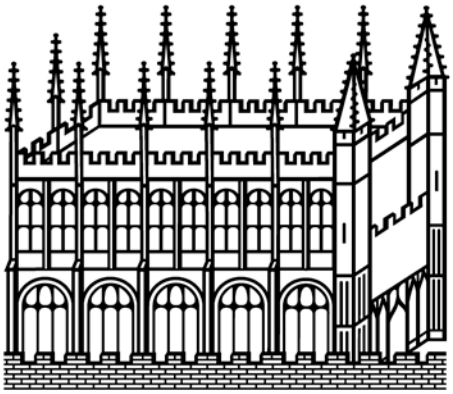

at the Breakfast Table

Oliver Wendell Holmes

THE PROFESSOR

AT

THE BREAKFAST TABLE.

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THE PROFESSOR

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BY

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Author's Edition

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PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION.

THE reader of to-day will not forget, I trust, that it is nearly a quarter of a century since these papers were written. Statements which were true then are not necessarily true now. Thus, the speed of the trotting horse has been so much developed that the record of the year when the fastest time to that date was given must be very considerably altered, as may be seen by referring to a note on page 51 of the *Autocrat*. No doubt many other statements and opinions might be more or less modified if I were writing to-day, instead of having written before the war, when the world and I were both more than a score of years younger.

These papers followed close upon the track of the *Autocrat*. They had to endure the trial to which all second comers are subjected, which is a formidable ordeal for the

least as well as the greatest. *Paradise Regained* and the Second Part of *Faust* are examples which are enough to warn every one who has made a single fair hit with his arrow of the danger of missing when he looses "his fellow of the selfsame flight."

There is good reason why it should be so. The first juice that runs of itself from the grapes comes from the heart of the fruit, and tastes of the pulp only; when the grapes are squeezed in the press the flow betrays the flavour of the skin. If there is any freshness in the original idea of the work, if there is any individuality in the method or style of a new author, or of an old author on a new track, it will have lost much of its first effect when repeated. Still, there have not been wanting readers who have preferred this second series of papers to the first. The new papers were more aggressive than the earlier ones, and for that reason found a heartier welcome in some quarters, and met with a sharper antagonism in others. It amuses me to look back on some of the attacks they called forth. Opinions which do not excite the faintest show of temper at this time from those who do not accept them were treated as if they were the utterances of a nihilist

incendiary. It required the exercise of some forbearance not to recriminate.

How a stray sentence, a popular saying, the maxim of some wise man, a line accidentally fallen upon and remembered, will sometimes help one when he is all ready to be vexed or indignant! One day, in the time when I was young or youngish, I happened to open a small copy of *Tom Jones*, and glance at the title-page. There was one of those little engravings opposite, which bore the familiar name of "T. Uwins," as I remember it, and under it the words "*Mr. Partridge bore all this patiently.*" How many times, when after rough usage from ill-mannered critics, my own vocabulary of vituperation was simmering in such a lively way that it threatened to boil and lift its lid, and so boil over, those words have calmed the small internal effervescence! There is very little in them and very little of them; and so there is not much in a linch-pin, considered by itself, but it often keeps a wheel from coming off, and prevents what might be a catastrophe. The chief trouble in offering such papers as these to the readers of to-day is that their heresies have become so familiar among intelligent people that they have too commonplace an

aspect. All the lighthouses and landmarks of belief bear so differently from the way in which they presented themselves when these papers were written that it is hard to recognise that we and our fellow-passengers are still in the same old vessel, sailing the same unfathomable sea, and bound to the same as yet unseen harbour.

But after all, there is not enough theology, good or bad, in these papers to cause them to be inscribed on the Protestant *Index Expurgatorius;* and if they are medicated with a few questionable dogmas or antidogmas, the public has become used to so much rougher treatment that what was once an irritant may now act as an anodyne, and the reader may nod over pages which, when they were first written, would have waked him up into a paroxysm of protest and denunciation.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

November 1882.

THE PROFESSOR

AT

THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

What he said, what he heard, and what he saw.

I.

I INTENDED to have signalised my first appearance by a certain large statement, which I flatter myself is the nearest approach to a universal formula of life yet promulgated at this breakfast-table. It would have had a grand effect. For this purpose I fixed my eyes on a certain divinity-student, with the intention of exchanging a few phrases, and then forcing my court-card, namely, *The great end of being.*—I will thank you for the sugar, —I said.—Man is a dependent creature.

It is a small favour to ask,—said the divinity-student,—and passed the sugar to me.

—Life is a great bundle of little things,—I said.

The divinity-student smiled, as if that was the concluding epigram of the sugar question.

You smile,—I said.—Perhaps life seems to you a little bundle of great things?

The divinity-student started a laugh, but suddenly reined it back with a pull, as one throws a horse on his haunches.—Life is a great bundle of great things,—he said.

(*Now, then!*) The great end of being, after all, is—

Hold on!—said my neighbour, a young fellow whose name seems to be John, and nothing else,—for that is what they all call him,—hold on! the Sculpin is go'n' to say somethin'.

Now the Sculpin (*Cottus Virginianus*) is a little water-beast which pretends to consider itself a fish, and, under that pretext, hangs about the piles upon which West-Boston Bridge is built, swallowing the bait and hook intended for flounders. On being drawn from the water, it exposes an immense head, a diminutive bony carcass, and a surface so full of spines, ridges, ruffles, and frills, that the naturalists have not been able to count them without quarrelling about the number, and that the coloured youth, whose sport

they spoil, do not like to touch them, and especially to tread on them, unless they happen to have shoes on, to cover the thick white soles of their broad black feet.

When, therefore, I heard the young fellow's exclamation, I looked round the table with curiosity to see what it meant. At the further end of it I saw a head, and a small portion of a little deformed body, mounted on a high chair, which brought the occupant up to a fair level enough for him to get at his food. His whole appearance was so grotesque, I felt for a minute as if there was a showman behind him who would pull him down presently and put up Judy, or the hangman, or the Devil, or some other wooden personage of the famous spectacle. I contrived to lose the first part of his sentence, but what I heard began so :—

—by the Frog-Pond, when there were frogs in it, and the folks used to come down from the tents on 'Lection and Independence days with their pails to get water to make egg-pop with. Born in Boston ; went to school in Boston as long as the boys would let me.—The little man groaned, turned, as if to look round, and went on.—Ran away from school one day to see Phillips hung for killing Denegri with a loggerhead. That

was in flip days, when there were always two or three loggerheads in the fire. I 'm a Boston boy, I tell you,—born at North End, and mean to be buried on Copps' Hill, with the good old underground people, — the Worthylakes, and the rest of 'em. Yes, Sir,—up on the old hill, where they buried Captain Daniel Malcolm in a stone grave, ten feet deep, to keep him safe from the red-coats, in those old times when the world was frozen up tight and there wasn't but one spot open, and that was right over Faneuil Hall, —and black enough it looked, I tell you ! There's where my bones shall lie, Sir, and rattle away when the big guns go off at the Navy Yard opposite ! You can't make me ashamed of the old place ! Full of crooked little streets ;—I was born and used to run round in one of 'em—

—I should think so,—said that young man whom I hear them call "John," softly, not meaning to be heard, nor to be cruel, but thinking in a half-whisper, evidently.—I should think so ; and got kinked up, turnin' so many corners.—The little man did not hear what was said, but went on—

—full of crooked little streets ; but I tell you Boston has opened, and kept open, more turnpikes that lead straight to free thought

and free speech and free deeds than any other city of live men or dead men,—I don't care how broad their streets are, nor how high their steeples !

—How high is Bosting meet'n'-house ?—said a person with black whiskers and imperial, a velvet waistcoat, a guard-chain rather *too* massive, and a diamond pin so *very* large that the most trusting nature might confess an inward *suggestion*,—of course, nothing amounting to a suspicion. For this is a gentleman from a great city, and sits next to the landlady's daughter, who evidently believes in him, and is the object of his especial attention.

How high ?—said the little man.—As high as the first step of the stairs that lead to the New Jerusalem. Isn't that high enough ?

It is,—I said.—The great end of being is to harmonise man with the order of things, and the church has been a good pitch-pipe, and may be so still. But who shall tune the pitch-pipe ? *Quis cus*— (On the whole, as this quotation was not entirely new, and, being in a foreign language, might not be familiar to all the boarders, I thought I would not finish it.)

—Go to the Bible !—said a sharp voice from a sharp-faced, sharp-eyed, sharp-elbowed,

strenuous-looking woman in a black dress, appearing as if it began as a piece of mourning and perpetuated itself as a bit of economy.

You speak well, Madam,—I said;—yet there is room for a gloss or commentary on what you say. "He who would bring back the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies." What you bring away from the Bible depends to some extent on what you carry to it.—Benjamin Franklin! Be so good as to step up to my chamber and bring me down the small uncovered pamphlet of twenty pages which you will find lying under the *Cruden's Concordance.* [The boy took a large bite, which left a very perfect crescent in the slice of bread-and-butter he held, and departed on his errand, with the portable fraction of his breakfast to sustain him on the way.]

Here it is. "*Go to the Bible.* A Dissertation, etc., etc. By J. J. Flournoy. Athens, Georgia, 1858."

Mr. Flournoy, Madam, has obeyed the precept which you have judiciously delivered. You may be interested, Madam, to know what are the conclusions at which Mr. J. J. Flournoy of Athens, Georgia, has arrived. You shall hear, Madam. He has gone to the Bible, and he has come back from the Bible,

bringing a remedy for existing social evils, which, if it is the real specific, as it professes to be, is of great interest to humanity, and to the female part of humanity in particular. It is what he calls *trigamy*, Madam, or the marrying of three wives, so that "good old men" may be solaced at once by the companionship of the wisdom of maturity, and of those less perfected but hardly less engaging qualities which are found at an earlier period of life. He has followed your precept, Madam; I hope you accept his conclusions.

The female boarder in black attire looked so puzzled, and, in fact, "all abroad," after the delivery of this "counter" of mine, that I left her to recover her wits, and went on with the conversation, which I was beginning to get pretty well in hand.

But in the meantime I kept my eye on the female boarder to see what effect I had produced. First, she was a little stunned at having her argument knocked over. Secondly, she was a little shocked at the tremendous character of the triple matrimonial suggestion. Thirdly,—I don't like to say what I thought. Something seemed to have pleased her fancy. Whether it was that, if trigamy should come into fashion, there would be three times as many chances to

enjoy the luxury of saying, "No!" is more than I can tell you. I may as well mention that B. F. came to me after breakfast to borrow the pamphlet for "a lady,"—one of the boarders, he said,—looking as if he had a secret he wished to be relieved of.

—I continued.—If a human soul is necessarily to be trained up in the faith of those from whom it inherits its body, why, there is the end of all reason. If, sooner or later, every soul is to look for truth with its own eyes, the first thing is, to recognise that no presumption in favour of any particular belief arises from the fact of our inheriting it. Otherwise you would not give the Mahometan a fair chance to become a convert to a better religion.

The second thing would be to depolarise every fixed religious idea in the mind by changing the word which stands for it.

—I don't know what you mean by "depolarising" an idea, said the divinity-student.

I will tell you,—I said.—When a given symbol which represents a thought has lain for a certain length of time in the mind, it undergoes a change like that which rest in a certain position gives to iron. It becomes magnetic in its relations,—it is traversed by strange forces which did not belong to it.

The word, and consequently the idea it represents, is *polarised.*

The religious currency of mankind, in thought, in speech, and in print, consists entirely of polarised words. Borrow one of these from another language and religion, and you will find it leaves all its magnetism behind it. Take that famous word, O'm, of the Hindoo mythology. Even a priest cannot pronounce it without sin; and a holy Pundit would shut his ears and run away from you in horror if you should say it aloud. What do you care for O'm? If you wanted to get the Pundit to look at his religion fairly, you must first depolarise this and all similar words for him. The argument for and against new translations of the Bible really turns on this. Scepticism is afraid to trust its truths in depolarised words, and so cries out against a new translation. I think, myself, if every idea our Book contains could be shelled out of its old symbol and put into a new, clean, unmagnetic word, we should have some chance of reading it as philosophers, or wisdom-lovers, ought to read it,—which we do not and cannot now any more than a Hindoo can read the *Gayatri* as a fair man and lover of truth should do. When society has once fairly dissolved the New

Testament, which it never has done yet, it will perhaps crystallise it over again in new forms of language.

—I didn't know you was a settled minister over this parish,—said the young fellow near me.

A sermon by a lay-preacher may be worth listening to, — I replied, calmly. — It gives the *parallax* of thought and feeling as they appear to the observers from two very different points of view. If you wish to get the distance of a heavenly body, you know that you must take two observations from remote points of the earth's orbit,—in midsummer and midwinter, for instance. To get the parallax of heavenly truths, you must take an observation from the position of the laity as well as of the clergy. Teachers and students of theology get a certain look, certain conventional tones of voice, a clerical gait, a professional neckcloth, and habits of mind as professional as their externals. They are scholarly men and read Bacon, and know well enough what the "idols of the tribe" are. Of course they have their false gods, as all men that follow one exclusive calling are prone to do. — The clergy have played the part of the fly-wheel in our modern civilisation. They have never suf-

fered it to stop. They have often carried on its movement, when other moving powers failed, by the momentum stored in their vast body. Sometimes, too, they have kept it back by their *vis inertiæ*, when its wheels were like to grind the bones of some old canonised error into fertilisers for the soil that yields the bread of life. But the mainspring of the world's onward religious movement is not in them, nor in any one body of men, let me tell you. It is the people that makes the clergy, and not the clergy that makes the people. Of course, the profession reacts on its source with variable energy.— But there never was a guild of dealers or a company of craftsmen that did not need sharp looking after.

Our old friend, Dr. Holyoke, whom we gave the dinner to some time since, must have known many people that saw the great bonfire in Harvard College yard.

—Bonfire?—shrieked the little man.—The bonfire when Robert Calef's book was burned?

The same,—I said,—when Robert Calef the Boston merchant's book was burned in the yard of Harvard College, by order of Increase Mather, President of the College and Minister of the Gospel. You remember

the old witchcraft revival of '92, and how stout Master Robert Calef, trader of Boston, had the pluck to tell the ministers and judges what a set of fools and worse than fools they were—

Remember it?—said the little man.—I don't think I shall forget it, as long as I can stretch this forefinger to point with, and see what it wears.—There was a ring on it.

May I look at it?—I said.

Where it is,—said the little man;—it will never come off, till it falls off from the bone in the darkness and in the dust.

He pushed the high chair on which he sat slightly back from the table, and dropped himself, standing, to the floor,—his head being only a little above the level of the table, as he stood. With pain and labour, lifting one foot over the other, as a drummer handles his sticks, he took a few steps from his place,—his motions and the dead beat of the misshapen boots announcing to my practised eye and ear the malformation which is called in learned language *talipes varus*, or inverted club-foot.

Stop! stop!—I said,—let me come to you.

The little man hobbled back, and lifted himself by the left arm, with an ease approaching to grace which surprised me, into

his high chair. I walked to his side, and he stretched out the forefinger of his right hand, with the ring upon it. The ring had been put on long ago, and could not pass the misshapen joint. It was one of those funeral rings which used to be given to relatives and friends after the decease of persons of any note or importance. Beneath a round bit of glass was a death's head. Engraved on one side of this, "L. B. Æt. 22,"— on the other, "Ob. 1692."

My grandmother's grandmother,—said the little man.—Hanged for a witch. It doesn't seem a great while ago. I knew my grandmother, and loved her. Her mother was daughter to the witch that Chief Justice Sewall hanged and Cotton Mather delivered over to the Devil.—That was Salem, though, and not Boston. No, not Boston. Robert Calef, the Boston merchant, it was that blew them all to—

Never mind where he blew them to,—I said ;—for the little man was getting red in the face, and I didn't know what might come next.

This episode broke me up, as the jockeys say, out of my square conversational trot ; but I settled down to it again.

—A man that knows men, in the street,

at their work, human nature in its shirt-sleeves,—who makes bargains with deacons, instead of talking over texts with them,—a man who has found out that there are plenty of praying rogues and swearing saints in the world,—above all, who has found out, by living into the pith and core of life, that all of the Deity which can be folded up between the sheets of any human book is to the Deity of the firmament, of the strata, of the hot aortic flood of throbbing human life, of this infinite, instantaneous consciousness in which the soul's being consists,—an incandescent point in the filament connecting the negative pole of a past eternity with the positive pole of an eternity that is to come, — that all of the Deity which any human book can hold is to this larger Deity of the working battery of the universe only as the films in a book of gold-leaf are to the broad seams and curdled lumps of ore that lie in unsunned mines and virgin placers, —— Oh !—I was saying that a man who lives out-of-doors, among live people, gets some things into his head he might not find in the index of his *Body of Divinity.*

I tell you what,—the idea of the professions' digging a moat round their close corporations, like that Japanese one at Jeddo,

which you could put Park Street Church on the bottom of and look over the vane from its side, and try to stretch another such spire across it without spanning the chasm, —that idea, I say, is pretty nearly worn out. Now when a civilisation or a civilised custom falls into senile *dementia*, there is commonly a judgment ripe for it, and it comes as plagues come, from a breath,—as fires come, from a spark.

Here, look at medicine. Big wigs, gold-headed canes, Latin prescriptions, shops full of abominations, recipes a yard long, "curing" patients by drugging as sailors bring a wind by whistling, selling lies at a guinea apiece,—a routine, in short, of giving unfortunate sick people a mess of things either too odious to swallow or too acrid to hold, or, if that were possible, both at once.

—You don't know what I mean, indignant and not unintelligent country-practitioner? Then you don't know the history of medicine,—and that is not my fault. But don't expose yourself in any outbreak of eloquence; for, by the mortar in which Anaxarchus was pounded! I did not bring home Schenckius and Forestus and Hildanus, and all the old folios in calf and vellum I will show you, to be bullied by the proprie-

tor of a *Wood and Bache*, and a shelf of peppered sheepskin reprints by Philadelphia Editors. Besides, many of the profession and I know a little something of each other, and you don't think I am such a simpleton as to lose their good opinion by saying what the better heads among them would condemn as unfair and untrue? Now mark how the great plague came on the generation of drugging doctors, and in what form it fell.

A scheming drug-vendor (inventive genius), an utterly untrustworthy and incompetent observer (profound searcher of Nature), a shallow dabbler in erudition (sagacious scholar), started the monstrous fiction (founded the immortal system) of Homœopathy. I am very fair, you see,—you can help yourself to either of these sets of phrases.

All the reason in the world would not have had so rapid and general an effect on the public mind to disabuse it of the idea that a drug is a good thing in itself, instead of being, as it is, a bad thing, as was produced by the trick (system) of this German charlatan (theorist). Not that the wiser part of the profession needed him to teach them; but the routinists and their employers, the

"general practitioners," who lived by selling pills and mixtures, and their drug-consuming customers, had to recognise that people could get well, unpoisoned. These dumb cattle would not learn it of themselves, and so the murrain of Homœopathy fell on them.

—You don't know what plague has fallen on the practitioners of theology? I will tell you, then. It is SPIRITUALISM. While some are crying out against it as a delusion of the Devil, and some are laughing at it as an hysteric folly, and some are getting angry with it as a mere trick of interested or mischievous persons, Spiritualism is quietly undermining the traditional ideas of the future state which have been and are still accepted,—not merely in those who believe in it, but in the general sentiment of the community, to a larger extent than most good people seem to be aware of. It needn't be true, to do this, any more than Homœopathy need, to do its work. The Spiritualists have some pretty strong instincts to pry over, which no doubt have been roughly handled by theologians at different times. And the Nemesis of the pulpit comes, in a shape it little thought of, beginning with the snap of a toe-joint, and ending with such a crack of old beliefs that the roar of

it is heard in all the ministers' studies of Christendom! Sir, you cannot have people of cultivation, of pure character, sensible enough in common things, large-hearted women, grave judges, shrewd business-men, men of science, professing to be in communication with the spiritual world and keeping up constant intercourse with it, without its gradually reacting on the whole conception of that other life. It is the folly of the world, constantly, which confounds its wisdom. Not only out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, but out of the mouths of fools and cheats, we may often get our truest lessons. For the fool's judgment is a dog-vane that turns with a breath, and the cheat watches the clouds and sets his weather-cock by them,—so that one shall often see by their pointing which way the winds of heaven are blowing, when the slow-wheeling arrows and feathers of what we call the Temples of Wisdom are turning to all points of the compass.

—Amen!—said the young fellow called John—Ten minutes by the watch. Those that are unanimous will please to signify by holding up their left foot!

I looked this young man steadily in the face for about thirty seconds. His counten-

ance was as calm as that of a reposing infant. I think it was simplicity, rather than mischief, with perhaps a youthful playfulness, that led him to this outbreak. I have often noticed that even quiet horses, on a sharp November morning, when their coats are just beginning to get the winter roughness, will give little sportive demi-kicks, with slight sudden elevation of the subsequent region of the body, and a sharp short whinny,—by no means intending to put their heels through the dasher, or to address the driver rudely, but feeling, to use a familiar word, frisky. This, I think, is the physiological condition of the young person John. I noticed, however, what I should call a *palpebral spasm*, affecting the eyelid and muscles of one side, which, if it were intended for the facial gesture called a wink, might lead me to suspect a disposition to be satirical on his part.

—Resuming the conversation, I remarked, —I am *ex officio*, as a Professor, a conservative. For I don't know any fruit that clings to its tree so faithfully, not even a "froze-'n'-thaw" winter-apple, as a Professor to the bough of which his chair is made. You can't shake him off, and it is as much as you can do to pull him off. Hence, by a chain of

induction I need not unwind, he tends to conservatism generally.

But then, you know, if you are sailing the Atlantic, and all at once find yourself in a current, and the sea covered with weeds, and drop your Fahrenheit over the side and find it eight or ten degrees higher than in the ocean generally, there is no use in flying in the face of facts aud swearing there is no such thing as a Gulf-Stream, when you are in it.

You can't keep gas in a bladder, and you can't keep knowledge tight in a profession. Hydrogen will leak out, and air will leak in, through Indiarubber ; and special knowledge will leak out, and general knowledge will leak in, though a profession were covered with twenty thicknesses of sheepskin diplomas. By Jove, Sir, till common sense is well mixed up with medicine, and common manhood with theology, and common honesty with law, *We the people*, Sir, some of us with nut-crackers, and some of us with trip-hammers, and some of us with pile-drivers, and some of us coming with a whish ! like air-stones out of a lunar volcano, will crash down on the lumps of nonsense in all of them till we have made powder of them like Aaron's calf !

If to be a conservative is to let all the drains of thought choke up and keep all the soul's windows down,—to shut out the sun from the east and the wind from the west,—to let the rats run free in the cellar, and the moths feed their fill in the chambers, and the spiders weave their lace before the mirrors, till the soul's typhus is bred out of our neglect, and we begin to snore in its coma or rave in its delirium,—I, Sir, am a *bonnet-rouge*, a red cap of the barricades, my friends, rather than a conservative.

—Were you born in Boston, Sir?—said the little man,—looking eager and excited.

I was not,—I replied.

