomuch that, while every man *differeth* from other in *constitution*, they differ also from one another concerning the common distinction of good and evil. Nor is there any such thing as absolute goodness, considered without relation; for even the goodness which we apprehend in the Almighty is his goodness *to us*. And as we call good and evil the things that please and displease, so call we goodness

and badness the qualities or powers whereby they do it; and the signs of that goodness are called by the Latins in one word *Pulchritudo*, and the signs of evil *Turpitudo*, to which *we* have no words precisely answerable."

There is much matter for thinking upon, in this passage, but (with all due deference to Mr. Hobbes) I greatly doubt both its correctness and its wisdom.

THE PRESENT TIME.

Lord Byron set the fashion of running off to Greece in search of sentiment, dark eyes, pale foreheads, and a taste for the antique. Since his time there has been an infinite quantity of very vulgar declamation about Greece, and half Cheapside has trafficked either in Greek bonds or bas reliefs, for the purpose of showing a classical feeling, or for some other purpose. But, after all, there never was a time since classical learning and associations gained an ascendancy over the minds and actions of modern, civilized men, that the spirit of old Greece and Rome, whether in energy or in elegance, seemed of so little practical avail as it now is. People think themselves too wise in these times to be influenced by the grandeur of soul in literature, or in patriotism, which was once idolized as classical, and which it was thought every gentle-

man should be proud of. One might submit to the change the more cheerfully, if any thing really true, and more practically useful, that is, more conducive to elevation of thought, and the happiness of society—had come in the place of that enthusiasm after classical models of character, which has certainly departed. But we do not recognise any such thing. Confident conjecture, tricked out in the formalities of truth, under the name of "statistics;" mechanical improvements, which throw labourers out of work; railways and locomotive engines, by which rich people are shot through the air at the rate of thirty miles an hour, and poor people are killed at the rate of three or four per week; union workhouses; mechanics' institutes; lectures; chartists; agitation; hurry; noise; enormous activity—little meditation—much art—no gracefulness—these are the signs of the times which have arisen, since the eyes, and ears, and hands, and feet, of so many Englishmen have become familiar with those classic scenes of which formerly they only read. How is this?

> "The man of *abject soul* in vain
> Shall walk the Marathonian plain;
> Or thrid the shadowy gloom,
> That still invests the guardian pass,
> Where stood, sublime, Leonidas
> Devoted to the tomb."

The poet has hit it—abjectness of soul, whencesoever arising, is the characteristic of the time.

People go to Greece, not to have their souls elevated and sanctified by contemplation, but to fidget about, take the number of feet and inches in some pillar, and then to hie away home and see what profit can be made of the voyage, either in the way of talk and distinction in their set, or in an article for a magazine, or perhaps in the manufacture of a book. In the early part of Byron's career he compared the aspect of Greece to that of a human form lifeless, but still lovely:—

> "the mild angelic air,
> The rapture of repose, that's there;"

and added, after much rather unintelligible rhodomontade, which has been excessively admired:—

> "Such is the aspect of this shore.
> 'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more."

But this sublime tranquillity which ruined Greece wore for upwards of a thousand years, while the soul of the nation lived in other forms and in other lands—this has, in our days of worthless activity, and perpetual disturbance, given place to a far more revolting species of decay. The body of Greece has gone into another and a fouler stage of dissolution, and "creeping things" are "revelling in the spoil" of that with which so many noble and inspiring recollections have been associated.

But where is *now* the *soul* of Greece? Is it

dead, too? Where is that noble energy—that lofty devotedness—that magnificent elevation above all meanness—that splendour of simple dignity—that sublime propriety, which the literature of Greece—her poetry—her history—her glorious eloquence did once inspire? Where are these things gone?

Alas! they are not to be found in our "halls of science," nor on our railroads; no, nor among our public men.

SUCCESS WITH THE GREAT.

It is, perhaps, quite certain that in England, more than in any other country, there is a pride of society which mere talent, or even genius, cannot of itself break through. Clever people are, no doubt, admitted in very many quarters on account of their cleverness—and made use of as a sort of exciting novelty. Of these a very few may keep their ground: but, if they do, it depends upon something else than their cleverness—upon their power of making themselves agreeable, and having tact enough to assume nothing, at least in appearance, on account of the superiority of which they may be conscious. This is extremely difficult; and many who think they can manage it, and who may perhaps succeed for a while, fail in the end, and so bid farewell to the ex-

clusive circle. The danger is twofold—that of falling into obsequiousness, which breeds contempt, or into presumption, which excites alarm and disgust. Thus, unless a man or woman, however clever, have a natural turn for succeeding in society with the great, it is not worth while to attempt it. For, suppose the thing attainable by considerable pains and trouble, where is the equivalent advantage?

There is a brief passage relating to this subject in the life of the poet Crabbe, by his son, which is very well worthy of attention. The writer is alluding to Mr. Crabbe having relinquished his situation as domestic chaplain in the house of the Duke of Rutland, and says—"in truth, neither nature nor circumstances had qualified him for it. The aristocracy of genius approaches too near the aristocracy of station: superiority of talent is apt, without intention, to betray occasional presumption. It is true, subserviency would be always despised; but a cool collected mind—never thrown off its guard—pleased with what passes—entering into the interests of the day, but never betrayed into enthusiasm—is an indispensable qualification for that station." There is good sense and accuracy of observation, worthy of Crabbe himself, in these remarks of his biographer. Let every one remember them well, and square his practice by them, who would succeed permanently in the very highest walks of society.

But unless under some very peculiar circumstances, it is not worth a clever man's while to strive for such success.

DISPUTATION AND CRITICISM.

A GREAT deal of disputation goes on in this world because people have not definite notions about the point at which they are respectively aiming. Boswell tells a good story about Johnson setting him right one day in a matter of this kind. Boswell related a dispute, as he calls it, which took place between Goldsmith and Dodsley about the poetry of the age they lived in. After mentioning what had been said on both sides—a knack in which Boswell excelled—Johnson passed judgment upon the matter by declaring that both disputants had said the same thing, the difference between them being only in the manner of saying it. But that our listeners may judge whether the sage pronounced rightly, they must hear what the matter of dispute was, and how each side handled it. Goldsmith had asserted that there was no poetry produced in the age he lived in. Dodsley resisted this dictum, and appealed to his own collection in disproof of it. Though, said he, "you cannot find in the poetry of this age a Palace, like Dryden's ode on St. Cecilia's Day, yet you have villages composed of very pretty

houses;" and then he mentioned particularly "The Spleen." Upon this statement Johnson pronounced the judgment that Dodsley had given up the question. "He and Goldsmith," continued the Doctor, "said the same thing, only he said it in a *softer manner* than Goldsmith did, for he acknowledged there was no poetry, nothing that towered above the common mark. You may find wit and humour in verse, and yet no poetry. Hudibras has a profusion of these, yet it is not to be reckoned a poem. The Spleen, in Dodsley's collection, on which you say he chiefly rested, is not poetry."

Let every one carefully note that people may be disputing, and have all the anger which disputation is so likely to call up, when in truth they are saying the same thing. Therefore, when you have to do with an adversary who thinks that he differs with you, and thereupon assails you, try whether you cannot, by putting his own statements into another shape, though not precisely the same shape as that with which he quarrels, find herein a standing place of mutual agreement. This is what the syllogistic reasoners do when they find a middle term—something to which both ends of the argument clearly bear the relation of truth, and from which, therefore, the just relation of the end to the beginning is inferred. In very many cases of dispute it may be found either that the adversaries are saying the same thing in a different

way, or they are saying the same thing to a considerable extent; and, if the agreement to this extent can be shown, ten to one but the attraction of this newly discovered sympathy will overcome all the repelling power of the remaining small portion of actual difference, and the dispute will be at an end.

The disputation here alluded to is that which arises and is pursued in honesty and good faith. That which grows out of wilful misrepresentation and obstinately asserted lies, is another matter. Disputation properly so called, ceases in such cases, and the business of an honest man becomes that of exposure and rebuke. But if you discharge this business honestly, and with energy, you will be called "bitter," "ill-natured," "abusive," "illiberal," "uncharitable," and a thousand other epithets besides, which the perpetrators of things false or foolish would much rather call you, than reform the error of their ways. For this there is no help, but to bear the reproaches with as much patience as you can, recollecting that you are contending for truth, and not with the small design of becoming agreeable to those who cannot bear or do not like truth. The pervading characteristic of all society in this age is a small, busy, self-sufficiency. "No grandeur now in nature or in book delights us;" some little conceit, or plan, or stratagem—some stroke of cleverness or stoop of meanness—some little bit of flattery

well applied to a discovered weakness—some fortunate revival of a forgotten joke—some successful impudence on a small scale—some felicitous accession of finery. Such are the things upon which the great crowd of those who think themselves "somebody" are apt to plume themselves. The two most rare things are real candour and real modesty.