It 's a pity,—it 's a pity,—said the little man;—it 's the place to be born in. But if you can't fix it so as to be born here, you can come and live here. Old Ben Franklin, the father of American science and the American Union, wasn't ashamed to be born here. Jim Otis, the father of American Independence, bothered about in the Cape Cod marshes awhile, but he came to Boston as soon as he got big enough. Joe Warren, the first bloody ruffled-shirt of the Revolution, was as good as born here. Parson Channing strolled along this way from Newport, and stayed here. Pity old Sam

Hopkins hadn't come, too;—we'd have made a man of him,—poor, dear, good old Christian heathen! There he lies, as peaceful as a young baby, in the old burying-ground! I've stood on the slab many a time. Meant well,—meant well. Juggernaut. Parson Channing put a little oil on one linchpin, and slipped it out so softly, the first thing they knew about it was the wheel of that side was down. T'other fellow's at work now, but he makes more noise about it. When the linchpin comes out on his side, there'll be a jerk, I tell you! Some think it will spoil the old cart, and they pretend to say that there are valuable things in it which may get hurt. Hope not, —hope not. But this is the great Macadamising place,—always cracking up something.

Cracking up Boston folks,—said the gentleman with the *diamond*-pin, whom, for convenience' sake, I shall hereafter call the *Koh-i-noor*.

The little man turned round mechanically towards him, as Maelzel's Turk used to turn, carrying his head slowly and horizontally, as if it went by cog-wheels.—Cracking up all sorts of things,—native and foreign vermin included,—said the little man.

This remark was thought by some of us to

have a hidden personal application, and to afford a fair opening for a lively rejoinder, if the Koh-i-noor had been so disposed. The little man uttered it with the distinct wooden calmness with which the ingenious Turk used to exclaim, *E-chec!* so that it *must* have been heard. The party supposed to be interested in the remark was, however, carrying a large knife-bladeful of something to his mouth just then, which, no doubt, interfered with the reply he would have made.

—My friend who used to board here was accustomed sometimes, in a pleasant way, to call himself the *Autocrat* of the table,—meaning, I suppose, that he had it all his own way among the boarders. I think our small boarder here is like to prove a refractory subject, if I undertake to use the sceptre my friend meant to bequeath me, too magisterially. I won't deny that sometimes, on rare occasions, when I have been in company with gentlemen who *preferred* listening, I have been guilty of the same kind of usurpation which my friend openly justified. But I maintain, that I, the Professor, am a good listener. If a man can tell me a fact which subtends an appreciable angle in the horizon of thought, I am as receptive as the contri-

bution-box in a congregation of coloured brethren. If, when I am exposing my intellectual dry-goods, a man will begin a good story, I will have them all in, and my shutters up, before he has got to the fifth "says he," and listen like a three-years' child, as the author of the *Old Sailor* says. I had rather hear one of these grand elemental laughs from either of our two Georges (fictitious names, Sir or Madam), or listen to one of those old playbills of our College days, in which *Tom and Jerry* ("Thomas and Jeremiah," as the old Greek Professor was said to call it) was announced to be brought on the stage with the whole force of the Faculty, read by our Frederick (no such person, of course), than say the best things I might by any chance find myself capable of saying. Of course, if I come across a real thinker, a suggestive, acute, illuminating, informing talker, I enjoy the luxury of sitting still for a while as much as another.

Nobody talks much that doesn't say unwise things,—things he did not mean to say; as no person plays much without striking a false note sometimes. Talk, to me, is only spading up the ground for crops of thought. I can't answer for what will turn

up. If I could, it wouldn't be for talking, but "speaking my piece." Better, I think, the hearty abandonment of one's-self to the suggestions of the moment, at the risk of an occasional slip of the tongue, perceived the instant it escapes, but just one syllable too late, than the royal reputation of never saying a foolish thing.

—What shall I do with this little man?—There is only one thing to do,—and that is to let him talk when he will. The day of "Autocrat's" monologues is over.

—My friend,—said I to the young fellow whom, as I have said, the boarders call "John,"—My friend,—I said, one morning, after breakfast,—can you give me any information respecting the deformed person who sits on the other end of the table?

What! the Sculpin?—said the young fellow.

The diminutive person, with angular curvature of the spine,—I said,—and double *talipes varus*,—I beg your pardon,—with two club-feet.

Is that long word what you call it when a fellah walks so?—said the young man, making his fists revolve round an imaginary axis, as you may have seen youth of tender age and limited pugilistic knowledge, when

they show how they would punish an adversary, themselves protected by this rotating guard, — the middle knuckle, meantime, thumb-supported, fiercely prominent, death-threatening.

It is,—said I.—But would you have the kindness to tell me if you know anything about this deformed person?

About the Sculpin?—said the young fellow.

My good friend,—said I,—I am sure, by your countenance, you would not hurt the feelings of one who has been hardly enough treated by Nature to be spared by his fellows. Even in speaking of him to others, I could wish that you might not employ a term which implies contempt for what should inspire only pity.

A fellah's no business to be so—crooked, —said the young man called John.

Yes, yes, — I said, thoughtfully, — the strong hate the weak. It 's all right. The arrangement has reference to the race, and not to the individual. Infirmity must be kicked out, or the stock run down. Wholesale moral arrangements are so different from retail!—I understand the instinct, my friend,—it is cosmic,—it is planetary,—it is a conservative principle in creation.

The young fellow's face gradually lost its expression as I was speaking, until it became as blank of vivid significance as the countenance of a gingerbread rabbit with two currants in the place of eyes. He had not taken my meaning.

Presently the intelligence came back with a snap that made him wink, as he answered, —Jest so. All right. A 1. Put her through. That 's the way to talk. Did you speak to me, Sir?—Here the young man struck up that well-known song which I think they used to sing at Masonic festivals, beginning, "Aldiborontiphoscophornio, Where left you Chrononhotonthologos?"

I beg your pardon,—I said;—all I meant was, that men, as temporary occupants of a permanent abode called human life, which is improved or injured by occupancy, according to the style of tenant, have a natural dislike to those who, if they live the life of the race as well as of the individual, will leave lasting injurious effects upon the abode spoken of, which is to be occupied by countless future generations. This is the final cause of the underlying brute instinct which we have in common with the herds.

— The gingerbread-rabbit expression was

coming on so fast, that I thought I must try again.—It 's a pity that families are kept up, where there are such hereditary infirmities. Still, let us treat this poor man fairly, and not call him names. Do you know what his name is?

I know what the rest of 'em call him,—said the young fellow,—They call him Little Boston. There's no harm in that, is there?

It is an honourable term,—I replied.—But why Little *Boston*, in a place where most are Bostonians?

Because nobody else is quite so Boston all over as he is,—said the young fellow.

"L. B. Ob. 1692."—Little Boston let him be, when we talk about him. The ring he wears labels him well enough. There is stuff in the little man, or he wouldn't stick so manfully by this crooked, crotchety old town. Give him a chance.—You will drop the Sculpin, won't you?—I said to the young fellow.

Drop him?—he answered,—I ha'n't took him up yet.

No, no,—the term,—I said,—the term. Don't call him so any more, if you please. Call him Little Boston, if you like.

All right,—said the young fellow.—I wouldn't be hard on the poor little—

The word he used was objectionable in point of significance and of grammar. It was a frequent termination of certain adjectives among the Romans,—as of those designating a person following the sea, or given to rural pursuits. It is classed by custom among the profane words; why, it is hard to say,—but it is largely used in the street by those who speak of their fellows in pity or in wrath.

I never heard the young fellow apply the name of the odious pretended fish to the little man from that day forward.

— Here we are, then, at our boarding-house. First, myself, the Professor, a little way from the head of the table, on the right, looking down, where the "Autocrat" used to sit. At the further end sits the Landlady. At the head of the table, just now, the Koh-i-noor, or the gentleman with the *diamond.* Opposite me is a Venerable Gentleman with a bland countenance, who as yet has spoken little. The Divinity-Student is my neighbour on the right,—and further down, that Young Fellow of whom I have repeatedly spoken. The Landlady's Daughter sits near the Koh-i-noor, as I said. The Poor Relation near the Landlady. At the right upper corner is a fresh-

looking youth of whose name and history I have as yet learned nothing. Next the further left-hand corner, near the lower end of the table, sits the deformed person. The chair at his side, occupying that corner, is empty. I need not specially mention the other boarders, with the exception of Benjamin Franklin, the landlady's son, who sits near his mother. We are a tolerably assorted set,—difference enough and likeness enough; but still it seems to me there is something wanting. The Landlady's Daughter is the *prima donna* in the way of feminine attractions. I am not quite satisfied with this young lady. She wears more "jewelry," as certain young ladies call their trinkets, than I care to see on a person in her position. Her voice is strident, her laugh too much like a giggle, and she has that foolish way of dancing and bobbing like a quillfloat with a "minnum" biting the hook below it, which one sees and weeps over sometimes in persons of more pretensions. I can't help hoping we shall put something into that empty chair yet which will add the missing string to our social harp. I hear talk of a rare Miss who is expected. Something in the school-girl way, I believe. We shall see.

—My friend who calls himself *The Autocrat* has given me a caution which I am going to repeat, with my comment upon it, for the benefit of all concerned.

Professor,—said he one day,—don't you think your brain will run dry before a year 's out, if you don't get the pump to help the cow? Let me tell you what happened to me once. I put a little money into a bank, and bought a check-book, so that I might draw it as I wanted, in sums to suit. Things went on nicely for a time; scratching with a pen was as easy as rubbing Aladdin's Lamp; and my blank check-book seemed to be a dictionary of possibilities, in which I could find all the synonyms of happiness, and realise any one of them on the spot. A check came back to me at last with these two words on it,—*No funds.* My check-book was a volume of waste-paper.

Now, Professor,—said he,—I have drawn something out of your bank, you know; and just so sure as you keep drawing out your soul's currency without making new deposits, the next thing will be, *No funds,*—and then where will you be, my boy? These little bits of paper mean your gold and your silver and your copper, Professor; and you will certainly break up and go to

pieces, if you don't hold on to your metallic basis.

There is something in that,—said I.—Only I rather think life can coin thought somewhat faster than I can count it off in words. What if one shall go round and dry up with soft napkins all the dew that falls of a June evening on the leaves of his garden? Shall there be no more dew on those leaves thereafter? Marry, yea,—many drops large and round and full of moonlight as those thou shalt have absterged!

Here am I, the Professor,—a man who has lived long enough to have plucked the flowers of life and come to the berries,—which are not always sad-coloured, but sometimes golden-hued as the crocus of April, or rosy-cheeked as the damask of June; a man who staggered against books as a baby, and will totter against them, if he lives to decrepitude; with a brain as full of tingling thoughts, such as they are, as a limb which we call "asleep," because it is so particularly awake, is of pricking points; presenting a keyboard of nerve-pulps, not as yet tanned or ossified, to the finger touch of all outward agencies; knowing something of the filmy threads of this web of life in which we insects buzz awhile, waiting for the grey old

spider to come along ; contented enough with daily realities, but twirling on his finger the key of a private Bedlam of ideals ; in knowledge feeding with the fox oftener than with the stork,—loving better the breadth of a fertilising inundation than the depth of a narrow artesian well ; finding nothing too small for his contemplation in the markings of the *grammatophora subtilissima*, and nothing too large in the movement of the solar system towards the star Lambda of the constellation Hercules ;—and the question is, whether there is anything left for me, the Professor, to suck out of creation, after my lively friend has had his straw in the bung-hole of the Universe !

A man's mental reactions with the atmosphere of life must go on, whether he will or no, as between his blood and the air he breathes. As to catching the residuum of the process, or what we call *thought*,—the gaseous ashes of burned-out *thinking*,—the excretion of mental respiration,—that will depend on many things, as, on having a favourable intellectual temperature about one, and a fitting receptacle.—I sow more thought-seeds in twenty-four hours' travel over the desert-sand along which my lonely consciousness paces day and night, than I

shall throw into soil where it will germinate, in a year. All sorts of bodily and mental perturbations come between us and the due projection of our thought. The pulse-like "fits of easy and difficult transmission" seem to reach even the transparent medium through which our souls are seen. We know our humanity by its often intercepted rays, as we tell a revolving light from a star or meteor by its constantly recurring obscuration.

An illustrious scholar once told me, that, in the first lecture he ever delivered, he spoke but half his allotted time, and felt as if he had told all he knew. Braham came forward once to sing one of his most famous and familiar songs, and for his life could not recall the first line of it;—he told his mishap to the audience, and they screamed it at him in a chorus of a thousand voices. Milton could not write to suit himself, except from the autumnal to the vernal equinox. One in the clothing business, who, there is reason to suspect, may have inherited by descent the great poet's impressible temperament, let a customer slip through his fingers one day without fitting him with a new garment. "Ah!" said he to a friend of mine, who was standing by, "if it hadn't been for that confounded headache of mine this morn-

ing, I'd have had a coat on that man, in spite of himself, before he left the store." A passing throb, only,—but it deranged the nice mechanism required to persuade the accidental human being, x, into a given piece of broadcloth, a.

We must take care not to confound this frequent difficulty of transmission of our ideas with want of ideas. I suppose that a man's mind does in time form a neutral salt with the elements in the universe for which it has special elective affinities. In fact, I look upon a library as a kind of mental chemist's shop, filled with the crystals of all forms and hues which have come from the union of individual thought with local circumstances or universal principles.

When a man has worked out his special affinities in this way, there is an end of his genius as a real solvent. No more effervescence and hissing tumult as he pours his sharp thought on the world's biting alkaline unbeliefs! No more corrosion of the old monumental tablets covered with lies! No more taking up of dull earths, and turning them, first into clear solutions, and then into lustrous prisms!

I, the Professor, am very much like other men. I shall not find out when I have used

up my affinities. What a blessed thing it is, that Nature, when she invented, manufactured, and patented her authors, contrived to make critics out of the chips that were left! Painful as the task is, they never fail to warn the author, in the most impressive manner, of the probabilities of failure in what he has undertaken. Sad as the necessity is to their delicate sensibilities, they never hesitate to advertise him of the decline of his powers, and to press upon him the propriety of retiring before he sinks into imbecility. Trusting to their kind offices, I shall endeavour to fulfil—

(*Bridget enters and begins clearing the table.*)

— The following poem is my (The Professor's) only contribution to the great department of Ocean-Cable literature. As all the poets of this country will be engaged for the next six weeks in writing for the premium offered by the Crystal-Palace Company for the Burns Centenary (so called, according to our Benjamin Franklin, because there will be na'ry a cent for any of us), poetry will be very scarce and dear. Consumers may, consequently, be glad to take the present article, which, by the aid of a Latin tutor and a Professor of Chemis-

try, will be found intelligible to the educated classes.

DE SAUTY.

AN ELECTRO-CHEMICAL ECLOGUE.

Professor. *Blue-Nose.*

PROFESSOR.

Tell me, O Provincial ! speak, Ceruleo-Nasal !
Lives there one De Sauty extant now among you,
Whispering Boanerges, son of silent thunder,
Holding talk with nations ?

Is there a De Sauty, ambulant on Tellus,
Bifid-cleft like mortals, dormient in night-cap,
Having sight, smell, hearing, food-receiving feature
Three times daily patent ?

Breathes there such a being, O Ceruleo-Nasal ?
Or is he a *mythus*,—ancient word for "humbug,"—
Such as Livy told about the wolf that wet-nursed Romulus and Remus ?

Was he born of woman, this alleged De Sauty ?
Or a living product of galvanic action,
Like the *acarus* bred in Crosse's flint-solution ?
Speak, thou Cyano-Rhinal !

BLUE-NOSE.

Many things thou askest, jackknife-bearing stranger,
Much-conjecturing mortal, pork-and-treacle-waster!
Pretermit thy whittling, wheel thine ear-flap toward me,
Thou shalt hear them answered.

When the charge galvanic tingled through the cable,
At the polar focus of the wire electric
Suddenly appeared a white-faced man among us:
Called himself "DE SAUTY."

As the small opossum held in pouch maternal
Grasps the nutrient organ whence the term *mammalia*,
So the unknown stranger held the wire electric,
Sucking in the current.

When the current strengthened, bloomed the pale-faced stranger,—
Took no drink nor victual, yet grew fat and rosy,—
And from time to time, in sharp articulation,
Said, "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

From the lonely station passed the utterance,
spreading
Through the pines and hemlocks to the groves
of steeples,
Till the land was filled with loud reverberations
Of "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

When the current slackened, drooped the mystic
stranger,—
Faded, faded, faded, as the stream grew weaker,—
Wasted to a shadow, with a hartshorn odour
Of disintegration.

Drops of deliquescence glistened on his forehead,
Whitened round his feet the dust of efflorescence,
Till one Monday morning, when the flow sus-
pended,
There was no De Sauty.

Nothing but a cloud of elements organic,
C. O. H. N. Ferrum, Chor. Flu. Sil. Potassa,
Calc. Sod. Phosph. Mag. Sulphur, Mang. (?)
Alumin. (?) Cuprum, (?)
Such as man is made of.

Born of stream galvanic, with it he had perished!
There is no De Sauty now there is no current!
Give us a new cable, then again we 'll hear him
Cry, "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

II.

BACK again!—A turtle—which means a tortoise—is fond of his shell; but if you put a live coal on his back, he crawls out of it. So the boys say.

It is a libel on the turtle. He grows to his shell, and his shell is in his body as much as his body is in his shell—I don't think there is one of our boarders quite so testudineous as I am. Nothing but a combination of motives, more peremptory than the coal on the turtle's back, could have got me to leave the shelter of my carapace; and after memorable interviews, and kindest hospitalities, and grand sights, and huge influx of patriotic pride,—for every American owns all America,—

"Creation's heir,—the world, the world is"

his, if anybody's,—I come back with the feeling which a boned turkey might experience, if, retaining his consciousness, he were allowed to resume his skeleten.

Welcome, O Fighting Gladiator, and Re-

cumbent Cleopatra, and Dying Warrior, whose classic outlines (reproduced in the calcined mineral of Lutetia) crown my loaded shelves! Welcome, ye triumphs of pictorial art (repeated by the magic graver) that look down upon me from the walls of my sacred cell! Vesalius, as Titian drew him, high-fronted, still-eyed, thick-bearded, with signet-ring, as beseems a gentleman, with book and carelessly-held eyeglass, marking him a scholar; thou, too, Jan Kuyper, commonly called Jan Praktiseer, old man of a century and seven years besides, father of twenty sons and two daughters, cut in copper by Houbraken, bought from a portfolio on one of the Paris *quais;* and ye Three Trees of Rembrandt, black in shadow against the blaze of sunlight; and thou Rosy Cottager of Sir Joshua,—thy roses hinted by the peppery burin of Bartolozzi; ye, too, of lower grades in nature, yet not unlovely nor unrenowned, Young Bull of Paulus Potter, and Sleeping Cat of Cornelius Visscher; welcome once more to my eyes! The old books look out from the shelves, and I seem to read on their backs something besides their titles,—a kind of solemn greeting. The crimson carpet flushes warm under my feet. The arm-chair hugs me; the

swivel-chair spins round me, as if it were giddy with pleasure; the vast recumbent *fauteuil* stretches itself out under my weight, as one joyous with food and wine stretches in after-dinner laughter.

The boarders were pleased to say that they were glad to get me back. One of them ventured a compliment, namely,—that I talked as if I believed what I said.—This was apparently considered something unusual, by its being mentioned.

One who means to talk with entire sincerity,—I said,—always feels himself in danger of two things, namely,—an affectation of bluntness, like that of which Cornwall accuses Kent in *Lear*, and actual rudeness. What a man wants to do, in talking with a stranger, is to get and to give as much of the best and most real life that belongs to the two talkers as the time will let him. Life is short, and conversation apt to run to mere words. Mr. Huc I think it is, who tells us some very good stories about the way in which two Chinese gentlemen contrive to keep up a long talk without saying a word which has any meaning in it. Something like this is occasionally heard on this side of the Great Wall. The best Chinese talkers I know are some pretty

women whom I meet from time to time. Pleasant, airy, complimentary, the little flakes of flattery glimmering in their talk like the bits of gold-leaf in *eau-de-vie de Dantzic;* their accents flowing on in a soft ripple,—never a wave, and never a calm; words nicely fitted, but never a coloured phrase or a high-flavoured epithet; they turn air into syllables so gracefully, that we find meaning for the music they make as we find faces in the coals and fairy palaces in the clouds. There is something very odd, though, about this mechanical talk.

You have sometimes been in a train on the railroad when the engine was detached a long way from the station you were approaching? Well, you have noticed how quietly and rapidly the cars kept on, just as if the locomotive were drawing them? Indeed, you would not have suspected that you were travelling on the strength of a dead fact, if you had not seen the engine running away from you on a side-track. Upon my conscience, I believe some of these pretty women detach their minds entirely, sometimes, from their talk,—and, what is more, that we never know the difference. Their lips let off the fluty syllables just as their fingers would sprinkle the music-drops from

their pianos; unconscious habit turns the phrase of thought into words just as it does that of music into notes.—Well, they govern the world for all that,—these sweet-lipped women,—because beauty is the index of a larger fact than wisdom.

—The Bombazine wanted an explanation.

Madam,—said I,—wisdom is the abstract of the past, but beauty is the promise of the future.

—All this, however, is not what I was going to say. Here am I, suppose, seated—we will say at a dinner-table—alongside of an intelligent Englishman. We look in each other's faces,—we exchange a dozen words. One thing is settled: we mean not to offend each other,—to be perfectly courteous,—more than courteous; for we are the entertainer and the entertained, and cherish particularly amiable feelings to each other. The claret is good; and if our blood reddens a little with its warm crimson, we are none the less kind for it.

—I don't think people that talk over their victuals are like to say anything very great, especially if they get their heads muddled with strong drink before they begin jabberin'.

The Bombazine uttered this with a sugary

sourness, as if the words had been steeped in a solution of acetate of lead.—The boys of my time used to call a hit like this a "side-winder."

—I must finish this woman.—

Madam,—I said,—the Great Teacher seems to have been fond of talking as he sat at meat. Because this was a good while ago, in a far-off place, you forget what the true fact of it was,—that those were real dinners, where people were hungry and thirsty, and where you met a very miscellaneous company. Probably there was a great deal of loose talk among the guests; at any rate, there was always wine, we may believe.

Whatever may be the hygienic advantages or disadvantages of wine,—and I for one, except for certain particular ends, believe in water, and, I blush to say it, in black tea,—there is no doubt about its being the grand specific against dull dinners. A score of people come together in all moods of mind and body. The problem is, in the space of one hour, more or less, to bring them all into the same condition of slightly exalted life. Food alone is enough for one person, perhaps,—talk, alone, for another; but the grand equaliser and fraterniser, which works up the radiators to their maximum radiation,

and the absorbents to their maximum receptivity, is now just where it was when

The conscious water saw its Lord and blushed,

—when six great vessels containing water, the whole amounting to more than a hogshead-full were changed into the best of wine. I once wrote a song about wine, in which I spoke so warmly of it that I was afraid some would think it was written *inter pocula;* whereas it was composed in the bosom of my family, under the most tranquillising domestic influences.

—The divinity-student turned towards me, looking mischievous.—Can you tell me,—he said,—who wrote a song for a temperance celebration once, of which the following is a verse ?—

Alas for the loved one, too gentle and fair
The joys of the banquet to chasten and share !
Her eye lost its light that his goblet might shine,
And the rose of her cheek was dissolved in his wine !

I did,—I answered.—What are you going to do about it ?—I will tell you another line I wrote long ago :—

Don't be "consistent,"—but be simply *true.*

The longer I live, the more I am satisfied

of two things: first, that the truest lives are those that are cut rose-diamond-fashion, with many facets answering to the many-planed aspects of the world about them; secondly, that society is always trying in some way or other to grind us down to a single flat surface. It is hard work to resist this grinding-down action.—Now give me a chance. Better eternal and universal abstinence than the brutalities of those days that made wives and mothers and daughters and sisters blush for those whom they should have honoured, as they came reeling home from their debaucheries! Yet better even excess than lying and hypocrisy; and if wine is upon all our tables, let us praise it for its colour and fragrance and social tendency, so far as it deserves, and not hug a bottle in the closet and pretend not to know the use of a wine-glass at a public dinner! I think you will find that people who honestly mean to be true really contradict themselves much more rarely than those who try to be "consistent." But a great many things we say can be made to appear contradictory, simply because they are partial views of a truth, and may often look unlike at first, as a front view of a face and its profile often do.

Here is a distinguished divine, for whom

I have great respect, for I owe him a charming hour at one of our literary anniversaries, and he has often spoken noble words; but he holds up a remark of my friend the "Autocrat,"—which I grieve to say he twice misquotes, by omitting the very word which gives it its significance,—the word *fluid*, intended to typify the mobility of the restricted will,—holds it up, I say, as if it attacked the reality of the self-determining principle, instead of illustrating its limitations by an image. Now I will not explain any farther, still less defend, and least of all attack, but simply quote a few lines from one of my friend's poems, printed more than ten years ago, and ask the distinguished gentleman where *he* has ever asserted more strongly or absolutely the independent will of the "subcreative centre," as my heretical friend has elsewhere called man.

—Thought, conscience, will, to make them all
thy own
He rent a pillar from the eternal throne!
—Made in His image, thou must nobly dare
The thorny crown of sovereignty to share.
—Think not too meanly of thy low estate;
Thou hast a choice; to choose is to create!

If he will look a little closely, he will see

that the profile and the full-face views of the will are both true and perfectly consistent.

Now let us come back, after this long digression, to the conversation with the intelligent Englishman. We begin skirmishing with a few light ideas,—testing for thoughts,—as our electro-chemical friend, De Sauty, if there were such a person, would test for his current; trying a little litmus-paper for acids, and then a slip of turmeric-paper for alkalies, as chemists do with unknown compounds; flinging the lead, and looking at the shells and sands it brings up to find out whether we are like to keep in shallow water, or shall have to drop the deep-sea line;—in short, seeing what we have to deal with. If the Englishman gets his H's pretty well placed, he comes from one of the higher grades of the British social order, and we shall find him a good companion.

But, after all, here is a great fact between us. We belong to two different civilisations, and, until we recognise what separates us, we are talking like Pyramus and Thisbe, without any hole in the wall to talk through. Therefore, on the whole, if he were a superior fellow, incapable of mistaking it for personal conceit, I think I would let out the fact of the real American

feeling about Old-World folks. They are children to us in certain points of view. They are playing with toys we have done with for whole generations. That silly little drum they are always beating on, and the trumpet and the feather they make so much noise and cut such a figure with, we have not quite outgrown, but play with much less seriously and constantly than they do. Then there is a whole museum of wigs, and masks, and lace-coats, and gold-sticks, and grimaces, and phrases, which we laugh at honestly, without affectation, that are still used in the Old-World puppet-shows. I don't think we on our part ever understand the Englishman's concentrated loyalty and specialised reverence. But then we do think more of a man, as such (barring some little difficulties about race and complexion which the Englishman will touch us on presently), than any people that ever lived did think of him. Our reverence is a great deal wider, if it is less intense. We have caste among us, to some extent, it is true; but there is never a collar on the American wolf-dog such as you often see on the English mastiff, notwithstanding his robust, hearty individuality.

This confronting of two civilisations is

always a grand sensation to me ; it is like cutting through the isthmus and letting the two oceans swim into each other's laps. The trouble is, it is so difficult to let out the whole American nature without its self-assertion seeming to take a personal character. But I never enjoy the Englishman so much as when he talks of church and king like Manco Capac among the Peruvians. Then you get the real British flavour, which the cosmopolite Englishman loses.

How much better this thorough interpenetration of ideas than a barren interchange of courtesies, or a bush-fighting argument, in which each man tries to cover as much of himself and expose as much of his opponent as the tangled thicket of the disputed ground will let him !

—My thoughts flow in layers or strata, at least three deep. I follow a slow person's talk, and keep a perfectly clear under-current of my own beneath it. Under both runs obscurely a consciousness belonging to a third train of reflections, independent of the two others. I will try to write out a mental movement in three parts.

A.—First voice, or Mental Soprano,—thought follows a woman talking.

B.—Second voice, or Mental Barytone,—my running accompaniment.

C.—Third voice, or Mental Basso,—low grumble of an importunate self-repeating idea.

A.—White lace, three skirts, looped with flowers, wreath of apple-blossoms, gold bracelets, diamond pin and ear-rings, the most delicious *berthe* you ever saw, white satin slippers—

B.—Deuce take her! What a fool she is! Hear her chatter! (Look out of window just here.—Two pages and a half of description, if it were all written out, in one tenth of a second.)—Go ahead, old lady! (Eye catches picture over fireplace.) There's that infernal family nose! Came over in the *Mayflower* on the first old fool's face. Why don't they wear a ring in it?

C.—You 'll be late at lecture,—late at lecture—late,—late,—late—

I observe that a deep layer of thought sometimes makes itself felt through the superincumbent strata, thus:—The usual single or double currents shall flow on, but there shall be an influence blending with them, disturbing them in an obscure way, until

all at once I say, — Oh, there! I knew there was something troubling me,—and the thought which had been working through comes up to the surface clear, definite, and articulates itself,—a disagreeable duty, perhaps or an unpleasant recollection.

The inner world of thought and the outer world of events are alike in this, that they are both brimful. There is no space between consecutive thoughts, or between the never-ending series of actions. All pack tight, and mould their surfaces against each other, so that in the long run there is a wonderful average uniformity in the forms of both thoughts and actions, — just as you find that cylinders crowded all become hexagonal prisms, and spheres pressed together are formed into regular polyhedra.

Every event that a man would master must be mounted on the run, and no man ever caught the reins of a thought except as it galloped by him. So, to carry out, with another comparison, my remark about the layers of thought, we may consider the mind, at it moves among thoughts or events, like a circus-rider whirling round with a great troop of horses. He can mount a fact or an idea, and guide it more or less completely, but he cannot stop it. So, as I said

in another way at the beginning, he can stride two or three thoughts at once, but not break their steady walk, trot, or gallop. He can only take his foot from the saddle of one thought and put it on that of another.

— What is the saddle of a thought? Why, a word, of course.—Twenty years after you have dismissed a thought, it suddenly wedges up to you through the press, as if it had been steadily galloping round and round all that time without a rider.

The will does not act in the interspaces of thought, for there are no such interspaces, but simply steps from the back of one moving thought upon that of another.

— I should like to ask,—said the divinity-student,—since we are getting into metaphysics, how you can admit space, if all things are in contact, and how you can admit time, if it is always *now* to something?

— I thought it best not to hear this question.

— I wonder if you know this class of philosophers in books or elsewhere. One of them makes his bow to the public, and exhibits an unfortunate truth bandaged up so that it cannot stir hand or foot,—as helpless, apparently, and unable to take care of itself, as an Egyptian mummy. He then proceeds,

with the air and method of a master, to take off the bandages. Nothing can be neater than the way in which he does it. But as he takes off layer after layer, the truth seems to grow smaller and smaller, and some of its outlines begin to look like something we have seen before. At last, when he has got them all off, and the truth struts out naked, we recognise it as a diminutive and familiar acquaintance whom we have known in the streets all our lives. The fact is, the philosopher has coaxed the truth into his study and put all those bandages on ; of course it is not very hard for him to take them off. Still, a great many people like to watch the process,—he does it so neatly !

Dear ! dear ! I am ashamed to write and talk, sometimes, when I see how those functions of the large-brained, thumb-opposing plantigrade are abused by my fellow-vertebrates,—perhaps by myself. How they spar for wind, instead of hitting from the shoulder !

—The young fellow called John arose and placed himself in a neat fighting attitude.—Fetch on the fellah that makes them long words ! — he said, — and planted a straight hit with the right fist in the concave palm of the left hand with a click like a cup and

ball.—You small boy there, hurry up that *Webster's Unabridged!*

The little gentleman with the malformation, before described, shocked the propriety of the breakfast-table by a loud utterance of three words, of which the two last were "*Webster's Unabridged,*" and the first was an emphatic monosyllable.—Beg pardon,—he added,—forgot myself. But let us have an English dictionary, if we are to have any. I don't believe in clipping the coin of the realm, Sir! If I put a weathercock on my house, Sir, I want it to tell which way the wind blows up aloft,—off from the prairies to the ocean, or off from the ocean to the prairies, or any way it wants to blow! I don't want a weathercock with a winch in an old gentleman's study that he can take hold of and turn, so that the vane shall point west when the great wind overhead is blowing east with all its might, Sir! Wait till we give you a dictionary, Sir! It takes Boston to do that thing, Sir!

—Some folks think water can't run downhill anywhere out of Boston,—remarked the Koh-i-noor.

I don't know what *some folks think* so well as I know what *some fools say*, —rejoined the Little Gentleman.—If importing

most dry goods made the best scholars, I dare say you would know where to look for 'em.—Mr. Webster couldn't spell, Sir, or wouldn't spell, Sir,—at any rate, he didn't spell; and the end of it was a fight between the owners of some copyrights and the dignity of this noble language which we have inherited from our English fathers. Language!—the blood of the soul, Sir! into which our thoughts run and out of which they grow! We know what a word is worth here in Boston. Young Sam Adams got up on the stage at Commencement, out at Cambridge there, with his gown on, the Governor and Council looking on in the name of his Majesty King George the Second, and the girls looking down out of the galleries, and taught people how to spell a word that wasn't in the Colonial dictionaries! *R-e, re, s-i-s, sis, t-a-n-c-e, tance, Resistance!* That was in '43, and it was a good many years before the Boston boys began spelling it with their muskets;—but when they did begin, they spelt it so loud that the old bedridden women in the English almshouses heard every syllable! Yes, yes, yes,—it was a good while before those other two Boston boys got the class so far along that it could spell those two hard words, *Independence* and *Union!*

I tell you what, Sir, there are a thousand lives, ay, sometimes a million, go to get a new word into a language that is worth speaking. We know what language means too well here in Boston to play tricks with it. We never make a new word till we have made a new thing or a new thought, Sir! When we shaped the new mould of this continent, we had to make a few. When, by God's permission, we abrogated the primal curse of maternity, we had to make a word or two. The cutwater of this great Leviathan clipper, the OCCIDENTAL,—this thirty-masted wind-and-steam wave-crusher,—must throw a little spray over the human vocabulary as it splits the waters of a new world's destiny!

He rose as he spoke, until his stature seemed to swell into the fair human proportions. His feet must have been on the upper round of his high chair;—that was the only way I could account for it.

Puts her through fust-rate,—said the young fellow whom the boarders call John.

The venerable and kind-looking old gentleman who sits opposite said he remembered Sam Adams as Governor. An old man in a brown coat. Saw him take the Chair on Boston Common. Was a boy then, and remembers sitting on the fence in front of

the old Hancock house. Recollects he had a glazed 'lection-bun, and sat eating it and looking down on to the Common. Lalocks flowered late that year, and he got a great bunch off from the bushes in the Hancock front-yard.

Them 'lection-buns are no go,—said the young man John, so called.—I know the trick. Give a fellah a fo'penny bun in the mornin', an' he downs the whole of it. In about an hour it swells up in his stomach as big as a football, and *his* feedin's sp'ilt for *that* day. That 's the way to stop off a young one from eatin' up all the 'lection dinner.

Salem ! Salem ! not Boston,—shouted the little man.

But the Koh-i-noor laughed a great rasping laugh, and the boy Benjamin Franklin looked sharp at his mother, as if he remembered the bun-experiment as a part of his past personal history.

The little gentleman was holding a fork in his left hand. He stabbed a boulder of home-made bread with it, mechanically, and looked at it as if it ought to shriek. It did not,—but he sat as if watching it.

— Language is a solemn thing,—I said.— It grows out of life,—out of its agonies and ecstasies, its wants and its weariness. Every

language is a temple, in which the soul of those who speak it is enshrined. Because time softens its outlines and rounds the sharp angles of its cornices, shall a fellow take a pickaxe to help time? Let me tell you what comes of meddling with things that can take care of themselves.—A friend of mine had a watch given him, when he was a boy,—a "bull's eye," with a loose silver case that came off like an oyster-shell from its contents; you know them,—the cases that you hang on your thumb, while the *core*, or the real watch, lies in your hand as naked as a peeled apple. Well, he began with taking off the case, and so on from one liberty to another, until he got it fairly open, and there were the works, as good as if they were alive, —crown-wheel, balance-wheel, and all the rest. All right except one thing,—there was a confounded little *hair* had got tangled round the balance-wheel. So my young Solomon got a pair of tweezers, and caught hold of the *hair* very nicely, and pulled it right out, without touching any of the wheels, —when,—buzzzZZZ! and the watch had done up twenty-four hours in double magnetic-telegraph time!—The English language was wound up to run some thousands of years, I trust; but if everybody is to be

pulling at everything he thinks is a *hair*, our grandchildren will have to make the discovery that it is a hair-*spring*, and the old Anglo-Norman soul's-timekeeper will run down, as so many other dialects have done before it. I can't stand this meddling any better than you, Sir. But we have a great deal to be proud of in the lifelong labours of that old lexicographer, and we mustn't be ungrateful. Besides, don't let us deceive ourselves,—the war of the dictionaries is only a disguised rivalry of cities, colleges, and especially of publishers. After all, it is likely that the language will shape itself by larger forces than phonography and dictionary-making. You may spade up the ocean as much as you like, and harrow it afterwards, if you can,—but the moon will still lead the tides, and the winds will form their surface.

—Do you know *Richardson's Dictionary?* —I said to my neighbour the divinity-student.

Haöw?—said the divinity-student.—He coloured, as he noticed on my face a twitch in one of the muscles which tuck up the corner of the mouth (*zygomaticus major*), and which I could not hold back from making a little movement on its own account.

It was too late.—A country-boy, lassoed when he was a half-grown colt. Just as good as a city-boy, and in some ways, perhaps, better,—but caught a little too old not to carry some marks of his earlier ways of life. Foreigners, who have talked a strange tongue half their lives, return to the language of their childhood in their dying hours. Gentlemen in fine linen, and scholars in large libraries, taken by surprise, or in a careless moment, will sometimes let slip a word they knew as boys in homespun and have not spoken since that time,—but it lay there under all their culture. That is one way you may know the country-boys after they have grown rich or celebrated; another is by the odd old family names, particularly those of the Hebrew prophets, which the good old people have saddled them with.

—Boston has enough of England about it to make a good English dictionary,—said that fresh-looking youth whom I have mentioned as sitting at the right upper corner of the table.

I turned and looked him full in the face, —for the pure, manly intonations arrested me. The voice was youthful, but full of character.—I suppose some persons have a

peculiar susceptibility in the matter of voice. —Hear this.

Not long after the American Revolution, a young lady was sitting in her father's chaise in a street of this town of Boston. She overheard a little girl talking or singing, and was mightily taken with the tones of her voice. Nothing would satisfy her but she must have that little girl come and live in her father's house. So the child came, being then nine years old. Until her marriage she remained under the same roof with the young lady. Her children became successively inmates of the lady's dwelling; and now, *seventy* years, or thereabouts, since the young lady heard the child singing, one of that child's children and one of her grandchildren are with her in that home, where she, no longer young, except in heart, passes her peaceful days.—Three generations linked together by so light a breath of accident!

I liked the sound of this youth's voice, I said, and his look when I came to observe him a little more closely. His complexion had something better than the bloom and freshness which had first attracted me;—it had that diffused *tone* which is a sure index of wholesome lusty life. A fine liberal style of nature it seemed to be: hair crisped,

moustache springing thick and dark, head firmly planted, lips finished, as one commonly sees them in gentlemen's families, a pupil well contracted, and a mouth that opened frankly with a white flash of teeth that looked as if they could serve him as they say Ethan Allen's used to serve their owner,—to draw nails with. This is the kind of fellow to walk a frigate's deck and bowl his broadsides into the "*Gadlant Thudnder-bomb*," or any forty-portholed adventurer who would like to exchange a few tons of iron compliments. — I don't know what put this into my head, for it was not till some time afterward I learned the young fellow had been in the naval school at Annapolis. Something had happened to change his plan of life, and he was now studying engineering and architecture in Boston.

When the youth made the short remark which drew my attention to him, the little deformed gentleman turned round and took a long look at him.

Good for the Boston boy !—he said.

I am not a Boston boy,—said the youth, smiling,—I am a Marylander.

I don't care where you come from,—we 'll make a Boston man of you,—said the little gentleman.—Pray, what part of Maryland

did you come from, and how shall I call you?

The poor youth had to speak pretty loud, as he was at the right upper corner of the table, and the little gentleman next the lower left-hand corner. His face flushed a little, but he answered pleasantly,—telling who he was, as if the little man's infirmity gave him a right to ask any questions he wanted to.

Here is the place for you to sit,—said the little gentleman, pointing to the vacant chair next his own, at the corner.

You 're go'n' to have a young lady next you, if you wait till to-morrow,—said the landlady to him.

He did not reply, but I had a fancy that he changed colour. It can't be that *he* has susceptibilities with reference to a contingent young lady! It can't be that he has had experiences which make him sensitive! Nature could not be quite so cruel as to set a heart throbbing in that poor little cage of ribs! There is no use in wasting notes of admiration. I must ask the landlady about him.

These are some of the facts she furnished. —Has not been long with her. Brought a sight of furniture,—couldn't hardly get

some of it up-stairs. Hasn't seemed particularly attentive to the ladies. The Bombazine (whom she calls Cousin something or other) has tried to enter into conversation with him, but retired with the impression that he was indifferent to ladies' society. Paid his bill the other day without saying a word about it. Paid it in gold,—had a great heap of twenty-dollar pieces. Hires her best room. Thinks he is a very nice little man, but lives dreadful lonely up in his chamber. Wants the care of some capable nuss. Never pitied anybody more in her life,—never see a more interestin' person.

—My intention was, when I began making these notes, to let them consist principally of conversations between myself and the other boarders. So they will, very probably; but my curiosity is excited about this little boarder of ours, and my reader must not be disappointed if I sometimes interrupt a discussion to give an account of whatever fact or traits I may discover about him. It so happens that his room is next to mine, and I have the opportunity of observing many of his ways without any active movements of curiosity. That his room contains heavy furniture, that he is a restless little body and is apt to be up late, that he talks

to himself, and keeps mainly to himself, is nearly all I have yet found out.

One curious circumstance happened lately, which I mention without drawing an absolute inference.—Being at the studio of a sculptor with whom I am acquainted, the other day, I saw a remarkable cast of a *left arm.* On my asking where the model came from, he said it was taken direct from the arm of a *deformed person*, who had employed one of the Italian moulders to make the cast. It was a curious case, it should seem, of one beautiful limb upon a frame otherwise singularly imperfect—I have repeatedly noticed this little gentleman's use of his left arm. Can he have furnished the model I saw at the sculptor's ?

—So we are to have a new boarder tomorrow. I hope there will be something pretty and pleasing about her. A woman with a creamy voice, and finished in *alto rilievo*, would be a variety in the boarding-house,—a little more marrow and a little less sinew than our landlady and her daughter and the bombazine-clad female, all of whom are of the turkey-drumstick style of organisation. I don't mean that these are our only female companions ; but the rest being conversational non-combatants, mostly still,

sad feeders, who take in their food as locomotives take in wood and water, and then wither away from the table like blossoms that never come to fruit, I have not yet referred to them as individuals.

I wonder what kind of young person we shall see in that empty chair to-morrow!

—I read this song to the boarders after breakfast the other morning. It was written for our fellows;—you know who they are, of course.

THE BOYS.

Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?
If there has, take him out, without making a noise!
Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!
Old Time is a liar! We're twenty to-night!

We're twenty! We're twenty! Who says we are more?
He's tipsy,—young jackanapes!—show him the door!—
"Grey temples at twenty?"—Yes! *white*, if we please;
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!
Look close,—you will see not a sign of a flake;
We want some new garlands for those we have shed,—
And these are white roses in place of the red!

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,
Of talking (in public) as if we were old;—
That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge;"—
It's a neat little fiction,—of course it's all fudge.

That fellow's the "Speaker,"—the one on the right;
"Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you to-night?
That's our "Member of Congress, we say when we chaff;
There's the "Reverend" What's his name?—don't make me laugh!

That boy with the grave mathematical look
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was *true!*
So they chose him right in; a good joke it was, too!

There's a boy,—we pretend,—with a three-decker-brain,
That could harness a team with a logical chain;
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,
We called him "The Justice,"—but now he's "The Squire."

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith,—
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith,
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free,—
—Just read on his medal,—"My country,—of thee."

You hear that boy laughing?—you think he's all fun,—
But the angels laugh too, at the good he has done;
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we're boys,—always playing with tongue or with pen,—
And I sometimes have asked,—Shall we ever be men?
Shall we always be youthful and laughing and gay,
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its grey !
The stars of its Winter, the dews of its May !
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
Dear Father, take care of thy children, the Boys !

III.

The Professor talks with the Reader. He tells a Young Girl's Story.

WHEN the elements that went to the making of the first man, father of mankind, had been withdrawn from the world of unconscious matter, the balance of creation was disturbed. The materials that go to the making of one woman were set free by the abstraction from inanimate nature of one man's-worth of masculine constituents. These combined to make our first mother, by a logical necessity involved in the previous creation of our common father. All this, mythically, illustratively, and by no means doctrinally or polemically.

The man implies the woman, you will understand. The excellent gentleman whom I had the pleasure of setting right in a trifling matter a few weeks ago believes in the frequent occurrence of miracles at the present day. So do I. I believe, if you could find an uninhabited coral-reef island, in the

middle of the Pacific Ocean, with plenty of cocoa-palms and bread-fruit on it, and put a handsome young fellow, like our Marylander, ashore upon it, if you touched there a year afterwards, you would find him walking under the palm-trees arm in arm with a pretty woman.

Where would she come from?

Oh, that 's the miracle!

—I was just as certain, when I saw that fine, high-coloured youth at the upper right-hand corner of our table, that there would appear some fitting feminine counterpart to him, as if I had been a clairvoyant, seeing it all beforehand.