The plea in behalf of charity and moderation, addressed to those who engage in the work of exposure and rebuke, as regards public affairs and public men, deserves some words of separate consideration. An honest man can hardly get out a few earnest words of condemnation without being told that he should not speak thus—that *charity* should lead him to take other views. Very good kind of people use this language, but it is *weak*—very weak. Bishop Burnet speaks very well and very wisely upon this matter when he says, that "whatever moderation or charity we may owe to men's persons we owe none at all to their errors, and to that frame which is built on, and supported by, them." This is the common sense of the matter, and religious charity is perfectly consistent with common sense. You may be called hasty and violent, because you earnestly attack certain conduct of which, with all your heart, you disapprove. But it is they who reproach you who are really hasty and violent. They presume, because you

attack the error, that you hate and are desirous of injuring the person or the persons whose errors you attack. This is the presumption of a weak and narrow mind. Many a man, who seems all fierceness when denouncing the conduct which his heart condemns, would sooner die than inflict personal harm upon those whose conduct he rebukes, or treat them with anything but courtesy and kindness in personal intercourse with them. Truth and courtesy are not really at variance; but in these days of narrow mental vision, and of loose morality, every one who does not sacrifice truth to puffery or to compliment of that which he disapproves, is called unkind, discourteous, and severe. All this, as I have said, cannot be helped, and must be endured.

DECAY OF THE MIND.

In the whole range of English poetry there is not, perhaps, any single couplet so pregnant with painful observation, and so suggestive of melancholy reflection, as that one of Samuel Johnson in which he refers to the closing scenes of the lives of Marlborough and Swift. These were undoubtedly the greatest men of their time in arms and in literature—they did more than any

other two men to influence the course of events, and to occupy the minds of the thinking multitude; and yet it is of such men that Johnson has to record—

> "From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow,
> And Swift expires, a driv'ler and a show."

Sad—humiliating end of all their greatness! Who can think of *such* decay without a shudder, and a sickness of the heart? The observation of the decay of the bodily machine, in comparison with this, affects us not. It is the certain fate of material substance, however nicely brought together, to wear out by action. They who had never seen a man grow old, might have prophesied bodily decay from a mere study of analogies. But we know not why the mind should fail similarly, and, when it does so, we are struck with the most fearful apprehension, not unmingled with a sympathetic sense of degradation. It seems as if the dignity of our nature were visibly prostrated before us, and made subject to the laws which govern mechanical agency—the agency of things made of wood, and iron, and stone. Grief, fear, and shame overwhelm us at the contemplation of a great mind fallen from its high estate, and grovelling in dust and darkness. It is more than even the firmest nerves can bear without a shock.

But who can fathom the reasons of these exceptions, in some illustrious instances, to the general course of mind as compared with matter? No man. Let us consider of the thousands upon thousands of instances where, in spite of bodily wear and tear, of fatigue and illness, the mind still retains its energy, and, escaping from the control of the passions, rises to a greater height of reasoning and judgment. How greatly did Johnson's own mind sustain itself to the last of a long life. Him we may contrast with Swift, and, if we want a similar contrast with Marlborough, let us take the great Captain of our own time, of whom Sir Robert Peel has so recently said,* when speaking of the eminent men with whom he has acted and continues to act, "Above all, I shall retain the confidence—I shall retain the satisfaction and the distinction of cooperating with that illustrious man by whose right hand I have stood in the conflicts which have been fought for the last twelve years, and who now, with faculties unimpaired by advancing years, is proving that the same qualities which raised him to the highest pitch of military glory—that fortitude, perseverance, simplicity of mind, the love of justice and the sense of duty—qualities 'rare in their separate excellence and wonderful in their combination'—

* In the House of Commons, February 1840.

still distinguish him in his civil life, and show that as a statesman his reputation is not inferior to that which he has achieved as a warrior." Such a glowing description as this cheers and elevates the mind, after the depression which the reminiscence of the fate of Marlborough and of Swift is so likely to occasion.