—I have a fancy that those Marylanders are just about near enough to the sun to ripen well.—How some of us fellows remember Joe and Harry, Baltimoreans, both! Joe, with his cheeks like lady-apples, and his eyes like black-heart cherries, and his teeth like the whiteness of the flesh of cocoa-nuts, and his laugh that set the chandelier-drops rattling overhead, as we sat at our sparkling banquets in those gay times! Harry, champion, by acclamation, of the College heavy-weights, broad-shouldered, bull-necked, square-jawed, six feet and trimmings, a little science, lots of pluck,

good-natured as a steer in peace, formidable as a red-eyed bison in the crack of hand-to-hand battle ! Who forgets the great muster-day, and the collision of the classic with the democratic forces? The huge butcher, fifteen stone,—two hundred and ten pounds, —good weight,—steps out like Telamonian Ajax, defiant. No words from Harry, the Baltimorean,—one of the quiet sort, who strike first, and do the talking, if there is any, afterwards. No words, but, in the place thereof, a clean, straight, hard hit, which took effect with a spank like the explosion of a percussion-cap, knocking the slayer of beeves down a sand-bank,—followed, alas ! by the too impetuous youth, so that both rolled down together, and the conflict terminated in one of those inglorious and inevitable Yankee *clinches*, followed by a general *mêlée*, which make our native fistic encounters so different from such admirably-ordered contests as that which I once saw at an English fair, where everything was done decently and in order, and the fight began and ended with such grave propriety, that a sporting parson need hardly have hesitated to open it with a devout petition, and, after it was over, dismiss the ring with a benediction.

I can't help telling one more story about this great field-day, though it is the most wanton and irrelevant digression. But all of us have a little speck of fight underneath our peace and good-will to men, — just a speck, for revolutions and great emergencies, you know,—so that we should not submit to be trodden quite flat by the first heavy-heeled aggressor that came along. You can tell a portrait from an ideal head, I suppose, and a true story from one spun out of the writer's invention. See whether this sounds true or not.

Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin sent out two fine blood-horses, Barefoot and Serab by name, to Massachusetts, something before the time I am talking of. With them came a Yorkshire groom, a stocky little fellow, in velvet breeches, who made that mysterious hissing noise, traditionary in English stables, when he rubbed down the silken-skinned racers, in great perfection. After the soldiers had come from the muster-field, and some of the companies were on the village-common, there was still some skirmishing between a few individuals who had not had the fight taken out of them. The little Yorkshire groom thought he must serve out somebody. So he threw himself into an approved scientific

attitude, and, in brief, emphatic language, expressed his urgent anxiety to accommodate any classical young gentleman who chose to consider himself a candidate for his attentions. I don't suppose there were many of the college boys that would have been a match for him in the art which Englishmen know so much more of than Americans, for the most part. However, one of the Sophomores, a very quiet, peaceable fellow, just stepped out of the crowd, and, running straight at the groom, as he stood there, sparring away, struck him with the sole of his foot, a straight blow, as if it had been with his fist,—and knocked him heels over head and senseless, so that he had to be carried off from the field. This ugly way of hitting is the great trick of the French *savate*, which is not commonly thought able to stand its ground against English pugilistic science.—These are old recollections, with not much to recommend them, except, perhaps, a dash of life, which may be worth a little something.

The young Marylander brought them all up, you may remember. He recalled to my mind those two splendid pieces of vitality I told you of. Both have been long dead. How often we see these great red flaring

flambeaux of life blown out, as it were, by a puff of wind,—and the little, single-wicked night-lamp of being, which some white-faced and attenuated invalid shades with trembling fingers, flickering on while they go out one after another, until its glimmer is all that is left to us of the generation it belonged to !

I told you that I was perfectly sure, beforehand, we should find some pleasing girlish or womanly shape to fill the blank at our table and match the dark-haired youth at the upper corner.

There she sits, at the very opposite corner, just as far off as accident could put her from this handsome fellow, by whose side she ought, of course, to be sitting. One of the "positive" blondes, as my friend, you may remember, used to call them. Tawny-haired, amber-eyed, full-throated, skin as white as a blanched almond. Looks dreamy to me, not self-conscious, though a black ribbon round her neck sets it off as a Marie-Antoinette's diamond-necklace could not do. So in her dress, there is a harmony of tints that looks as if an artist had run his eye over her and given a hint or two like the finishing touch to a picture. I can't help being struck with her, for she is at once

rounded and fine in feature, looks calm, as blondes are apt to, and as if she might run wild, if she were trifled with.—It is just as I knew it would be,—and anybody can see that our young Marylander will be dead in love with her in a week.

Then if that little man would only turn out immensely rich and have the good-nature to die and leave them all his money, it would be as nice as a three-volume novel.

The Little Gentleman is in a flurry, I suspect, with the excitement of having such a charming neighbour next him. I judge so mainly by his silence and by a certain rapt and serious look on his face, as if he were thinking of something that had happened, or that might happen, or that ought to happen,—or how beautiful her young life looked, or how hardly Nature had dealt with him, or something which struck him silent, at any rate. I made several conversational openings for him, but he did not fire up as he often does. I even went so far as to indulge in a fling at the State House, which, as we all know, is in truth a very imposing structure, covering less ground than St. Peter's, but of similar general effect. The little man looked up, but did not reply to my taunt. He said to the young lady, however, that

the State House was the Parthenon of our Acropolis, which seemed to please her, for she smiled, and he reddened a little,—so I thought. I don't think it right to watch persons who are the subjects of special infirmity,—but we all do it.

I see that they have crowded the chairs a little at that end of the table, to make room for another new-comer of the lady sort. A well-mounted, middle-aged preparation, wearing her hair without a cap,—pretty wide in the parting, though,—contours vaguely hinted,—features very quiet,—says little as yet, but seems to keep her eye on the young lady, as if having some responsibility for her—

My record is a blank for some days after this. In the meantime I have contrived to make out the person and the story of our young lady, who, according to appearances, ought to furnish us a heroine for a boarding-house romance before a year is out. It is very curious that she should prove connected with a person many of us have heard of. Yet, curious as it is, I have been a hundred times struck with the circumstance that the most remote facts are constantly striking each other; just as vessels starting

from ports thousands of miles apart pass close to each other in the naked breadth of the ocean, nay, sometimes even touch, in the dark, with a crack of timbers, a gurgling of water, a cry of startled sleepers, —a cry mysteriously echoed in warning dreams, as the wife of some Gloucester fisherman, some coasting skipper, wakes with a shriek, calls the name of her husband, and sinks back to uneasy slumbers upon her lonely pillow,—a widow.

O these mysterious meetings! Leaving all the vague, waste, endless spaces of the washing desert, the ocean-steamer and the fishing-smack sail straight towards each other as if they ran in grooves ploughed for them in the waters from the beginning of creation! Not only things and events, but our own thoughts, are so full of these surprises, that, if there were a reader in my parish who did not recognise the familiar occurrence of what I am now going to mention, I should think it a case for the missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of Intelligence among the Comfortable Classes.

There are about as many twins in the births of thought as of children. For the first time in your lives you learn some fact

or come across some idea. Within an hour, a day, a week, that same fact or idea strikes you from another quarter. It seems as if it had passed into space and bounded back upon you as an echo from the blank wall that shuts in the world of thought. Yet no possible connection exists between the two channels by which the thought or the fact arrived. Let me give an infinitesimal illustration.

One of the Boys mentioned, the other evening, in the course of a very pleasant poem he read us, a little trick of the Commons-table boarders, which I, nourished at the parental board, had never heard of. Young fellows being always hungry—Allow me to stop dead-short, in order to utter an aphorism which has been forming itself in one of the blank interior spaces of my intelligence, like a crystal in the cavity of a geode.

Aphorism by the Professor.

In order to know whether a human being is young or old, offer it food of different kinds at short intervals. If young, it will eat anything at any hour of the day or night. If old, it observes stated periods, and you might as well attempt to regulate the time

of high-water to suit a fishing party as to change these periods.

The crucial experiment is this. Offer a bulky and boggy bun to the suspected individual just ten minutes before dinner. If this is eagerly accepted and devoured, the fact of youth is established. If the subject of the question starts back and expresses surprise and incredulity, as if you could not possibly be in earnest, the fact of maturity is no less clear.

— Excuse me,—I return to my story of the Commons-table.— Young fellows being always hungry, and tea and dry toast being the meagre fare of the evening meal, it was a trick of some of the Boys to impale a slice of meat upon a fork, at dinner-time, and stick the fork holding it beneath the table, so that they could get it at tea-time. The dragons that guarded this table of the Hesperides found out the trick at last, and kept a sharp look-out for missing forks;—they knew where to find one, if it was not in its place,—Now the odd thing was, that, after waiting so many years to hear of this college trick, I should hear it mentioned *a second time* within the same twenty-four hours by a college youth of the present generation.

Strange, but true. And so it has happened to me and to every person, often and often, to be hit in rapid succession by these twinned facts or thoughts, as if they were linked like chain-shot.

I was going to leave the simple reader to wonder over this, taking it as an unexplained marvel. I think, however, I will turn over a furrow of subsoil in it.—The explanation is, of course, that in a great many thoughts there must be a few coincidences, and these instantly arrest our attention. Now we shall probably never have the least idea of the enormous number of impressions which pass through our consciousness, until in some future life we see the photographic record of our thoughts and the stereoscopic picture of our actions. There go more pieces to make up a conscious life or a living body than you think for. Why, some of you were surprised when a friend of mine told you there were fifty-eight separate pieces in a fiddle. How many "swimming glands"—solid, organised, regularly formed, rounded disks taking an active part in all your vital processes, part and parcel, each one of them, of your corporeal being—do you suppose are whirled along, like pebbles in a stream, with the blood which warms your frame and

colours your cheeks?—A noted German physiologist spread out a minute drop of blood, under the microscope, in narrow streaks, and counted the globules, and then made a calculation. The counting by the micrometer took him *a week*.—You have, my full-grown friend, of these little couriers in crimson or scarlet livery, running on your vital errands day and night as long as you live, sixty-five billions, five hundred and seventy thousand millions. Errors excepted.—Did I hear some gentleman say, "Doubted?"—I am the Professor. I sit in my chair with a petard under it that will blow me through the skylight of my lecture-room, if I do not know what I am talking about and whom I am quoting.

Now, my dear friends, who are putting your hands to your foreheads, and saying to yourselves that you feel a little confused, as if you had been waltzing until things began to whirl slightly round you, is it possible that you do not clearly apprehend the exact connection of all that I have been saying, and its bearing on what is now to come? Listen, then. The number of these living elements in our bodies illustrates the incalculable multitude of our thoughts; the number of our thoughts accounts for those frequent

coincidences spoken of; these coincidences in the world of thought illustrate those which we constantly observe in the world of outward events, of which the presence of the young girl now at our table, and proving to be the daughter of an old acquaintance some of us may remember, is the special example which led me through this labyrinth of reflections, and finally lands me at the commencement of this young girl's story, which, as I said, I have found the time and felt the interest to learn something of, and which I think I can tell without wronging the unconscious subject of my brief delineation.

IRIS.

You remember, perhaps, in some papers published awhile ago, an odd poem written by an old Latin tutor? He brought up at the verb *amo*, I love; as all of us do, and by and by Nature opened her great living dictionary for him at the word *filia*, a daughter. The poor man was greatly perplexed in choosing a name for her. *Lucretia* and *Virginia* were the first that he thought of; but then came up those pictured stories of Titus Livius, which he could never read without crying, though he had read them a hundred times.

— Lucretia sending for her husband and her father, each to bring one friend with him, and awaiting them in her chamber. To them her wrongs briefly. Let them see to the wretch,—she will take care of herself. Then the hidden knife flashes out and sinks into her heart. She slides from her seat, and falls dying. "Her husband and her father cry aloud."—No,—not Lucretia.

— Virginius,—a brown old soldier, father of a nice girl. She engaged to a very promising young man. Decemvir Appius takes a violent fancy to her,—must have her at any rate. Hires a lawyer to present the arguments in favour of the view that she was another man's daughter. There used to be lawyers in Rome that would do such things.—All right. There are two sides to everything. *Audi alteram partem.* The legal gentleman has no opinion,—he only states the evidence.—A doubtful case. Let the young lady be under the protection of the Honourable Decemvir until it can be looked up thoroughly.—Father thinks it best, on the whole, to give in. Will explain the matter, if the young lady and her maid will step this way. *That* is the explanation,—a stab with a butcher's knife, snatched

from a stall, meant for other lambs than this poor bleeding Virginia!

The old man thought over the story. Then he must have one look at the original. So he took down the first volume and read it over. When he came to that part where it tells how the young gentleman she was engaged to and a friend of his took up the poor girl's bloodless shape and carried it through the street, and how all the women followed, wailing, and asking if that was what their daughters were coming to, — if that was what they were to get for being good girls,—he melted down into his accustomed tears of pity and grief, and, through them all, of delight at the charming Latin of the narrative. But it was impossible to call his child Virginia. He could never look at her without thinking she had a knife sticking in her bosom.

Dido would be a good name, and a fresh one. She was a queen, and the founder of a great city. Her story had been immortalised by the greatest of poets,—for the old Latin tutor clove to "Virgilius Maro," as he called him, as closely as ever Dante did in his memorable journey. So he took down his Virgil,—it was the smooth-leafed, open-lettered quarto of Baskerville,—and began

reading the loves and mishaps of Dido. It wouldn't do. A lady who had not learned discretion by experience, and came to an evil end. He shook his head, as he sadly repeated,

"—misera ante diem, subitoque accensa furore;"

but when he came to the lines,

"Ergo Iris croceis per cœlum roscida pennis
Mille trahens varios adverso Sole colores,"

he jumped up with a great exclamation, which the particular recording angel who heard it pretended not to understand, or it might have gone hard with the Latin tutor some time or other.

"*Iris* shall be her name!"—he said. So her name was Iris.

—The natural end of a tutor is to perish by starvation. It is only a question of time, just as with the burning of college libraries. These all burn up sooner or later, provided they are not housed in brick or stone and iron. I don't mean that you will see in the registry of deaths that this or that particular tutor died of well-marked, uncomplicated starvation. They *may*, even, in extreme cases, be carried off by a thin, watery kind of apoplexy, which sounds very well in the

returns, but means little to those who know that it is only debility settling on the head. Generally, however, they fade and waste away under various pretexts, — calling it dyspepsia, consumption, and so on, to put a decent appearance upon the case and keep up the credit of the family and the institution where they have passed through the successive stages of inanition.

In some cases it takes a great many years to kill a tutor by the process in question. You see, they do get food and clothes and fuel, in appreciable quantities, such as they are. You will even notice rows of books in their rooms, and a picture or two,—things that look as if they had surplus money ; but these superfluities are the *water of crystallisation* to scholars, and you can never get them away till the poor fellows effloresce into dust. Do not be deceived. The tutor breakfasts on coffee made of beans, edulcorated with milk watered to the verge of transparency ; his mutton is tough and elastic, up to the moment when it becomes tired out and tasteless ; his coal is a sullen, sulphurous anthracite, which rusts into ashes, rather than burns, in the shallow grate ; his flimsy broadcloth is too thin for winter and too thick for summer. The greedy lungs of

fifty hot-blooded boys suck the oxygen from the air he breathes in his recitation-room. In short, he undergoes a process of gentle and gradual starvation.

— The mother of little Iris was not called Electra, like hers of the old story, neither was her grandfather Oceanus. Her blood-name, which she gave away with her heart to the Latin tutor, was a plain old English one, and her water-name was Hannah, beautiful as recalling the mother of Samuel, and admirable as reading equally well from the initial letter forwards and from the terminal letter backwards. The poor lady, seated with her companion at the chess-board of matrimony, had but just pushed forward her one little white pawn upon an empty square, when the Black Knight, that cares nothing for castles or kings or queens, swooped down upon her and swept her from the larger board of life.

The old Latin tutor put a modest blue stone at the head of his late companion, with her name and age and *Eheu!* upon it,—a smaller one at her feet, with initials; and left her by herself, to be rained and snowed on,—which is a hard thing to do for those whom we have cherished tenderly.

About the time that the lichens, falling on

the stone, like drops of water, had spread into fair, round rosettes, the tutor had starved into a slight cough. Then he began to draw the buckle of his black pantaloons a little tighter, and took in another reef in his never-ample waistcoat. His temples got a little hollow, and the contrast of colour in his cheeks more vivid than of old. After a while his walks fatigued him, and he was tired, and breathed hard after going up a flight or two of stairs. Then came on other marks of inward trouble and general waste, which he spoke of to his physician as peculiar, and doubtless owing to accidental causes; to all which the doctor listened with deference, as if it had not been the old story that one in five or six of mankind in temperate climates tells, or has told for him, as if it were something new. As the doctor went out, he said to himself,—"On the rail at last. Accommodation train. A good many stops, but will get to the station by and by." So the doctor wrote a recipe with the astrological sign of Jupiter before it (just as your own physician does, inestimable reader, as you will see, if you look at his next prescription), and departed, saying he would look in occasionally. After this, the Latin tutor began the usual course of "getting better," until he

got so much better that his face was very sharp, and when he smiled, three crescent lines showed at each side of his lips, and when he spoke, it was in a muffled whisper, and the white of his eye glistened as pearly as the purest porcelain,—so much better, that he hoped—by spring—he —— might be able—to—attend ——— to his class again. — But he was recommended not to expose himself, and so kept his chamber, and occasionally, not having anything to do, his bed. The unmarried sister with whom he lived took care of him; and the child, now old enough to be manageable, and even useful in trifling offices, sat in the chamber, or played about.

Things could not go on so for ever, of course. One morning his face was sunken and his hands were very, very cold. He was "better," he whispered, but sadly and faintly. After a while he grew restless and seemed a little wandering. His mind ran on his classics, and fell back on the Latin grammar.

"Iris!" he said,—"*filiola mea!*"—The child knew this meant *my dear little daughter* as well as if it had been English.—"Rainbow!"—for he would translate her name at times,—"come to me,—*veni*"—and his lips

went on automatically, and murmured, "*vel venito!*"—The child came and sat by his bedside and took his hand, which she could not warm, but which shot its rays of cold all through her slender frame. But there she sat, looking steadily at him. Presently he opened his lips feebly, and whispered. "*Moribundus.*" She did not know what that meant, but she saw that there was something new and sad. So she began to cry; but presently remembering an old book that seemed to comfort him at times, got up and brought a Bible in the Latin version, called the Vulgate. "Open it," he said,—"I will read,—*segnius irritant*,—don't put the light out,—ah! *hæret lateri*,—I am going,—*vale, vale, vale*, good-bye, good-bye, —the Lord take care of my child!—*Domine, audi——vel audito!*" His face whitened suddenly, and he lay still, with open eyes and mouth. He had taken his last degree.

—Little Miss Iris could not be said to begin life with a very brilliant rainbow over her, in a worldly point of view. A limited wardrobe of man's attire, such as poor tutors wear,—a few good books, principally classics, —a print or two, and a plaster model of the Pantheon, with some pieces of furniture which had seen service,—these, and a child's

heart full of tearful recollections and strange doubts and questions, alternating with the cheap pleasures which are the anodynes of childish grief; such were the treasures she inherited. — No, — I forgot. With that kindly sentiment which all of us feel for old men's first children,—frost-flowers of the early winter season,—the old tutor's students had remembered him at a time when he was laughing and crying with his new parental emotions, and running to the side of the plain crib in which his *alter ego*, as he used to say, was swinging, to hang over the little heap of stirring clothes, from which looked the minute, red, downy, still, round face, with unfixed eyes and working lips,—in that unearthly gravity which has never yet been broken by a smile, and which gives to the earliest moon-year or two of an infant's life the character of a *first old age*, to counterpoise that *second childhood* which there is one chance in a dozen it may reach by and by. The boys had remembered the old man and young father at that tender period of his hard, dry life. There came to him a fair, silver goblet, embossed with classical figures, and bearing on a shield the graven words, *Ex dono pupillorum*. The handle on its side showed what use the boys had meant it

for; and a kind letter in it, written with the best of feeling, in the worst of Latin, pointed delicately to its destination. Out of this silver vessel, after a long, desperate, strangling cry, which marked her first great lesson in the realities of life, the child took the blue milk, such as poor tutors and their children get, tempered with water, and sweetened a little, so as to bring it nearer the standard established by the touching indulgence and partiality of Nature,—who has mingled an extra allowance of sugar in the blameless food of the child at its mother's breast, as compared with that of its infant brothers and sisters of the bovine race.

But a willow will grow in baked sand wet with rain-water. An air-plant will grow by feeding on the winds. Nay, those huge forests that overspread great continents have built themselves up mainly from the air-currents with which they are always battling. The oak is but a foliated atmospheric crystal deposited from the aërial ocean that holds the future vegetable world in solution. The storm that tears its leaves has paid tribute to its strength, and it breasts the tornado clad in the spoils of a hundred hurricanes.

Poor little Iris! What had she in common with the great oak in the shadow of which we are losing sight of her?—She lived and grew like that,—this was all. The blue milk ran into her veins and filled them with thin, pure blood. Her skin was fair, with a faint tinge, such as the white rosebud shows before it opens. The doctor who had attended her father was afraid her aunt would hardly be able to "raise" her,—"delicate child,"—hoped she was not consumptive,—thought there was a fair chance she would take after her father.

A very forlorn-looking person, dressed in black, with a white neckcloth, sent her a memoir of a child who died at the age of two years and eleven months, after having fully indorsed all the doctrines of the particular persuasion to which he not only belonged himself, but thought it very shameful that everybody else did not belong. What with foreboding looks and dreary deathbed stories it was a wonder the child made out to live through it. It saddened her early years, of course,—it distressed her tender soul with thoughts which, as they cannot be fully taken in, should be sparingly used as instruments of torture to break down the natural cheerfulness of a

healthy child, or, what is infinitely worse, to cheat a dying one out of the kind illusions with which the Father of All has strewed its downward path.

The child would have died, no doubt, and, if properly managed, might have added another to the long catalogue of wasting children who have been as cruelly played upon by spiritual physiologists, often with the best intentions, as ever the subject of a rare disease by the curious students of science.

Fortunately for her, however, a wise instinct had guided the late Latin tutor in the selection of the partner of his life, and the future mother of his child. The deceased tutoress was a tranquil, smooth woman, easily nourished, as such people are, — a quality which is inestimable in a tutor's wife,—and so it happened that the daughter inherited enough vitality from the mother to live through childhood and infancy and fight her way towards womanhood, in spite of the tendencies she derived from her other parent.

— Two and two do not always make four, in this matter of hereditary descent of qualities. Sometimes they make three, and sometimes five. It seems as if the parental traits

at one time showed separate, at another blended,—that occasionally the force of two natures is represented in the derivative one by a diagonal of greater value than either original line of living movement,—that sometimes there is a loss of vitality hardly to be accounted for, and again a forward impulse of variable intensity in some new and unforeseen direction.

So it was with this child. She had glanced off from her parental probabilities at an unexpected angle. Instead of taking to classical learning like her father, or sliding quietly into household duties like her mother, she broke out early in efforts that pointed in the direction of Art. As soon as she could hold a pencil she began to sketch outlines of objects round her with a certain air and spirit. Very extraordinary horses, but their legs looked as if they could move. Birds unknown to Audubon, yet flying, as it were, with a rush. Men with impossible legs, which did yet seem to have a vital connection with their most improbable bodies. By-and-by the doctor, on his beast, — an old man with a face looking as if Time had kneaded it like dough with his knuckles, with a rhubarb tint and flavour pervading himself and his sorrel horse and all their

appurtenances. A dreadful old man! Be sure she did not forget those saddle-bags that held the detestable bottles out of which he used to shake those loathsome powders which, to virgin childish palates that find heaven in strawberries and peaches, are — Well, I suppose I had better stop. Only she wished she was dead sometimes when she heard him coming. On the next leaf would figure the gentleman with the black coat and white cravat, as he looked when he came and entertained her with stories concerning the death of various little children about her age, to encourage her, as that wicked Mr. Arouet said about shooting Admiral Byng. Then she would take her pencil, and with a few scratches there would be the outline of a child, in which you might notice how one sudden sweep gave the chubby cheek, and two dots darted at the paper looked like real eyes.

By-and-by she went to school, and caricatured the schoolmaster on the leaves of her grammars and geographies, and drew the faces of her companions, and, from time to time, heads and figures from her fancy, with large eyes, far apart, like those of Raffaelle's mothers and children, sometimes with wild floating hair, and then with wings and heads

thrown back in ecstacy. This was at about twelve years old, as the dates of these drawings show, and, therefore, three or four years before she came among us. Soon after this time, the ideal figures began to take the place of portraits and caricatures, and a new feature appeared in her drawing-books in the form of fragments of verse and short poems.

It was dull work, of course, for such a young girl to live with an old spinster and go to a village school. Her books bore testimony to this ; for there was a look of sadness in the faces she drew, and a sense of weariness and longing for some imaginary conditions of blessedness or other, which began to be painful. She might have gone through this flowering of the soul, and, casting her petals, subsided into a sober, human berry but for the intervention of friendly assistance and counsel.

In the town where she lived was a lady of honourable condition, somewhat past middle age, who was possessed of pretty ample means, of cultivated tastes, of excellent principles, of exemplary character, and of more than common accomplishments. The gentleman in black broadcloth and white neckerchief only echoed the common voice about her when he called her, after

enjoying, beneath her hospitable roof, an excellent cup of tea, with certain elegancies and luxuries he was unaccustomed to, "The Model of all the Virtues."

She deserved this title as well as almost any woman. She did really bristle with moral excellences. Mention any good thing she had not done; I should like to see you try! There was no handle of weakness to take hold of her by; she was as unseizable, except in her totality, as a billiard-ball; and on the broad, green, terrestrial table, where she had been knocked about, like all of us, by the cue of Fortune, she glanced from every human contact, and "caromed" from one relation to another, and rebounded from the stuffed cushion of temptation, with such exact and perfect angular movements, that the Enemy's corps of Reporters had long given up taking notes of her conduct, as there was no chance for their master.

What an admirable person for the patroness and directress of a slightly self-willed child, with the lightning zigzag line of genius running like a glittering vein through the marble whiteness of her virgin nature! One of the lady-patroness's peculiar virtues was calmness. She was resolute and strenuous, but still. You could depend on her for

every duty; she was as true as steel. She was kind-hearted and serviceable in all the relations of life. She had more sense, more knowledge, more conversation, as well as more goodness, than all the partners you have waltzed with this winter put together.

Yet no man was known to have loved her, or even to have offered himself to her in marriage. It was a great wonder. I am very anxious to vindicate my character as a philosopher and an observer of Nature by accounting for this apparently extraordinary fact.

You may remember certain persons who have the misfortune of presenting to the friends whom they meet a cold, damp hand. There are states of mind in which a contact of this kind has a depressing effect on the vital powers that makes us insensible to all the virtues and graces of the proprietor of one of these life-absorbing organs. When they touch us, virtue passes out of us, and we feel as if our electricity had been drained by a powerful negative battery, carried about by an overgrown human torpedo.

"The Model of all the Virtues" had a pair of searching eyes as clear as Wenham ice; but they were slower to melt than that fickle jewelry. Her features disordered

themselves slightly at times in a surface-smile, but never broke loose from their corners and indulged in the riotous tumult of a laugh,—which, I take it, is the mob-law of the features,—and propriety the magistrate who reads the Riot Act. She carried the brimming cup of her inestimable virtues with a cautious, steady hand, and an eye always on them, to see that they did not spill. Then she was an admirable judge of character. Her mind was a perfect laboratory of tests and reagents; every syllable you put into breath went into her intellectual eudiometer, and all your thoughts were recorded on litmus-paper. I think there has rarely been a more admirable woman. Of course, Miss Iris was immensely and passionately attached to her.——Well, —these are two highly oxygenated adverbs, —grateful,—suppose we say,—yes,—grateful, dutiful, obedient to her wishes for the most part,—perhaps not quite up to the concert pitch of such a perfect orchestra of the virtues.

We must have a weak spot or two in a character before we can love it much. People that do not laugh or cry, or take more of anything than is good for them, or use anything but dictionary words, are

admirable subjects for biographies. But we don't always care most for those flat-pattern flowers that press best in the herbarium.

This immaculate woman,—why couldn't she have a fault or two? Isn't there any old whisper which will tarnish that wearisome aureole of saintly perfection? Doesn't she carry a lump of opium in her pocket? Isn't her cologne-bottle replenished oftener than its legitimate use would require? It would be such a comfort!

Not for the world would a young creature like Iris have let such words escape her, or such thoughts pass through her mind. Whether at the bottom of her soul lies any uneasy consciousness of an oppressive presence, it is hard to say, until we know more about her. Iris sits between the Little Gentleman and the "Model of all the Virtues," as the black-coated personage called her.—I will watch them all.

—Here I stop for the present. What the Professor said has had to make way this time for what he saw and heard.

—And now you may read these lines, which were written for gentle souls who love music, and read in even tones, and, perhaps, with something like a smile upon the reader's lips,

at a meeting where these musical friends had gathered. Whether they were written with smiles or not, you can guess better after you have read them.

THE OPENING OF THE PIANO.

In the little southern parlour of the house you may have seen
With the gambrel-roof, and the gable looking westward to the green,
At the side toward the sunset, with the window on its right,
Stood the London-made piano I am dreaming of to-night.

Ah me! how I remember the evening, when it came!
What a cry of eager voices, what a group of cheeks in flame,
When the wondrous box was opened that had come from over seas,
With its smell of mastic-varnish and its flash of ivory keys!

Then the children all grew fretful in the restlessness of joy,
For the boy would push his sister, and the sister crowd the boy,

Till the father asked for quiet in his grave paternal way,
But the mother hushed the tumult with the words, "Now, Mary, play."

For the dear soul knew that music was a very sovereign balm;
She had sprinkled it over Sorrow and seen its brow grow calm,
In the days of slender harpsichords with tapping tinkling quills,
Or carolling to her spinet with its thin metallic thrills.

So Mary, the household minstrel, who always loved to please,
Sat down to the new "Clementi," and struck the glittering keys.
Hushed were the children's voices, and every eye grew dim,
As, floating from lip and finger, arose the "Vesper Hymn."

—Catharine, child of a neighbour, curly and rosy-red,
(Wedded since, and a widow,—something like ten years dead),
Hearing a gush of music such as none before,
Steals from her mother's chamber and peeps at the open door.

Just as the "Jubilate" in threaded whisper dies,
—"Open it! open it, lady!" the little maiden cries,
(For she thought 'twas a singing creature caged in a box she heard),
"Open it! open it, lady! and let me see the *bird!*"

IV.

I DON'T know whether our literary or professional people are more amiable than they are in other places, but certainly quarrelling is out of fashion among them. This could never be, if they were in the habit of secret anonymous puffing of each other. That is the kind of underground machinery which manufactures false reputations and genuine hatreds. On the other hand, I should like to know if we are not at liberty to have a good time together, and say the pleasantest things we can think of to each other, when any of us reaches his thirtieth or fortieth or fiftieth or eightieth birthday.

We don't have "scenes," I warrant you, on these occasions. No "surprise" parties! You understand these, of course. In the rural districts, where scenic tragedy and melodrama cannot be had, as in the city, at the expense of a quarter and a white

pocket-handkerchief, emotional excitement has to be sought in the dramas of real life. Christenings, weddings, and funerals, especially the latter, are the main dependence; but babies, brides, and deceased citizens cannot be had at a day's notice. Now, then, for a surprise-party!

A bag of flour, a barrel of potatoes, some strings of onions, a basket of apples, a big cake and many little cakes, a jug of lemonade, a purse stuffed with bills of the more modest denominations, may, perhaps, do well enough for the properties in one of these private theatrical exhibitions. The minister of the parish, a tender-hearted, quiet, hard-working man, living on a small salary, with many children, sometimes pinched to feed and clothe them, praying fervently every day to be blest in his "basket and store," but sometimes fearing he asks amiss, to judge by the small returns, has the first *rôle*,—not, however, by his own choice, but forced upon him. The minister's wife, a sharp-eyed, unsentimental body, is first lady; the remaining parts by the rest of the family. If they only had a playbill, it would run thus:—

ON TUESDAY NEXT

WILL BE PRESENTED

THE AFFECTING SCENE

CALLED

THE SURPRISE-PARTY,

OR

THE OVERCOME FAMILY;

WITH THE FOLLOWING STRONG CAST OF CHARACTERS.

The Rev. Mr. Overcome, by the Clergyman of this Parish.
Mrs. Overcome, by his estimable lady.
Masters Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John Overcome,
Misses Dorcas, Tabitha, Rachel, and Hannah Overcome, by their interesting children.
Peggy, by the female help.

The poor man is really grateful;—it is a most welcome and unexpected relief. He tries to express his thanks,—his voice falters,—he chokes,—and bursts into tears. *That* is the great effect of the evening. The sharp-sighted lady cries a little with one eye, and counts the strings of onions, and the rest of the things, with the other. The children stand ready for a spring at the

apples. The female help weeps after the noisy fashion of untutored handmaids.

Now this is all very well as charity, but do let the kind visitors remember they get their money's worth. If you pay a quarter for *dry-crying*, done by a second-rate actor, how much ought you to pay for real hot, wet tears, out of the honest eyes of a gentleman who is not acting, but sobbing in earnest?

All I meant to say, when I began, was, that this was *not* a surprise-party where I read these few lines that follow :—

We will not speak of years to-night;
For what have years to bring,
But larger floods of love and light
And sweeter songs to sing?

We will not drown in wordy praise
The kindly thoughts that rise;
If friendship owns one tender phrase,
He reads it in our eyes.

We need not waste our schoolboy art
To gild this notch of time;
Forgive me, if my wayward heart
Has throbbed in artless rhyme.

Enough for him the silent grasp
That knits us hand in hand,
And he the bracelet's radiant clasp
That locks our circling band.

Strength to his hours of manly toil !
  Peace to his starlit dreams !
Who loves alike the furrowed soil,
  The music-haunted streams !

Sweet smiles to keep for ever bright
  The sunshine on his lips,
And faith, that sees the ring of light
  Round Nature's last eclipse !

—One of our boarders has been talking in such strong language that I am almost afraid to report it. However, as he seems to be really honest, and is so very sincere in his local prejudices, I don't believe anybody will be very angry with him.

It is here, Sir ! right here !—said the little deformed gentleman,—in this old new city of Boston,—this remote provincial corner of a provincial nation, that the Battle of the Standard is fighting, and was fighting before we were born, and will be fighting when we are dead and gone,—please God ! The *battle* goes on everywhere throughout civilisation ; but here, here, here ! is the broad white flag flying which proclaims, first of all, peace and good-will to men, and, next to that, the absolute, unconditional spiritual liberty of each individual immortal soul ! The three-hilled city against the seven-hilled city !

That is it, Sir,—nothing less than that; and if you know what that means, I don't think you 'll ask for anything more. I swear to you, Sir, I believe that these two centres of civilisation are just exactly the two points that close the circuit in the battery of our planetary intelligence! And I believe there are spiritual eyes looking out from Uranus and unseen Neptune,—ay, Sir, from the systems of Sirius and Arcturus and Aldebaran, and as far as that faint stain of sprinkled worlds confluent in the distance that we call the nebula of Orion,—looking on, Sir, with what organs I know not, to see which are going to melt in that fiery fusion, the accidents and hindrances of humanity or man himself, Sir,—the stupendous abortion, the illustrious failure that he is, if the three-hilled city does not ride down and trample out the seven-hilled city!

— Steam 's up!—said the young man John, so called, in a low tone.—Three hundred and sixty-five tons to the square inch. Let him blow her off, or he 'll bu'st his b'iler.

The divinity-student took it calmly, only whispering that he thought there was a little confusion of images between a galvanic battery and a charge of cavalry.

But the Koh-i-noor—the gentleman, you

remember, with a very large *diamond* in his shirt front—laughed his scornful laugh, and made as if to speak.

Sail in, Metropolis!—said that same young man John, by name. And then, in a lower tone, not meaning to be heard,—Now, then, Ma'am Allen!

But he *was* heard,—and the Koh-i-noor's face turned so white with rage, that his blue-black moustache and beard looked fearful, seen against it. He grinned with wrath, and caught at a tumbler, as if he would have thrown it or its contents at the speaker. The young Marylander fixed his clear, steady eye upon him, and laid his hand on his arm, carelessly almost, but the Jewel found it was held so that he could not move it. It was of no use. The youth was his master in muscle, and in that deadly Indian hug in which men wrestle with their eyes;—over in five seconds, but breaks one of their two backs, and is good for threescore years and ten;—one trial enough,—settles the whole matter,—just as when two feathered songsters of the barn-yard, game and dunghill, come together,—after a jump or two at each other, and a few sharp kicks, there is the end of it; and it is, *Après vous, Monsieur*, with the beaten

party in all the social relations for all the rest of his days.

I cannot philosophically account for the Koh-i-noor's wrath. For though a cosmetic is sold, bearing the name of the lady to whom reference was made by the young person John, yet, as it is publicly asserted in respectable prints that this cosmetic is *not a dye*, I see no reason why he should have felt offended by any suggestion that he was indebted to it or its authoress. I have no doubt that there are certain exceptional complexions to which the purple tinge, above alluded to, is natural. Nature is fertile in variety. I saw an albiness in London once, for sixpence (including the inspection of a stuffed boa-constrictor), who looked as if she had been boiled in milk. A young Hottentot of my acquaintance had his hair all in little pellets of the size of marrowfat peas. One of my own classmates has undergone a singular change of late years,—his hair losing its original tint, and getting a remarkable discoloured look; and another has ceased to cultivate any hair at all over the vertex or crown of the head. So I am perfectly willing to believe that the purple-black of the Koh-i-noor's moustache and whiskers is constitutional and not pig-

mentary. But I can't think why he got so angry.

The intelligent reader will understand all this pantomime of the threatened onslaught and its suppression passed so quickly that it was all over by the time the other end of the table found out there was a disturbance; just as a man chopping wood half a mile off may be seen resting on his axe at the instant you hear the last blow he struck. So you will please to observe that the Little Gentleman was not interrupted during the time implied by these *ex-post-facto* remarks of mine, but for some ten or fifteen seconds only.

He did not seem to mind the interruption at all, for he started again. The "Sir" of his harangue was no doubt addressed to myself more than anybody else, but he often uses it in discourse as if he were talking with some imaginary opponent.

— America, Sir,—he exclaimed,—is the only place where man is full-grown!

He straightened himself up, as he spoke, standing on the top round of his high chair, I suppose, and so presented the larger part of his little figure to the view of the boarders.

It was next to impossible to keep from

laughing. The commentary was so strange an illustration of the text!

I thought it was time to put in a word; for I have lived in foreign parts, and am more or less cosmopolitan.

I doubt if we have more practical freedom in America than they have in England,—I said.—An Englishman thinks as he likes in religion and politics. Mr. Martineau speculates as freely as ever Dr. Channing did, and Mr. Bright is as independent as Mr. Seward.

Sir,—said he,—it isn't what a man thinks or says, but when and where and to whom he thinks and says it. A man with a flint and steel striking sparks over a wet blanket is one thing, and striking them over a tinder-box is another. The free Englishman is born under protest; he lives and dies under protest,—a tolerated, but not a welcome fact. Is not *freethinker* a term of reproach in England? The same idea in the soul of an Englishman who struggled up to it and still holds it *antagonistically*, and in the soul of an American to whom it is congenital and spontaneous, and often unrecognised, except as an element blended with *all* his thoughts, a natural movement, like the

drawing of his breath or the beating of his heart, is a very different thing. You may teach a quadruped to walk on his hind legs, but he is always wanting to be on all-fours. Nothing that can be taught a growing youth is like the atmospheric knowledge he breathes from his infancy upwards. The American baby sucks in freedom with the milk of the breast at which he hangs.

— That 's a good joke,—said the young fellow John,—considerin' it commonly belongs to a female Paddy.

I thought—I will not be certain—that the Little Gentleman winked, as if he had been hit somewhere—as I have no doubt Dr. Darwin did when the *wooden-spoon* suggestion upset his theory about why, etc. If he winked, however, he did not dodge.

A lively comment !—he said.—But Rome, in her great founder, sucked the blood of empire out of the dugs of a brute, Sir ! The Milesian wet-nurse is only a convenient vessel through which the American infant gets the life-blood of this virgin soil, Sir, that is making man over again, on the sunset pattern ! You don't think what we are doing and going to do here. Why, Sir, while commentators are bothering themselves with interpretation of prophecies, *we have got* the

new heavens and the new earth over us and under us! Was there ever anything in Italy, I should like to know, like a Boston sunset?

— This time there was a laugh, and the little man himself almost smiled.

Yes,—Boston sunsets;—perhaps they 're as good in some other places, but I know 'em best here. Anyhow, the American skies are different from anything they see in the Old World. Yes, and the rocks are different, and the soil is different, and everything that comes out of the soil, from grass up to Indians, is different. And now that the provisional races are dying out—

— What do you mean by the *provisional* races, Sir?—said the divinity-student, interrupting him.

Why, the aboriginal bipeds, to be sure,—he answered, — the red-crayon sketch of humanity laid on the canvas before the colours for the real manhood were ready.

I hope they will come to something yet,—said the divinity-student.

Irreclaimable, Sir, — irreclaimable!—said the Little Gentleman.—Cheaper to breed white men than domesticate a nation of red ones. When you can get the bitter out of the partridge's thigh, you can make an

enlightened commonwealth of Indians. A provisional race, Sir,—nothing more. Exhaled carbonic acid for the use of vegetation, kept down the bears and catamounts, enjoyed themselves in scalping and being scalped, and then passed away or are passing away, according to the programme.

Well, Sir, these races dying out, the white man has to acclimate himself. It takes him a good while ; but he will come all right by-and-by, Sir,—as sound as a woodchuck,—as sound as a musquash !

A new nursery, Sir, with Lake Superior and Huron and all the rest of 'em for wash-basins ! A new race, and a whole new world for the new-born human soul to work in ! And Boston is the brain of it, and has been any time these hundred years ! That 's all I claim for Boston,—that it is the thinking centre of the continent, and therefore of the planet.

—And the grand emporium of modesty— said the divinity-student, a little mischievously.

Oh, don't talk to me of modesty !— answered the Little Gentleman,—I 'm past that ! There isn't a thing that was ever said or done in Boston, from pitching the tea overboard to the last ecclesiastical lie it tore

into tatters and flung into the dock, that wasn't thought very indelicate by some fool or tyrant or bigot, and all the entrails of commercial and spiritual conservatism are twisted into colics as often as this revolutionary brain of ours has a fit of thinking come over it.—No, Sir,—show me any other place that is, or was since the megalosaurus has died out, where wealth and social influence are so fairly divided between the stationary and the progressive classes! Show me any other place where every other drawing-room is not a chamber of the Inquisition, with papas and mammas for inquisitors,—and the cold shoulder, instead of the "dry pan and the gradual fire," the punishment of "heresy"!

—We think *Baltimore* is a pretty civilised kind of a village,—said the young Marylander good-naturedly.—But I suppose you can't forgive it for always keeping a little ahead of Boston in point of numbers,—tell the truth now. Are we not the centre of something?

Ah, indeed, to be sure you are. You are the gastronomic metropolis of the Union. Why don't you put a canvas-back duck on the top of the Washington column? Why don't you get that lady off from Battle

Monument and plant a terrapin in her place? Why will you ask for other glories when you have soft crabs? No, Sir,—you live too well to think as hard as we do in Boston. Logic comes to us with the salt-fish of Cape Ann; rhetoric is born of the beans of Beverly; but *you*—if you open your mouths to speak, Nature stops them with a fat oyster, or offers a slice of the breast of your divine bird, and silences all your aspirations.

And what of Philadelphia?—said the Marylander.

Oh, Philadelphia?—Waterworks,—killed by the Croton and Cochituate;—Ben Franklin,—borrowed from Boston;—David Rittenhouse,—made an orrery;—Benjamin Rush,—made a medical system:—both interesting to antiquarians;—great Red-river raft of medical students,—spontaneous generation of professors to match;—more widely known through the Moyamensing hose-company, and the Wistar parties;—for geological section of social strata, go to *The Club*.—Good place to live in,—first-rate market,—tip-top peaches.—What do we know about Philadelphia, except that the engine-companies are always shooting each other?

And what do you say to Ne' York?—asked the Koh-i-noor.

A great city, Sir,—replied the Little Gentleman,—a very opulent, splendid city. A point of transit of much that is remarkable, and of permanence for much that is respectable. A great money-centre. San Francisco with the mines above-ground,—and some of 'em under the sidewalks. I have seen next to nothing *grandiose*, out of New York, in all our cities. It makes 'em all look paltry and petty. Has many elements of civilisation. May stop where Venice did, though, for aught we know.—The order of its development is just this :—Wealth ; architecture ; upholstery ; painting ; sculpture. Printing, as a mechanical art, — just as Nicholas Jenson and the Aldi, who were scholars too, made Venice renowned for it. Journalism, which is the accident of business and crowded populations, in great perfection. Venice got as far as Titian and Paul Veronese and Tintoretto,—great colourists, mark you, magnificent on the flesh-and-blood side of Art,—but look over to Florence and see who lie in Santa Croce, and ask out of whose loins Dante sprung !

Oh, yes, to be sure, Venice built her Ducal Palace, and her Church of St. Mark, and her Casa d' Oro, and the rest of her golden houses ; and Venice had great pic-

tures and good music; and Venice had a Golden Book, in which all the large tax-payers had their names written;—but all that did not make Venice the brain of Italy.

I tell you what, Sir,—with all these magnificent appliances of civilisation, it is time we began to hear something from the *jeunesse dorée* whose names are on the Golden Book of our sumptuous, splendid, marble-palaced Venice,—something in the higher walks of literature,—something in the councils of the nation. Plenty of Art, I grant you, Sir; now, then, for vast libraries, and for mighty scholars and thinkers and statesmen,—five for every Boston one, as the population is to ours,—*ten* to one more properly, in virtue of centralising attraction as *the* alleged metropolis,—and not call our people provincials, and have to come begging to us to write the lives of Hendrik Hudson and Gouverneur Morris!

—The Little Gentleman was on his hobby, exalting his own city at the expense of every other place. I have my doubts if he had been in either of the cities he had been talking about. I was just going to say something to sober him down, if I could, when the young Marylander spoke up.

Come, now,—he said,—what's the use of

these comparisons? Didn't I hear this gentleman saying, the other day, that every American owns all America? If you have really got more brains in Boston than other folks, as you seem to think, who hates you for it, except a pack of scribbling fools? If I like Broadway better than Washington Street, what then? I own them both, as much as anybody owns either. I am an American, —and wherever I look up and see the stars and stripes overhead, that is home to me!