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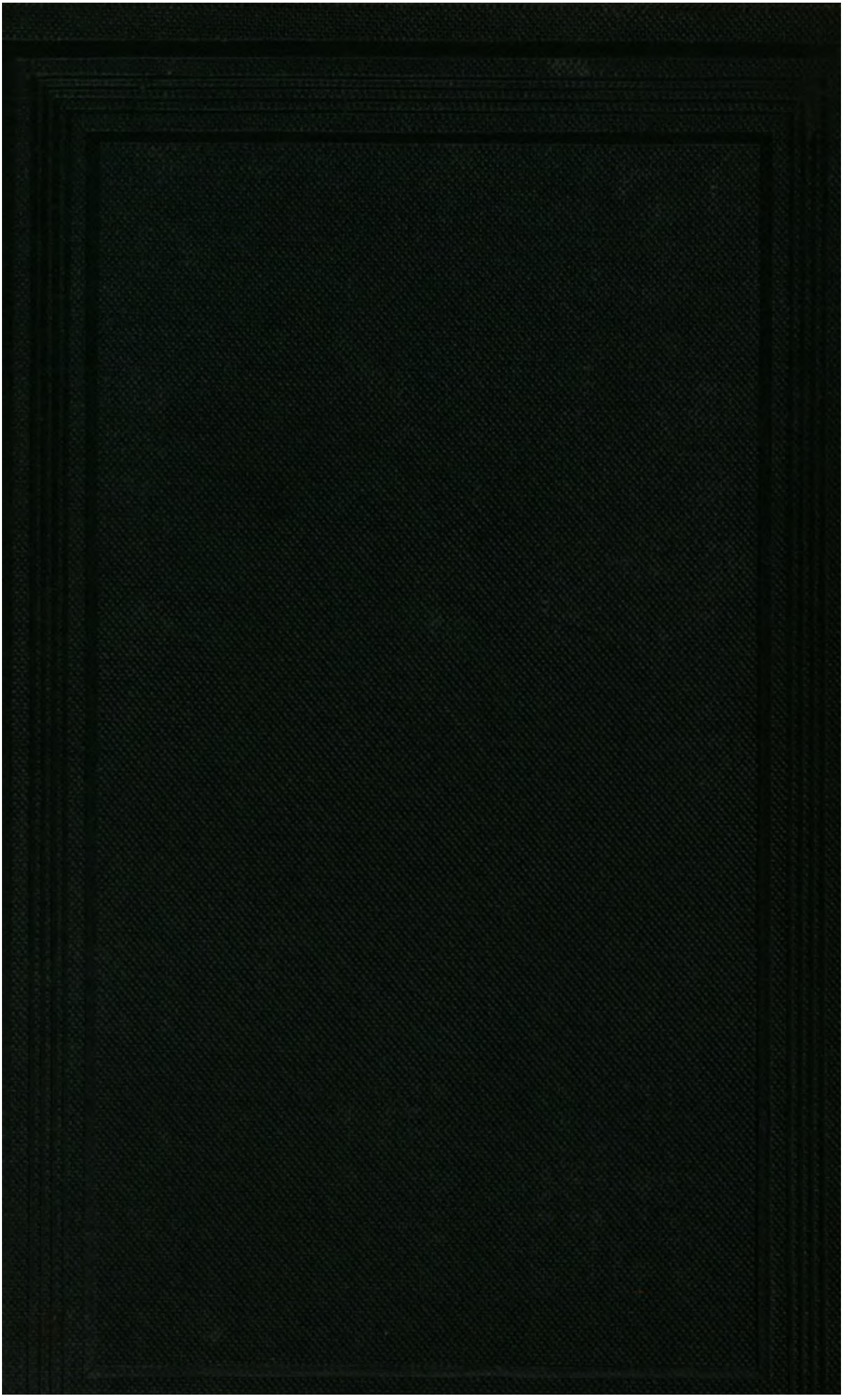
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