He spoke, and looked up as if he heard the emblazoned folds crackling over him in the breeze. We all looked up involuntarily, as if we should see the national flag by so doing. The sight of the dingy ceiling and the gas-fixture depending therefrom dispelled the illusion.

Bravo! bravo!—said the venerable gentleman on the other side of the table.—Those are the sentiments of Washington's Farewell Address. Nothing better than that since the last chapter in Revelation. Five-and-forty years ago there used to be Washington societies, and little boys used to walk in processions, each little boy having a copy of the Address, bound in red, hung round his neck by a ribbon. Why don't they now? Why don't they now? I saw enough of

hating each other in the old Federal times; now let 's love each other, I say,—let 's love each other, and not try to make it out that there isn't any place fit to live in except the one we happen to be born in.

It dwarfs the mind, I think,—said I,—to feed it on any localism. The full stature of manhood is shrivelled—

The colour burst up into my cheeks. What was I saying,—I, who would not for the world have pained our unfortunate little boarder by an allusion?

I will go,—he said,—and made a movement with his left arm to let himself down from his high chair.

No,—no,—he doesn't mean it,—you must not go,—said a kind voice next him; and a soft, white hand was laid upon his arm.

Iris, my dear!—exclaimed another voice, as of a female, in accents that might be considered a strong atmospheric solution of duty with very little flavour of grace.

She did not move for this address, and there was a *tableau* that lasted some seconds. For the young girl, in the glory of half-blown womanhood, and the dwarf, the cripple, the misshapen little creature covered with Nature's insults, looked straight into each other's eyes.

Perhaps no handsome young woman had ever looked at him so in his life. Certainly the young girl never had looked into eyes that reached into her soul as these did. It was not that they were in themselves supernaturally bright,—but there was the sad fire in them that flames up from the soul of one who looks on the beauty of woman without hope, but, alas! not without emotion. To him it seemed as if those amber gates had been translucent as the brown water of a mountain brook, and through them he had seen dimly into a virgin wilderness, only waiting for the sunrise of a great passion for all its buds to blow and all its bowers to ring with melody.

That is my image, of course,—not his. It was not a simile that was in his mind, or is in anybody's at such a moment,—it was a pang of wordless passion, and then a silent, inward moan.

A lady's wish,—he said, with a certain gallantry of manner,—makes slaves of us all. —And Nature, who is kind to all her children, and never leaves the smallest and saddest of all her human failures without one little comfit of self-love at the bottom of his poor ragged pocket,—Nature suggested to him that he had turned his sentence well;

and he fell into a reverie, in which the old thoughts that were always hovering just outside the doors guarded by Common Sense, and watching for a chance to squeeze in, knowing perfectly well they would be ignominiously kicked out again as soon as Common Sense saw them, flocked in pellmell,—misty, fragmentary, vague, half-ashamed of themselves, but still shouldering up against his inner consciousness till it warmed with their contact :—John Wilkes's—the ugliest man's in England—saying, that with half-an-hour's start he would cut out the handsomest man in all the land in any woman's good graces ; Cadenus—old and savage—leading captive Stella and Vanessa ; and then the stray line of a ballad, "And a winning tongue had he,"—as much as to say, it isn't looks, after all, but cunning words, that win our Eves over,—just as of old, when it was the worst-looking brute of the lot that got our grandmother to listen to his stuff, and so did the mischief.

Ah, dear me ! We rehearse the part of Hercules with his club, subjugating man and woman in our fancy, the first by the weight of it, and the second by our handling of it,—we rehearse it, I say, by our own hearth-stones, with the *cold* poker as our

club, and the exercise is easy. But when we come to real life, the poker is *in the fire*, and, ten to one, if we would grasp it, we find it too hot to hold; lucky for us, if it is not white-hot, and we do not have to leave the skin of our hands sticking to it when we fling it down or drop it with a loud or silent cry!

—I am frightened when I find into what a labyrinth of human character and feeling I am winding. I meant to tell my thoughts, and to throw in a few studies of manner and costume as they pictured themselves for me from day to day. Chance has thrown together at the table with me a number of persons who are worth studying, and I mean not only to look on them, but, if I can, through them. You can get any man's or woman's secret, whose sphere is circumscribed by your own, if you will only look patiently on them long enough. Nature is always applying her reagents to character, if you will take the pains to watch her. Our studies of character, to change the image, are very much like the surveyor's triangulation of a geographical province. We get a base-line in organisation, always; then we get an angle by sighting some distant object to which the passions or aspira-

tions of the subject of our observation are tending; then another;—and so we construct our first triangle. Once fix a man's ideals, and for the most part the rest is easy. *A* wants to die worth half a million. Good. *B* (female) wants to catch him,—and outlive him. All right. Minor details at our leisure.

What is it, of all your experiences, of all your thoughts, of all your misdoings, that lies at the very bottom of the great heap of acts of consciousness which makes up your past life? What should you most dislike to tell your nearest friend?—Be so good as to pause for a brief space, and shut the volume you hold with your finger between the pages.—Oh, that is it!

What a confessional I have been sitting at, with the inward ear of my soul open, as the multitudinous whisper of my involuntary confidants came back to me like the reduplicated echo of a cry among the craggy hills!

At the house of a friend where I once passed the night was one of those stately upright cabinet-desks and cases of drawers which were not rare in prosperous families during the last century. It had held the clothes and the books and the papers of

generation after generation. The hands that opened its drawers had grown withered, shrivelled, and at last been folded in death. The children that played with the lower handles had got tall enough to open the desk,—to reach the upper shelves behind the folding-doors,—grown bent after a while, —and then followed those who had gone before, and left the old cabinet to be ransacked by a new generation.

A boy of ten or twelve was looking at it a few years ago, and, being a quick-witted fellow, saw that all the space was not accounted for by the smaller drawers in the part beneath the lid of the desk. Prying about with busy eyes and fingers, he at length came upon a spring, on pressing which, a secret drawer flew from its hiding-place. It had never been opened but by the maker. The mahogany shavings and dust were lying in it as when the artisan closed it,—and when I saw it, it was as fresh as if that day finished.

Is there not one little drawer in your soul, my sweet reader, which no hand but yours has ever opened, and which none that have known you seem to have suspected? What does it hold?—A sin?—I hope not.

What a strange thing an old dead sin laid

away in a secret drawer of the soul is! Must it some time or other be moistened with tears, until it comes to life again and begins to stir in our consciousness,—as the dry wheel-animalcule, looking like a grain of dust, becomes alive, if it is wet with a drop of water?

Or is it a passion? There are plenty of withered men and women walking about the streets who have the secret drawer in their hearts, which, if it were opened, would show as fresh as it was when they were in the flush of youth and its first trembling emotions. What it held will, perhaps, never be known, until they are dead and gone, and some curious eye lights on an old yellow letter with the fossil footprints of the extinct passion trodden thick all over it.

There is not a boarder at our table, I firmly believe, excepting the young girl, who has not a story of the heart to tell, if one could only get the secret drawer open. Even this arid female, whose armour of black bombazine looks stronger against the shafts of love than any cuirass of triple brass, has had her sentimental history, if I am not mistaken. I will tell you my reason for suspecting it.

Like many other old women, she shows a great nervousness and restlessness whenever

I venture to express any opinion upon a class of subjects which can hardly be said to belong to any man or set of men as their strictly private property,—not even to the clergy, or the newspapers commonly called "religious." Now, although it would be a great luxury to me to obtain my opinions by contract, ready-made, from a professional man, and although I have a constitutional kindly feeling to all sorts of good people which would make me happy to agree with all their beliefs, if that were possible, still I must have an idea, now and then, as to the meaning of life; and though the only condition of peace in this world is to have no ideas, or, at least, not to express them, with reference to such subjects, I can't afford to pay quite so much as that even for peace.

I find that there is a very prevalent opinion among the dwellers on the shores of Sir Isaac Newton's Ocean of Truth, that *salt fish*, which have been taken from it a good while ago, split open, cured and dried, are the only proper and allowable food for reasonable people. I maintain, on the other hand, that there are a number of live fish still swimming in it, and that every one of us has a right to see if he cannot catch some of them. Sometimes I please myself with the

idea that I have landed an actual living fish, small, perhaps, but with rosy gills and silvery scales. Then I find the consumers of nothing but the salted and dried article insist that it is poisonous, simply because it is alive, and cry out to people not to touch it. I have not found, however, that people mind them much.

The poor boarder in bombazine is my dynamometer. I try every questionable proposition on her. If she winces, I must be prepared for an outcry from the other old women. I frightened her, the other day, by saying that *faith, as an intellectual state, was self-reliance,* which, if you have a metaphysical turn, you will find is not so much of a paradox as it sounds at first. So she sent me a book to read which was to cure me of that error. It was an old book, and looked as if it had not been opened for a long time. What should drop out of it, one day, but a small heart-shaped paper, containing a lock of that straight, coarse, brown hair which sets off the sharp faces of so many thin-flanked, large-handed bumpkins? I read upon the paper the name "Hiram."—Love! love! love!—everywhere! everywhere!—under diamonds and housemaids' "jewelry,"—lifting the marrowy camel's-hair, and

rustling even the black bombazine!—No, no,—I think she never was pretty, but she was young once, and wore bright ginghams, and, perhaps, gay merinos. We shall find that the poor little crooked man has been in love, or is in love, or will be in love before we have done with him, for aught that I know!

Romance! Was there ever a boarding-house in the world where the seemingly prosaic table had not a living fresco for its background, where you could see, if you had eyes, the smoke and fire of some upheaving sentiment, or the dreary craters of smouldering or burnt-out passions? You look on the black bombazine and high-necked decorum of your neighbour, and no more think of the real life that underlies this despoiled and dismantled womanhood than you think of a stone trilobite as having once been full of the juices and the nervous thrills of throbbing and self-conscious being. There is a wild creature under that long yellow pin which serves as brooch for the bombazine cuirass,—a wild creature, which I venture to say would leap in his cage, if I should stir him, quiet as you think him. A heart which has been domesticated by matrimony and maternity is as tranquil as a tame bullfinch; but a wild heart which has never been fairly

broken in flutters fiercely long after you think time has tamed it down,—like that purple finch I had the other day, which could not be approached without such palpitations and frantic flings against the bars of his cage, that I had to send him back and get a little orthodox canary which had learned to be quiet and never mind the wires or his keeper's handling. I will tell you my wicked, but half involuntary experiment on the wild heart under the faded bombazine.

Was there ever a person in the room with you, marked by any special weakness or peculiarity, with whom you could be two hours and not touch the infirm spot? I confess the most frightful tendency to do just this thing. If a man has a brogue, I am sure to catch myself imitating it. If another is lame, I follow him, or, worse than that, go before him, limping. I could never meet an Irish gentleman—if it had been the Duke of Wellington himself—without stumbling upon the word "Paddy,"—which I use rarely in my common talk.

I have been worried to know whether this was owing to some innate depravity of disposition on my part, some malignant torturing instinct, which, under different circumstances, might have made a Fijian

anthropophagus of me, or to some law of thought for which I was not answerable. It is, I am convinced, a kind of physical fact like *endosmosis*, with which some of you are acquainted. A thin film of politeness separates the unspoken and unspeakable current of thought from the stream of conversation. After a time one begins to soak through and mingle with the other.

We were talking about names, one day.—Was there ever anything,—I said,—like the Yankee for inventing the most uncouth, pretentious, detestable appellations,—inventing or finding them,—since the time of Praise-God Barebones? I heard a country-boy once talking of another whom he called *Elpit*, as I understood him. *Elbridge* is common enough, but this sounded oddly. It seems the boy was christened *Lord Pitt*,—and called, for convenience, as above. I have heard a charming little girl, belonging to an intelligent family in the country, called *Angès* invariably; doubtless intended for Agnes. Names are cheap. How can a man name an innocent new-born child, that never did him any harm, *Hiram?*—The poor relation, or whatever she is, in bombazine, turned toward me, but I was stupid, and went on.—To think of a man going through

life saddled with such an abominable name as that !—The poor relation grew very uneasy.—I continued ; for I never thought of all this till afterwards.—I knew one young fellow, a good many years ago, by the name of Hiram—

—What 's got into you, Cousin,—said our landlady,—to look so ?—There ! you 've upset your teacup !

It suddenly occurred to me what I had been doing, and I saw the poor woman had her hand at her throat ; she was half-choking with the "hysteric ball,"—a very odd symptom, as you know, which nervous women often complain of. What business had I to be trying experiments on this forlorn old soul ? I had a great deal better be watching that young girl.

Ah, the young girl ! I am sure that she can hide nothing from me. Her skin is so transparent that one can almost count her heart-beats by the flushes they send into her cheeks. She does not seem to be shy, either. I think she does not know enough of danger to be timid. She seems to me like one of those birds that travellers tell of, found in remote, uninhabited islands, who, having never received any wrong at the hand of man, show no alarm at and

hardly any particular consciousness of his presence.

The first thing will be to see how she and our little deformed gentleman get along together; for, as I have told you, they sit side by side. The next thing will be to keep an eye on the duenna,—the "Model" and so forth, as the white-neckcloth called her. The intention of that estimable lady is, I understand, to launch her and leave her. I suppose there is no help for it, and I don't doubt this young lady knows how to take care of herself, but I do not like to see young girls turned loose in boarding-houses. Look here now! There is that jewel of his race, whom I have called for convenience the Koh-i-noor (you understand it is quite out of the question for me to use the family names of our boarders, unless I want to get into trouble),—I say, the gentleman with the *diamond* is looking very often and very intently, it seems to me, down toward the farther corner of the table, where sits our amber-eyed blonde. The landlady's daughter does not look pleased, it seems to me, at this, nor at those other attentions which the gentleman referred to has, as I have learned, pressed upon the newly-arrived young person. The landlady made a communication

to me, within a few days after the arrival of Miss Iris, which I will repeat to the best of my remembrance.

He (the young person I have been speaking of),—she said,—seemed to be kinder hankerin' round after that young woman. It had hurt her daughter's feelin's a good deal, that the gentleman she was a-keepin' company with should be offerin' tickets and tryin' to send presents to them that he 'd never know'd till jest a little spell ago,—and he as good as merried, so fur as solemn promises went, to as respectable a young lady, if she did say so, as any there was round, whosomever that might be.

Tickets! presents!—said I.—What tickets, what presents has he had the impertinence to be offering to that young lady?

Tickets to the Múseum,—said the landlady.—There is them that 's glad enough to go to the Múseum, when tickets is given 'em; but some of 'em ha'n't had a ticket sence Cenderilla was played,—and now he must be offerin' 'em to this ridiculous young paintress, or whatever she is, that 's come to make more mischief than her board 's worth. But it a'n't her fault,—said the landlady, relenting;—and that aunt of hers, or whatever she is, served him right enough.

Why, what did she do?

Do? Why, she took it up in the tongs and dropped it out o' winder.

Dropped? dropped what?—I said.

Why, the *soap*,—said the landlady.

It appeared that the Koh-i-noor, to ingratiate himself, had sent an elegant package of perfumed soap, directed to Miss Iris, as a delicate expression of a lively sentiment of admiration, and that, after having met with the unfortunate treatment referred to, it was picked up by Master Benjamin Franklin, who appropriated it, rejoicing, and indulged in most unheard-of and inordinate ablutions in consequence, so that his hands were a frequent subject of maternal congratulation, and he smelt like a civet-cat for weeks after his great acquisition.

After watching daily for a time, I think I can see clearly into the relation which is growing up between the Little Gentleman and the young lady. She shows a tenderness to him that I can't help being interested in. If he was her crippled child, instead of being more than old enough to be her father, she could not treat him more kindly. The landlady's daughter said, the other day, she believed that girl was settin' her cap for the Little Gentleman.

Some of them young folks is very artful, —said her mother,—and there is them that would merry Lazarus, if he 'd only picked up crumbs enough. I don't think, though, this is one of that sort; she 's kinder child-like,—said the landlady,—and maybe never had any dolls to play with; for they say her folks was poor before Ma'am undertook to see to her teachin' and board her and clothe her.

I could not help overhearing this conversation. "Board her and clothe her!"—speaking of such a young creature! Oh, dear!—Yes,—she must be fed,—just like Bridget, maid-of-all-work at this establishment. Somebody must pay for it. Somebody has a right to watch her and see how much it takes to "keep" her, and growl at her, if she has too good an appetite. Somebody has a right to keep an eye on her and take care that she does not dress too prettily. No mother to see her own youth over again in those fresh features and rising reliefs of half-sculptured womanhood, and, seeing its loveliness, forget her lessons of neutral-tinted propriety, and open the cases that hold her own ornaments to find for her a necklace or a bracelet or a pair of earrings,—those golden lamps that light up

the deep, shadowy dimples on the cheeks of young beauties,—swinging in a semibarbaric splendour that carries the wild fancy to Abyssinian queens and musky Odalisques! I don't believe any woman has utterly given up the great firm of Mundus & Co., so long as she wears ear-rings.

I think Iris loves to hear the Little Gentleman talk. She smiles sometimes at his vehement statements, but never laughs at him. When he speaks to her, she keeps her eye always steadily upon him. This may be only natural good-breeding, so to speak, but it is worth noticing. I have often observed that vulgar persons, and public audiences of inferior collective intelligence, have this in common: the least thing draws off their minds, when you are speaking to them. I love this young creature's rapt attention to her diminutive neighbour while he is speaking.

He is evidently pleased with it. For a day or two after she came he was silent, and seemed nervous and excited. Now he is fond of getting the talk into his own hands, and is obviously conscious that he has at least one interested listener. Once or twice I have seen marks of special attention to personal adornment,—a ruffled shirt-

bosom, one day, and a diamond pin in it,—not so *very* large as the Koh-i-noor's, but more lustrous. I mentioned the death's-head ring he wears on his right hand. I was attracted by a very handsome red stone, a ruby or carbuncle, or something of the sort, to notice his left hand, the other day. It is a handsome hand, and confirms my suspicion that the cast mentioned was taken from his arm. After all, this is just what I should expect. It is not very uncommon to see the upper limbs, or one of them, running away with the whole strength, and, therefore, with the whole beauty, which we should never have noticed, if it had been divided equally between all four extremities. If it is so, of course he is proud of his one strong and beautiful arm; that is human nature. I am afraid he can hardly help betraying his favouritism, as people who have any one showy point are apt to do,—especially dentists with handsome teeth, who always smile back to their last molars.

Sitting, as he does, next to the young girl, and next but one to the calm lady who has her in charge, he cannot help seeing their relations to each other.

That is an admirable woman, Sir,—he said to me one day, as we sat alone at the table

after breakfast,—an admirable woman, Sir, —and I hate her.

Of course, I begged an explanation.

An admirable woman, Sir, because she does good things, and even kind things,—takes care of this—this—young lady—we have here, talks like a sensible person, and always looks as if she was doing her duty with all her might. I hate her because her voice sounds as if it never trembled, and her eyes look as if she never knew what it was to cry. Besides, she looks at me, Sir, stares at me, as if she wanted to get an image of me for some gallery in her brain, —and we don't love to be looked at in this way, we that have—I hate her,—I hate her, —her eyes kill me,—it is like being stabbed with icicles to be looked at so,—the sooner she goes home the better. I don't want a woman to weigh me in a balance; there are men enough for that sort of work. The judicial character isn't captivating in females, Sir. A woman fascinates a man quite as often by what she overlooks as by what she sees. Love prefers twilight to daylight; and a man doesn't think much of, nor care much for, a woman outside of his household, unless he can couple the idea of love, past, present, or future, with her. I don't believe

the Devil would give half as much for the services of a sinner as he would for those of one of these folks that are always doing virtuous acts in a way to make them unpleasing. —That young girl wants a tender nature to cherish her and give her a chance to put out her leaves,—sunshine, and not east winds.

He was silent,—and sat looking at his handsome left hand with the red stone ring upon it.—Is he going to fall in love with Iris ?

Here are some lines I read to the boarders the other day :—

THE CROOKED FOOTPATH.

Ah, here it is ! the sliding rail
  That marks the old remembered spot,—
The gap that struck our schoolboy trail,—
  The crooked path across the lot.

It left the road by school and church,
  A pencilled shadow, nothing more,
That parted from the silver birch
  And ended at the farmhouse door.

No line or compass traced its plan ;
  With frequent bends to left or right,
In aimless, wayward curves it ran,
  But always kept the door in sight.

The gabled porch, with woodbine green,—
  The broken millstone at the sill,—
Though many a rood might stretch between,
  The truant child could see them still.

No rocks across the pathway lie,—
  No fallen trunk is o'er it thrown,—
And yet it winds, we know not why,
  And turns as if for tree or stone.

Perhaps some lover trod the way
  With shaking knees and leaping heart,—
And so it often runs astray
  With sinuous sweep or sudden start.

Or one, perchance, with clouded brain
  From some unholy banquet reeled,—
And since, our devious steps maintain
  His track across the trodden field.

Nay, deem not thus,—no earthborn will
  Could ever trace a faultless line ;
Our truest steps are human still,—
  To walk unswerving were divine !

Truants from love, we dream of wrath ;—
  Oh, rather let us trust the more !
Through all the wanderings of the path,
  We still can see our Father's door !

V.

The Professor finds a Fly in his Teacup.

I HAVE a long theological talk to relate, which must be dull reading to some of my young and vivacious friends. I don't know, however, that any of them have entered into a contract to read all that I write, or that I have promised always to write to please them. What if I should sometimes write to please myself?

Now you must know that there are a great many things which interest me, to some of which this or that particular class of readers may be totally indifferent. I love Nature, and human nature, its thoughts, affections, dreams, aspirations, delusions,—Art in all its forms,—*virtu* in all its eccentricities,—old stories from black-letter volumes and yellow manuscripts, and new projects out of hot brains not yet embedded in the snows of age. I love the generous impulses of the reformer; but not less does my imagination

feed itself upon the old litanies, so often warmed by the human breath upon which they were wafted to Heaven that they glow through our frames like our own heart's blood. I hope I love good men and women; I know that they never speak a word to me, even if it be of question or blame, that I do not take pleasantly, if it is expressed with a reasonable amount of human kindness.

I have before me at this time a beautiful and affecting letter, which I have hesitated to answer, though the postmark upon it gave its direction, and the name is one which is known to all, in some of its representatives. It contains no reproach, only a delicately-hinted fear. Speak gently, as this dear lady has spoken, and there is no heart so insensible that it does not answer to the appeal, no intellect so virile that it does not own a certain deference to the claims of age, of childhood, of sensitive and timid natures, when they plead with it not to look at those sacred things by the broad daylight which they see in mystic shadow. How grateful would it be to make perpetual peace with these pleading saints and their confessors, by the simple act that silences all complainings! Sleep, sleep, sleep! says the Arch-Enchantress of them all,—and pours her dark and potent anodyne,

distilled over the fires that consumed her foes,—its large, round drops changing, as we look, into the beads of her convert's rosary! Silence! the pride of reason! cries another, whose whole life is spent in reasoning down reason.

I hope I love good people, not for their sake, but for my own. And most assuredly, if any deed or wrong or word of bitterness led me into an act of disrespect towards that enlightened and excellent class of men who make it their calling to teach goodness and their duty to practise it, I should feel that I had done myself an injury rather than them. Go and talk with any professional man holding any of the mediæval creeds, choosing one who wears upon his features the mark of inward and outward health, who looks cheerful, intelligent, and kindly, and see how all your prejudices melt away in his presence! It is impossible to come into intimate relations with a large, sweet nature, such as you may often find in this class, without longing to be at one with it in all its modes of being and believing. But does it not occur to you that one may love truth as he sees it, and his race as he views it, better than even the sympathy and approbation of many good men whom he honours,

—better than sleeping to the sound of the Miserere or listening to the repetition of an effete Confession of Faith?

The three learned professions have but recently emerged from a state of *quasi* barbarism. None of them like too well to be told of it, but it must be sounded in their ears whenever they put on airs. When a man has taken an overdose of laudanum, the doctors tell us to place him between two persons who shall make him walk up and down incessantly; and if he still cannot be kept from going to sleep, they say that a lash or two over his back is of great assistance.

So we must keep the doctors awake by telling them that they have not yet shaken off astrology and the doctrine of signatures, as is shown by the form of their prescriptions, and their use of nitrate of silver, which turns epileptics into Ethiopians. If that is not enough, they must be given over to the scourgers, who like their task and get good fees for it. A few score years ago, sick people were made to swallow burnt toads and powdered earthworms and the expressed juice of wood-lice. The physician of Charles I. and II. prescribed abominations not to be named. Barbarism, as bad as that of Congo

or Ashantee. Traces of this barbarism linger even in the greatly improved medical science of our century. So while the solemn farce of over-drugging is going on, the world over, the harlequin pseudo-science jumps on to the stage, whip in hand, with half-a-dozen somersets, and begins laying about him.

In 1817, perhaps you remember, the law of wager by battle was unrepealed, and the rascally murderous, and worse than murderous, clown, Abraham Thornton, put on his gauntlet in open court and defied the appellant to lift the other which he threw down. It was not until the reign of George II. that the statutes against witchcraft were repealed. As for the English Court of Chancery, we know that its antiquated abuses form one of the staples of common proverbs and popular literature. So the laws and the lawyers have to be watched perpetually by public opinion as much as the doctors do.

I don't think the other profession is an exception. When the Reverend Mr. Cauvin and his associates burned my distinguished scientific brother,—he was burned with green fagots, which made it rather slow and painful,—it appears to me they were in a state of religious barbarism. The dogmas of such people about the Father of Mankind and his

creatures are of no more account in my opinion than those of a council of Aztecs. If a man picks your pocket, do you not consider him thereby disqualified to pronounce any authoritative opinion on matters of ethics? If a man hangs my ancient female relatives for sorcery, as they did in this neighbourhood a little while ago, or burns my instructor for not believing as he does, I care no more for his religious edicts than I should for those of any other barbarian.

Of course, a barbarian may hold many true opinions; but when the ideas of the healing art, of the administration of justice, of Christian love, could not exclude systematic poisoning, judicial duelling, and murder for opinion's sake, I do not see how we can trust the verdict of that time relating to any subject which involves the primal instincts violated in these abominations and absurdities. —What if we are even now in a state of *semi*-barbarism?

Perhaps some think we ought not to talk at table about such things.—I am not so sure of that. Religion and government appear to me the two subjects which of all others should belong to the common talk of people who enjoy the blessings of freedom. Think, one moment. The earth is a great factory-

wheel, which, at every revolution on its axis, receives fifty thousand raw souls and turns off nearly the same number worked up more or less completely. There must be somewhere a population of two hundred thousand million, perhaps ten or a hundred times as many, earth-born intelligences. *Life*, as we call it, is nothing but the edge of the boundless ocean of existence where it comes on soundings. In this view, I do not see anything so fit to talk about, or half so interesting, as that which relates to the innumerable majority of our fellow-creatures, the dead-living, who are hundreds of thousands to one of the live-living, and with whom we all potentially belong, though we have got tangled for the present in some parcels of fibrine, albumen, and phosphates, that keep us on the minority side of the house. In point of fact, it is one of the many results of *Spiritualism* to make the permanent destiny of the race a matter of common reflection and discourse, and a vehicle for the prevailing disbelief of the Middle-Age doctrines on the subject. I cannot help thinking, when I remember how many conversations my friend and myself have reported, that it would be very extraordinary if there were no mention of that class of subjects which

involves all that we have and all that we hope, not merely for ourselves, but for the dear people whom we love best,—noble men, pure and lovely women, ingenuous children, —about the destiny of nine-tenths of whom you know the opinions that would have been taught by those old man-roasting, woman-strangling dogmatists.—However, I fought this matter with one of our boarders the other day, and I am going to report the conversation.

The divinity-student came down, one morning, looking rather more serious than usual. He said little at breakfast-time, but lingered after the others, so that I, who am apt to be long at the table, found myself alone with him.

When the rest were all gone, he turned his chair round towards mine, and began.

I am afraid,—he said,—you express yourself a little too freely on a most important class of subjects. Is there not danger in introducing discussions or allusions relating to matters of religion into common discourse?

Danger to what?—I asked.

Danger to truth,—he replied, after a slight pause.

I didn't know Truth was such an invalid, —I said.—How long is it since she could

only take the air in a close carriage, with a gentleman in a black coat on the box? Let me tell you a story, adapted to young persons, but which won't hurt older ones.

—There was a very little boy who had one of those balloons you may have seen, which are filled with light gas, and are held by a string to keep them from running off in aeronautic voyages on their own account. This little boy had a naughty brother, who said to him one day,—Brother, pull down your balloon, so that I can look at it and take hold of it. Then the little boy pulled it down. Now the naughty brother had a sharp pin in his hand, and he thrust it into the balloon, and all the gas oozed out, so that there was nothing left but a shrivelled skin.

One evening the little boy's father called him to the window to see the moon, which pleased him very much; but presently he said,—Father, do not pull the string and bring down the moon, for my naughty brother will prick it, and then it will all shrivel up, and we shall not see it any more.

Then his father laughed, and told him how the moon had been shining a good while, and would shine a good while longer, and that all we could do was to keep our

windows clean, never letting the dust get too thick on them, and especially to keep our eyes open, but that we could not pull the moon down with a string, nor prick it with a pin.—Mind you this, too, the moon is no man's private property, but is seen from a good many parlour-windows.

—Truth is tough. It will not break, like a bubble, at a touch ; nay, you may kick it about all day, like a football, and it will be round and full at evening. Does not Mr. Bryant say, that Truth gets well if she is run over by a locomotive, while Error dies of lockjaw if she scratches her finger? I never heard that a mathematician was alarmed for the safety of a demonstrated proposition. I think, generally, that fear of open discussion implies feebleness of inward conviction, and great sensitiveness to the expression of individual opinion is a mark of weakness.

—I am not so much afraid for truth,—said the divinity-student,—as for the conceptions of truth in the minds of persons not accustomed to judge wisely the opinions uttered before them.

Would you, then, banish all allusions to matters of this nature from the society of people who come together habitually?

I would be very careful in introducing them,—said the divinity-student.

Yes, but friends of yours leave pamphlets in people's entries, to be picked up by nervous misses and hysteric housemaids, full of doctrines these people do not approve. Some of your friends stop little children in the street and give them books, which their parents, who have had them baptized into the Christian fold, and give them what they consider proper religious instruction, do not think fit for them. One would say it was fair enough to talk about matters thus forced upon people's attention.

The divinity-student could not deny that this was what might be called opening the subject to the discussion of intelligent people.

But,—he said,—the greatest objection is this, that persons who have not made a professional study of theology are not competent to speak on such subjects. Suppose a minister were to undertake to express opinions on medical subjects, for instance, would you not think he was going beyond his province?

I laughed,—for I remembered John Wesley's "Sulphur and supplication," and so many other cases where ministers had

meddled with medicine,—sometimes well and sometimes ill, but, as a general rule, with a tremendous lurch to quackery, owing to their very loose way of admitting evidence,—that I could not help being amused.

I beg your pardon,—I said,—I do not wish to be impolite, but I was thinking of their certificates to patent medicines. Let us look at this matter.

If a minister had attended lectures on the theory and practice of medicine, delivered by those who had studied it most deeply, for thirty or forty years, at the rate of from fifty to one hundred a year,—if he had been constantly reading and hearing read the most approved text-books on the subject,—if he had seen medicine actually practised according to different methods, daily, for the same length of time,—I should think that, if a person of average understanding, he *was* entitled to express an opinion on the subject of medicine, or else that his instructors were a set of ignorant and incompetent charlatans.

If, before a medical practitioner would allow me to enjoy the full privileges of the healing art, he expected me to affirm my belief in a considerable number of medical doctrines, drugs and formulæ, I should think

that he thereby implied my right to discuss the same, and my ability to do so, if I knew how to express myself in English.

Suppose, for instance, the Medical Society should refuse to give us an opiate, or to set a broken limb, until we had signed our belief in a certain number of propositions,—of which we will say this is the first :—

I. All men's teeth are naturally in a state of total decay or caries, and, therefore, no man can bite until every one of them is extracted and a new set is inserted according to the principles of dentistry adopted by this Society.

I, for one, should want to discuss that before signing my name to it, and I should say this :—Why, no, that isn't true. There are a good many bad teeth, we all know, but a great many more good ones. You mustn't trust the *dentists ;* they are all the time looking at the people who have bad teeth, and such as are suffering from toothache. The idea that you must pull out every one of every nice young man and young woman's natural teeth ! Poh, poh ! Nobody believes that. This tooth must be straightened, that must be filled with gold, and this other perhaps extracted, but it must be a very rare case, if they are all so bad as

to require extraction; and if they are, don't blame the poor soul for it! Don't tell us, as some old dentists used to, that everybody not only always has every tooth in his head good for nothing, but that he ought to have his head cut off as a punishment for that misfortune! No, I can't sign Number One. Give us Number Two.

II. We hold that no man can be well who does not agree with our views of the efficacy of calomel, and who does not take the doses of it prescribed in our tables, as there directed.

To which I demur, questioning why it should be so, and get for answer the two following—

III. Every man who does not take our prepared calomel, as prescribed by us in our Constitution and By-Laws, is and must be a mass of disease from head to foot; it being self-evident that he is simultaneously affected with Apoplexy, Arthritis, Ascites, Asphyxia, and Atrophy; with Borborygmus, Bronchitis, and Bulimia; with Cachexia, Carcinoma, and Cretinismus; and so on through the alphabet, to Xerophthalmia and Zona, with all possible and incompatible diseases which are necessary to make up a totally morbid state; and he will certainly

die, if he does not take freely of our prepared calomel, to be obtained only of one of our authorised agents.

IV. No man shall be allowed to take our prepared calomel who does not give in his solemn adhesion to each and all of the above-named and the following propositions (from ten to a hundred) and show his mouth to certain of our apothecaries, who have *not* studied dentistry, to examine whether all his teeth have been extracted and a new set inserted according to our regulations.

Of course, the doctors have a right to say we shan't have any rhubarb if we don't sign their articles, and that if, after signing them, we express doubts (in public) about any of them, they will cut us off from our jalap and squills,—but then to ask a fellow not to discuss the propositions before he signs them is what I should call boiling it down a little *too* strong.

If we understand them, why can't we discuss them? If we can't understand them, because we haven't taken a medical degree, what the Father of Lies do they ask us to sign them for?

Just so with the graver profession. Every now and then some of its members seem to lose common sense and common humanity.

The laymen have to keep setting the divines right constantly. Science, for instance,—in other words, knowledge,—is not the enemy of religion; for, if so, then religion would mean ignorance. But it is often the antagonist of school-divinity.

Everybody knows the story of early astronomy and the school-divines. Come down a little later. Archbishop Usher, a very learned Protestant prelate, tells us that the world was created on Sunday, the twenty-third of October, four thousand and four years before the birth of Christ. Deluge, December 7th, two thousand three hundred and forty-eight years B.C.—Yes, and the earth stands on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise. One statement is as near the truth as the other.

Again, there is nothing so brutalising to some natures as *moral surgery*. I have often wondered that Hogarth did not add one more picture to his four stages of Cruelty. Those wretched fools, reverend divines and others, who were strangling men and women for imaginary crimes a little more than a century ago among us, were set right by a layman, and very angry it made them to have him meddle.

The good people of Northampton had a

very remarkable man for their clergyman, —a man with a brain as nicely adjusted for certain mechanical processes as Babbage's calculating machine. The commentary of the laymen on the preaching and practising of Jonathan Edwards was that, after twenty-three years of endurance, they turned him out by a vote of twenty to one, and passed a resolve that he should never preach for them again. A man's logical and analytical adjustments are of little consequence compared to his primary relations with Nature and truth; and people have sense enough to find it out in the long run; they know what "logic" is worth.

In that miserable delusion referred to above, the reverend Aztecs and Fijians argued rightly enough from their premises, no doubt, for many men can do this. But common sense and common humanity were unfortunately left out from their premises, and a layman had to supply them. A hundred more years and many of the barbarisms still lingering among us will, of course, have disappeared like witch-hanging. But people are sensitive now, as they were then. You will see by this extract that the Rev. Cotton Mather did

not like intermeddling with his business very well. "Let the *Levites* of the Lord keep close to their Instructions," he says, "and *God will smite thro' the loins of those that rise up against them.* I will report unto you a Thing which many Hundreds among us know to be true. The *Godly Minister* of a certain Town in Connecticut, when he had occasion to be absent on a *Lord's Day* from his Flock, employ'd an honest *Neighbour* of some small Talents for a *Mechanick*, to read a *Sermon* out of some *good Book* unto 'em. This *Honest*, whom they ever counted also a *Pious Man*, had so much conceit of his *Talents*, that instead of *Reading a Sermon* appointed, he to the *Surprize* of the People, fell to *preaching one of his own.* For his Text he took these Words, '*Despise not Prophecyings ;*' and in his Preachment he betook himself to bewail the *Envy of the Clergy* in the Land, in that they did not wish *all the Lord's People to be Prophets*, and call forth *Private Brethren* publickly to *prophesie.* While he was thus in the midst of his Exercise, God smote him with horrible *Madness ;* he was taken ravingly distracted ; the People were forc'd with violent Hands to carry him home. . . . I will not

mention his Name: He was reputed a Pious Man."—This is one of Cotton Mather's *Remarkable Judgments of God, on Several Sorts of Offenders*,—and the next cases referred to are the Judgments on the "Abominable Sacrilege" of not paying the Ministers' Salaries.

This sort of thing doesn't do here and now, you see, my young friend! We talk about our free institutions;—they are nothing but a coarse outside machinery to secure the freedom of individual thought. The President of the United States is only the engine-driver of our broad-gauge mail-train; and every honest, independent thinker has a seat in the first-class cars behind him.

—There is something in what you say,—replied the divinity-student;—and yet it seems to me there are places and times where disputed doctrines of religion should not be introduced. You would not attack a church dogma—say, Total Depravity—in a lyceum-lecture, for instance?

Certainly not; I should choose another place,—I answered.—But, mind you, at this table I think it is very different. I shall express my ideas on any subject I like. The laws of the lecture-room, to which my friends and myself are always amenable, do

not hold here. I shall not often give arguments, but frequently opinions,—I trust with courtesy and propriety, but, at any rate, with such natural forms of expression as it has pleased the Almighty to bestow upon me.

A man's opinions, look you, are generally of much more value than his arguments. These last are made by his brain, and perhaps he does not believe the proposition they tend to prove,—as is often the case with paid lawyers ; but opinions are formed by our whole nature,—brain, heart, instinct, brute life, everything all our experience has shaped for us by contact with the whole circle of our being.

—There is one thing more, — said the divinity-student,—that I wished to speak of ; I mean that idea of yours, expressed some time since, of *depolarising* the text of sacred books in order to judge them fairly. May I ask why you do not try the experiment yourself ?

Certainly,—I replied,—if it gives you any pleasure to ask foolish questions. I think the ocean telegraph-wire ought to be laid, and will be laid, but I don't know that you have any right to ask me to go and lay it. But, for that matter, I have heard a good

deal of Scripture depolarised in and out of the pulpit. I heard the Rev. Mr. F. once depolarise the story of the Prodigal Son in Park Street Church. Many years afterwards I heard him repeat the same or a similar depolarised version in Rome, New York. I heard an admirable depolarisation of the story of the young man who "had great possessions" from the Rev. Mr. H. in another pulpit, and felt that I had never half understood it before. All paraphrases are more or less perfect depolarisations. But I tell you this: the faith of our Christian community is not robust enough to bear the turning of our most sacred language into its depolarised equivalents. You have only to look back to Dr. Channing's famous Baltimore discourse and remember the shrieks of blasphemy with which it was greeted, to satisfy yourself on this point. Time, time only, can gradually wean us from our *Epeolatry*, or word-worship, by spiritualising our ideas of the thing signified. Man is an idolater or symbol-worshipper by nature, which, of course, is no fault of his; but sooner or later all his local and temporary symbols must be ground to powder, like the golden calf,—word-images as well as metal and wooden ones. Rough work, iconoclasm,

—but the only way to get at truth. It is, indeed, as that quaint and rare old discourse, *A Summons for Sleepers*, hath it, "no doubt a thankless office, and a verie unthriftie occupation; *veritas odium parit*, truth never goeth without a scratcht face; he that will be busie with *væ vobis*, let him looke shortly for *coram nobis*."

The very aim and end of our institutions is just this: that we may think what we like and say what we think.

—Think what we like!—said the divinity-student;—think what we like! What! against all human and divine authority?

Against all human versions of its own or any other authority. At our own peril always, if we do not *like* the right,—but not at the risk of being hanged and quartered for political heresy, or broiled on green fagots for ecclesiastical treason! Nay, we have got so far, that the very word *heresy* has fallen into comparative disuse among us.

And now, my young friend, let us shake hands and stop our discussion, which we will not make a quarrel. I trust you know, or will learn, a great many things in your profession which we common scholars do not know; but mark this: when the common

people of New England stop talking politics and theology, it will be because they have got an Emperor to teach them the one, and a Pope to teach them the other !

That was the end of my long conference with the divinity-student. The next morning we got talking a little on the same subject, very good-naturedly, as people return to a matter they have talked out.

You must look to yourself,—said the divinity-student,—if your democratic notions get into print. You will be fired into from all quarters.

If it were only a bullet, with the marksman's name on it !—I said.—I can't stop to pick out the peep-shot of the anonymous scribblers.

Right, Sir ! right !—said the Little Gentleman.—The scamps ! I know the fellows. They can't give fifty cents to one of the Antipodes, but they must have it jingled along through everybody's palms all the way, till it reaches him,—and forty cents of it get spilt, like the water out of the fire-buckets passed along a "lane" at a fire ;—but when it comes to anonymous defamation, putting lies into people's mouths, and then advertising those people through the country as the authors of them,—oh, then it is that

they let not their left hand know what their right hand doeth !

I don't like Ehud's style of doing business, Sir. He comes along with a very sanctimonious look, Sir, with his "secret errand unto thee," and his "message from God unto thee," and then pulls out his hidden knife with that unsuspected left hand of his,—(the Little Gentleman lifted his clenched left hand with the blood-red jewel on the ring-finger),—and runs it, blade and haft, into a man's stomach ! Don't meddle with these fellows, Sir. They are read mostly by persons whom you would not reach, if you were to write ever so much. Let 'em alone. A man whose opinions are not attacked is beneath contempt.

I hope so,—I said.—I got three pamphlets and innumerable squibs flung at my head for attacking one of the pseudo-sciences, in former years. When, by the permission of Providence, I held up to the professional public the damnable facts connected with the conveyance of poison from one young mother's chamber to another's,—for doing which humble office I desire to be thankful that I have lived, though nothing else good should ever come of my life,— I had to bear the sneers of those whose position I had

assailed, and, as I believe, have at last demolished, so that nothing but the ghosts of dead women stir among the ruins.—What would you do, if the folks without names kept at you, trying to get a San Benito on to your shoulders that would fit you?—Would you stand still in fly-time, or would you give a kick now and then?

Let 'em bite!—said the Little Gentleman;—let 'em bite! It makes 'em hungry to shake 'em off, and they settle down again as thick as ever and twice as savage. Do you know what meddling with the folks without names, as you call 'em, is like?—It is like riding at the *quintain*. You run full tilt at the board, but the board is on a pivot, with a bag of sand on an arm that balances it. The board gives way as soon as you touch it; and before you have got by, the bag of sand comes round whack on the back of your neck. "Ananias," for instance, pitches into your lecture, we will say, in some paper taken by the people in your kitchen. Your servants get saucy and negligent. If their newspaper calls you names, they need not be so particular about shutting doors softly or boiling potatoes. So you lose your temper, and come out in an article which you think is going to finish "Ananias," proving him a

booby who doesn't know enough to understand even a lyceum-lecture, or else a person that tells lies. Now you think you 've got him! Not so fast. "Ananias" keeps still and winks to "Shimei," and "Shimei" comes out in the paper which they take in your neighbour's kitchen, ten times worse than t'other fellow. If you meddle with "Shimei," he steps out, and next week appears "Rab-shakeh," an unsavoury wretch; and now, at any rate, you find out what good sense there was in Hezekiah's "Answer him not."—No, no,—keep your temper.—So saying, the Little Gentleman doubled his left fist and looked at it as if he should like to hit something or somebody a most pernicious punch with it.

Good!—said I.—Now let me give you some axioms I have arrived at, after seeing something of a great many kinds of good folks.

—Of a hundred people of each of the different leading religious sects, about the same proportion will be safe and pleasant persons to deal and live with.

—There are, at least, three real saints among the women to one among the men, in every denomination.

—The spiritual standard of different classes I would reckon thus:—

1. The comfortably rich.
2. The decently comfortable.
3. The very rich, who are apt to be irreligious.
4. The very poor, who are apt to be immoral.

—The cut nails of machine-divinity may be driven in, but they won't clinch.

—The arguments which the greatest of our schoolmen could not refute were two: the blood in men's veins, and the milk in women's breasts.

—Humility is the first of the virtues—for other people.

—Faith always implies the disbelief of a lesser fact in favour of a greater. A little mind often sees the unbelief, without seeing the belief of a large one.

The Poor Relation had been fidgeting about and working her mouth while all this was going on. She broke out in speech at this point.

I hate to hear folks talk so. I don't see that you are any better than a heathen.

I wish I were half as good as many heathens have been,—I said.—Dying for a principle seems to me a higher degree of virtue than scolding for it; and the history of heathen races is full of instances where

men have laid down their lives for the love of their kind, of their country, of truth, nay, even for simple manhood's sake, or to show their obedience or fidelity. What would not such beings have done for the souls of men, for the Christian commonwealth, for the King of Kings, if they had lived in days of larger light? Which seems to you nearest heaven, Socrates drinking his hemlock, Regulus going back to the enemy's camp, or that old New England divine sitting comfortably in his study and chuckling over his conceit of certain poor women, who had been burned to death in his own town, going "roaring out of one fire into another"?

I don't believe he said any such thing, —replied the Poor Relation.

It is hard to believe,—said I,—but it is true for all that. In another hundred years it will be as incredible that men talked as we sometimes hear them now.

Pectus est quod facit theologum. The heart makes the theologian. Every race, every civilisation, either has a new revelation of its own or a new interpretation of an old one. Democratic America has a different humanity from feudal Europe, and so must have a new divinity. See,

for one moment, how intelligence reacts on our faiths. The Bible was a divining-book to our ancestors, and is so still in the hands of some of the vulgar. The Puritans went to the Old Testament for their laws; the Mormons go to it for their patriarchal institution. Every generation dissolves something new and precipitates something once held in solution from that great storehouse of temporary and permanent truths.

You may observe this: that the conversation of intelligent men of the stricter sects is strangely in advance of the formulæ that belong to their organisations. So true is this, that I have doubts whether a large proportion of them would not have been rather pleased than offended if they could have overheard our talk. For, look you, I think there is hardly a professional teacher who will not in private conversation allow a large part of what we have said, though it may frighten him in print; and I know well what an under-current of secret sympathy gives vitality to those poor words of mine which sometimes get a hearing.

I don't mind the exclamation of any old stager who drinks Madeira worth from two

to six Bibles a bottle, and burns, according to his own premises, a dozen souls a year in the cigars with which he muddles his brains. But as for the good and true and intelligent men whom we see all around us, laborious, self-denying, hopeful, helpful, — men who know that the active mind of the century is tending more and more to the two poles, Rome and Reason, the sovereign church or the free soul, authority or personality, God in us or God in our masters, and that, though a man may by accident *stand* half-way between these two points, he must *look* one way or the other, — I don't believe they would take offence at anything I have reported of our late conversation.

But supposing any one *do* take offence at first sight, let him look over these notes again, and see whether he is quite sure he does not agree with most of these things that were said amongst us. If he agrees with most of them, let him be patient with an opinion he does not accept, or an expression or illustration a little too vivacious. I don't know that I shall report any more conversations on these topics ; but I do insist on the right to express a civil opinion on this class of subjects without giving offence, just when and where I please,—unless, as in the lec-

ture-room, there is an implied contract to keep clear of doubtful matters. You didn't think a man could sit at a breakfast-table doing nothing but making puns every morning for a year or two, and never give a thought to the two thousand of his fellow-creatures who are passing into another state during every hour that he sits talking and laughing! Of course, the *one* matter that a real human being cares for is what is going to become of them and of him. And the plain truth is, that a good many people are saying one thing about it and believing another.

—How do I know that? Why, I have known and loved to talk with good people, all the way from Rome to Geneva in doctrine, as long as I can remember. Besides, the real religion of the world comes from women much more than from men, — from mothers most of all, who carry the key of our souls in their bosoms. It is in their hearts that the "sentimental" religion some people are so fond of sneering at has its source. The sentiment of love, the sentiment of maternity, the sentiment of the paramount obligation of the parent to the child as having called it into existence, enhanced just in proportion to the power and

knowledge of the one and the weakness and ignorance of the other,—these are the "sentiments" that have kept our soulless systems from driving men off to die in holes like those that riddle the sides of the hill opposite the Monastery of St. Saba, where the miserable victims of a falsely-interpreted religion starved and withered in their delusion.

I have looked on the face of a saintly woman this very day, whose creed many dread and hate, but whose life is lovely and noble beyond all praise. When I remember the bitter words I have heard spoken against her faith, by men who have an Inquisition which excommunicates those who ask to leave their communion in peace, and an *Index Expurgatorius* on which this article may possibly have the honour of figuring,—and, far worse than these, the reluctant, pharisaical confession, that it might perhaps be *possible* that one who so believed should be accepted of the Creator,—and then recall the sweet peace and love that show through all her looks, the price of untold sacrifices and labours,—and again recollect how thousands of women, filled with the same spirit, die, without a murmur, to earthly life, die to their own names even, that they may

know nothing but their holy duties,—while men are torturing and denouncing their fellows, and while we can hear day and night the clinking of the hammers that are trying, like the brute forces in the *Prometheus*, to rivet their adamantine wedges right through the breast of human nature, — I have been ready to believe that we have even now a new revelation, and the name of its Messiah is WOMAN !

—I should be sorry,—I remarked, a day or two afterwards, to the divinity-student, —if anything I said tended in any way to foster any jealousy between the professions, or to throw disrespect upon that one on whose counsel and sympathies almost all of us lean in our moments of trial. But we are false to our new conditions of life, if we do not resolutely maintain our religious as well as our political freedom, in the face of any and all supposed monopolies. Certain men will, of course, say two things, if we do not take their views : first, that we don't know anything about these matters ; and, secondly, that we are not so good as they are. They have a polarised phraseology for saying these things, but it comes to precisely that. To which it may be answered, in the first place, that we have good authority for

saying that even babes and sucklings know *something;* and, in the second, that, if there is a mote or so to be removed from our premises, the courts and councils of the last few years have found beams enough in some other quarters to build a church that would hold all the good people in Boston and have sticks enough left to make a bonfire for all the heretics.

As to that terrible depolarising process of mine, of which we were talking the other day, I will give you a specimen of one way of managing it if you like. I don't believe it will hurt you or anybody. Besides, I had a great deal rather finish our talk with pleasant images and gentle words than with sharp sayings, which will only afford a text, if anybody repeats them, for endless relays of attacks from Messrs. Ananias, Shimei, and Rab-shakeh.

[I must leave such gentry, if any of them show themselves, in the hands of my clerical friends, many of whom are ready to stand up for the rights of the laity,—and to those blessed souls, the good women, to whom this version of the story of a mother's hidden hopes and tender anxieties is dedicated by their peaceful and loving servant.]

A MOTHER'S SECRET.

How sweet the sacred legend—if unblamed
In my slight verse such holy things are named—
Of Mary's secret hours of hidden joy,
Silent, but pondering on her wondrous boy!
Ave, Maria! Pardon, if I wrong
Those heavenly words that shame my earthly song!

The choral host had closed the angel's strain
Sung to the midnight watch on Bethlehem's plain;
And now the shepherds, hastening on their way,
Sought the still hamlet where the Infant lay.
They passed the fields that gleaning Ruth toiled o'er,—
They saw afar the ruined threshing-floor
Where Moab's daughter, homeless and forlorn,
Found Boaz slumbering by his heaps of corn;
And some remembered how the holy scribe,
Skilled in the lore of every jealous tribe,
Traced the warm blood of Jesse's royal son
To that fair alien, bravely wooed and won.
So fared they on to seek the promised sign
That marked the anointed heir of David's line.
At last, by forms of earthly semblance led,
They found the crowded inn, the oxen's shed.
No pomp was there, no glory shone around
On the coarse straw that strewed the reeking ground.

One dim retreat a flickering torch betrayed,—
In that poor cell the Lord of Life was laid !
The wondering shepherds told their breathless tale
Of the bright choir that woke the sleeping vale ;
Told how the skies with sudden glory flamed ;
Told how the shining multitude proclaimed
"Joy, joy to earth ! Behold the hallowed morn
In David's city Christ the Lord is born !
'Glory to God !' let angels shout on high,—
'Good-will to men !' the listening Earth reply !"
They spoke with hurried words and accents wild ;
Calm in his cradle slept the heavenly child.
No trembling word the mother's joy revealed,—
One sigh of rapture, and her lips were sealed ;
Unmoved she saw the rustic train depart,
But kept their words to ponder in her heart.

Twelve years had passed ; the boy was fair and tall,
Growing in wisdom, finding grace with all.
The maids of Nazareth, as they trooped to fill
Their balanced urns beside the mountain-rill,
The gathered matrons, as they sat and spun,
Spoke in soft words of Joseph's quiet son.
No voice had reached the Galilean vale
Of star-led kings or awe-struck shepherds' tale
In the meek, studious child they only saw
The future Rabbi, learned in Israel's law.

So grew the boy ; and now the feast was near,
When at the holy place the tribes appear.
Scarce had the home-bred child of Nazareth seen
Beyond the hills that girt the village-green,
Save when at midnight, o'er the starlit sands,
Snatched from the steel of Herod's murdering bands,
A babe, close-folded to his mother's breast,
Through Edom's wilds he sought the sheltering West.
Then Joseph spake : "Thy boy hath largely grown ;
Weave him fine raiment, fitting to be shown ;
Fair robes beseem the pilgrim, as the priest :
Goes he not with us to the holy feast ?"
And Mary culled the flaxen fibres white ;
Till eve she spun ; she spun till morning light ;
The thread was twined ; its parting meshes through ;
From hand to hand her restless shuttle flew,
Till the full web was wound upon the beam,—
Love's curious toil,—a vest without a seam !
They reach the holy place, fulfil the days
To solemn feasting given, and grateful praise.
At last they turn, and far Moriah's height
Melts in the southern sky and fades from sight.
All day the dusky caravan has flowed
In devious trails along the winding road,—
(For many a step their homeward path attends,
And all the sons of Abraham are as friends).

Evening has come, — the hour of rest and joy ;—
Hush! hush!—that whisper, —"Where is Mary's boy?"
O weary hour! O aching days that passed
Filled with strange fears, each wilder than the last :
The soldier's lance, — the fierce centurion's sword,—
The crushing wheels that whirl some Roman lord,—
The midnight crypt that sucks the captive's breath,—
The blistering sun on Hinnom's vale of death!
Thrice on his cheek had rained the morning light,
Thrice on his lips the mildewed kiss of night,
Crouched by some porphyry column's shining plinth,
Or stretched beneath the odorous terebinth.
At last, in desperate mood, they sought once more
The Temple's porches, searched in vain before ;
They found him seated with the ancient men,—
The grim old rufflers of the tongue and pen,—
Their bald heads glistening as they clustered near,
Their grey beards slanting as they turned to hear,
Lost in half-envious wonder and surprise
That lips so fresh should utter words so wise.

And Mary said,—as one who, tried too long,
Tells all her grief and half her sense of wrong,—
"What is this thoughtless thing which thou hast done?
Lo, we have sought thee sorrowing, O my son!"
Few words he spake, and scarce of filial tone,—
Strange words, their sense a mystery yet unknown;
Then turned with them and left the holy hill,
To all their mild commands obedient still.
The tale was told to Nazareth's sober men,
And Nazareth's matrons told it oft again;
The maids retold it at the fountain's side;
The youthful shepherds doubted or denied;
It passed around among the listening friends,
With all that fancy adds and fiction lends,
Till newer marvels dimmed the young renown
Of Joseph's son, who talked the Rabbis down.
But Mary, faithful to its lightest word,
Kept in her heart the sayings she had heard,
Till the dread morning rent the Temple's veil,
And shuddering Earth confirmed the wondrous tale.

Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall;
A mother's secret hope outlives them all.

VI.

YOU don't look so dreadful poor in the face as you did a while back. Bloated some, I expect.

This was the cheerful and encouraging and elegant remark with which the Poor Relation greeted the divinity-student one morning.

Of course every good man considers it a great sacrifice on his part to continue living in this transitory, unsatisfactory, and particularly unpleasant world. This is so much a matter of course, that I was surprised to see the divinity-student change colour. He took a look at a small and uncertain-minded glass which hung slanting forward over the chapped sideboard. The image it returned to him had the colour of a very young pea somewhat over-boiled. The scenery of a long tragic drama flashed through his mind as the lightning-express-train *whishes* by a station; the gradual dismantling process of disease; friends looking on, sympathetic, but

secretly chuckling over their own stomachs of iron and lungs of caoutchouc; nurses attentive, but calculating their crop, and thinking how soon it will be ripe, so that they can go to your neighbour, who is good for a year or so longer; doctors assiduous, but giving themselves a mental shake, as they go out of your door, which throws off your particular grief as a duck sheds a raindrop from his oily feathers; undertakers solemn, but happy; then the great subsoil cultivator, who plants, but never looks for fruit in his garden; then the stone-cutter, who finds the lie that has been waiting for you on a slab ever since the birds or beasts made their tracks on the new red sandstone; then the grass and the dandelions and the buttercups, —Earth saying to the mortal body, with her sweet symbolism, "You have scarred my bosom, but you are forgiven;" then a glimpse of the soul as a floating consciousness without very definite form or place, but dimly conceived of as an upright column of vapour or mist several times larger than life-size, so far as it could be said to have any size at all, wandering about and living a thin and half-awake life for want of good old-fashioned solid *matter* to come down upon with foot and fist,—in fact, having neither

foot nor fist, nor conveniences for taking the sitting posture.

And yet the divinity-student was a good Christian, and those heathen images which remind one of the childlike fancies of the dying Adrian were only the efforts of his imagination to give shape to the formless and position to the placeless. Neither did his thoughts spread themselves out and link themselves as I have displayed them. They came confusedly into his mind like a heap of broken mosaics,—sometimes a part of the picture complete in itself, sometimes connected fragments, and sometimes only single severed stones.

They did not diffuse a light of celestial joy over his countenance. On the contrary, the Poor Relation's remark turned him pale, as I have said; and when the terrible wrinkled and jaundiced looking-glass turned him green in addition, and he saw himself in it, it seemed to him as if it were all settled, and his book of life were to be shut not yet half-read, and go back to the dust of the underground archives. He coughed a mild short cough, as if to point the direction in which his downward path was tending. It was an honest little cough enough, so far as appearances went. But coughs are ungrateful

things. You find one out in the cold, take it up and nurse it and make everything of it, dress it up warm, give it all sorts of balsams and other food it likes, and carry it round in your bosom as if it were a miniature lapdog. And by-and-by its little bark grows sharp and savage, and — confound the thing!—you find it is a wolf's whelp that you have got there, and he is gnawing in the breast where he has been nestling so long.—The Poor Relation said that somebody's surrup was good for folks that were gettin' into a bad way.—The landlady had heard of desperate cases cured by cherry-pictorial.

Whisky's the fellah,—said the youngman John.—Make it into punch, cold at dinner-time 'n' hot at bed-time. I 'll come up 'n' show you how to mix it. Haven't any of you seen the wonderful fat man exhibitin' down in Hanover Street?

Master Benjamin Franklin rushed into the dialogue with a breezy exclamation, that he had seen a great picter outside of the place where the fat man was exhibitin'. Tried to get in at half-price, but the man at the door looked at his teeth and said he was more'n ten year old.

It isn't two years,—said the young man

John,—since that fat fellah was exhibitin' here as the Livin' Skeleton. Whisky—that 's what did it,—real Burbon 's the stuff. Hot water, sugar, 'n' jest a little shavin' of lemon-skin in it,—*skin*, mind you, none o' your juice; take it off thin,—shape of one of them flat curls the factory-girls wear on the sides of their foreheads.

But I am a teetotaller,—said the divinity-student in a subdued tone;—not noticing the enormous length of the bow-string the young fellow had just drawn.

He took up his hat and went out.

I think you have worried that young man more than you meant,—I said.—I don't believe he will jump off one of the bridges, for he has too much principle; but I mean to follow him and see where he goes, for he looks as if his mind were made up to something.

I followed him at a reasonable distance. He walked doggedly along, looking neither to the right nor the left, turned into State Street, and made for a well-known Life Insurance Office. Luckily, the doctor was there, and overhauled him on the spot. There was nothing the matter with him, he said, and he could have his life insured as a sound one. He came out in good spirits, and told me this soon after.

This led me to make some remarks the next morning on the manners of well-bred and ill-bred people.

I began,—The whole essence of true gentle-breeding (one does not like to say gentility) lies in the wish and the art to be agreeable. Good-breeding is *surface-Christianity*. Every look, movement, tone, expression, subject of discourse, that may give pain to another is habitually excluded from conversational intercourse. This is the reason why rich people are apt to be so much more agreeable than others.

—I thought you were a great champion of equality,—said the discreet and severe lady who had accompanied our young friend, the Latin Tutor's daughter.

I go politically for *e*quality,—I said,—and socially for *the* quality.

Who are the "quality,"—said the Model, etc.,—in a community like ours?

I confess I find this question a little difficult to answer,—I said.—Nothing is better known than the distinction of social ranks which exists in every community, and nothing is harder to define. The great gentlemen and ladies of a place are its real lords and masters and mistresses; they are the *quality*, whether in a monarchy or a re-

public; mayors and governors and generals and senators and ex-presidents are nothing to them. How well we know this, and how seldom it finds a distinct expression! Now I tell you truly, I believe in man as man, and I disbelieve in all distinctions except such as follow the natural lines of cleavage in a society which has crystallised according to its own true laws. But the essence of equality is to be able to say the truth; and there is nothing more curious than these truths relating to the stratification of society.

Of all the facts in this world that do not take hold of immortality, there is not one so intensely real, permanent, and engrossing as this of social position,—as you see by the circumstance that the core of all the great social orders the world has seen has been, and is still, for the most part, a privileged class of gentlemen and ladies arranged in a regular scale of precedence among themselves, but superior as a body to all else.

Nothing but an ideal Christian equality, which we have been getting farther away from since the days of the Primitive Church, can prevent this subdivision of society into classes from taking place everywhere,—in the great centres of our republic as much as

in old European monarchies. Only there position is more absolutely hereditary,— here it is more completely elective.

—Where is the election held? and what are the qualifications? and who are the electors?—said the Model.

Nobody ever sees when the vote is taken; there never is a formal vote. The women settle it mostly; and they know wonderfully well what is presentable, and what can't stand the blaze of the chandeliers and the critical eye and ear of people trained to know a staring shade in a ribbon, a false light in a jewel, an ill-bred tone, an angular movement, everything that betrays a coarse fibre and cheap training. As a general thing, you do not get elegance short of two or three removes from the soil, out of which our best blood doubtless comes,— quite as good, no doubt, as if it came from those old prize-fighters with iron pots on their heads, to whom some great people are so fond of tracing their descent through a line of small artisans and petty shopkeepers whose veins have held "base" fluid enough to fill the Cloaca Maxima!

Does not money go everywhere?— said the Model.

Almost. And with good reason. For

though there are numerous exceptions, rich people are, as I said, commonly altogether the most agreeable companions. The influence of a fine house, graceful furniture, good libraries, well-ordered tables, trim servants, and, above all, a position so secure that one becomes unconscious of it, gives a harmony and refinement to the character and manners which we feel, even if we cannot explain their charm. Yet we can get at the reason of it by thinking a little.

All these appliances are to shield the sensibility from disagreeable contacts, and to soothe it by varied natural and artificial influences. In this way the mind, the taste, the feelings, grow delicate, just as the hands grow white and soft when saved from toil and encased in soft gloves. The whole nature becomes subdued into suavity. I confess I like the quality-ladies better than the common kind even of literary ones. They haven't read the last book, perhaps, but they attend better to you when you are talking to them. If they are never learned, they make up for it in tact and elegance. Besides, I think, on the whole, there is less self-assertion in diamonds than in dogmas. I don't know where you will find a sweeter portrait of humility than in Esther, the poor

play-girl of King Ahasuerus; yet Esther put on her royal apparel when she went before her lord. I have no doubt she was a more gracious and agreeable person than Deborah, who judged the people and wrote the story of Sisera. The wisest woman you talk with is ignorant of something that you know, but an elegant woman never forgets her elegance.

Dowdyism is clearly an expression of imperfect vitality. The highest fashion is intensely alive,—not alive necessarily to the truest and best things, but with its blood tingling, as it were, in all its extremities and to the farthest point of its surface, so that the feather in its bonnet is as fresh as the crest of a fighting-cock, and the rosette on its slipper as clean-cut and *pimpant* (pronounce it English fashion,—it is a good word) as a dahlia. As a general rule, that society where flattery is acted is much more agreeable than that where it is spoken. Don't you see why? Attention and deference don't require you to make fine speeches expressing your sense of unworthiness (lies), and returning all the compliments paid you. This is one reason.

— A woman of sense ought to be above flattering any man,—said the Model.

[*My reflection.* Oh ! oh ! no wonder you didn't get married. Served you right.] *My remark.* Surely, Madam,—if you mean by flattery telling people boldly to their faces that they are this or that, which they are not. But a woman who does not carry a halo of good feeling and desire to make everybody contented about with her wherever she goes,—an atmosphere of grace, mercy, and peace, of at least six feet radius, which wraps every human being upon whom she voluntarily bestows her presence, and so flatters him with the comfortable thought that she is rather glad he is alive than otherwise, isn't worth the trouble of talking to, *as a woman;* she may do well enough to hold discussions with.

—I don't think the Model exactly liked this. She said,—a little spitefully, I thought, —that a sensible man might stand a little praise, but would of course soon get sick of it, if he were in the habit of getting much.

Oh, yes,—I replied,—just as men get sick of tobacco. It is notorious how apt they are to get tired of that vegetable.

—That 's so !—said the young fellow John.—I 've got tired of my cigars and burnt 'em all up.

I am heartily glad to hear it,—said the

Model,—I wish they were all disposed of in the same way.

So do I,—said the young fellow John.

Can't you get your friends to unite with you in committing those odious instruments of debauchery to the flames in which you have consumed your own?

I wish I could,—said the young fellow John.

It would be a noble sacrifice,—said the Model,—and every American woman would be grateful to you. Let us burn them all in a heap out in the yard.

That a'n't my way,—said the young fellow John ;—I burn 'em one 't' time,—little end in my mouth and big end outside.

—I watched for the effect of this sudden change of programme, when it should reach the calm stillness of the Model's interior apprehension, as a boy watches for the splash of a stone which he has dropped into a well. But before it had fairly reached the water, poor Iris, who had followed the conversation with a certain interest until it turned this sharp corner (for she seems rather to fancy the young fellow John), laughed out such a clear, loud laugh, that it started us all off, as the locust-cry of some full-throated soprano drags a multitudinous chorus after it.

It was plain that some dam or other had broken in the soul of this young girl, and she was squaring up old scores of laughter, out of which she had been cheated, with a grand flood of merriment that swept all before it. So we had a great laugh all round, in which the Model—who, if she had as many virtues as there are spokes to a wheel, all compacted with a personality as round and complete as its tire, yet wanted that one little addition of grace, which seems so small, and is as important as the linch-pin in trundling over the rough ways of life—had not the tact to join. She seemed to be "stuffy" about it, as the young fellow John said. In fact, I was afraid the joke would have cost us both our new lady-boarders. It had no effect, however, except, perhaps, to hasten the departure of the elder of the two, who could, on the whole, be spared.

—I had meant to make this note of our conversation a text for a few axioms on the matter of breeding. But it so happened, that, exactly at this point of my record, a very distinguished philosopher, whom several of our boarders and myself go to hear, and whom no doubt many of my readers follow habitually, treated this matter of *manners*. Up to this point, if I have been

so fortunate as to coincide with him in opinion, and so unfortunate as to try to express what he has more felicitously said, nobody is to blame; for what has been given thus far was all written before the lecture was delivered. But what shall I do now? He told us it was childish to lay down rules for deportment,—but he could not help laying down a few.

Thus, — *Nothing so vulgar as to be in a hurry.* — True, but hard of application. People with short legs step quickly, because legs are pendulums, and swing more times in a minute the shorter they are. Generally a natural rhythm runs through the whole organisation: quick pulse, fast breathing, hasty speech, rapid trains of thought, excitable temper. *Stillness* of person and steadiness of features are signal marks of good-breeding. Vulgar persons can't sit still, or, at least, they must work their limbs or features.

Talking of one's own ails and grievances.— Bad enough, but not so bad as insulting the person you talk with by remarking on his ill-looks, or appearing to notice any of his personal peculiarities.

Apologising.—A very desperate habit,— one that is rarely cured. Apology is only

egotism wrong side out. Nine times out of ten, the first thing a man's companion knows of his shortcoming is from his apology. It is mighty presumptuous on your part to suppose your small failures of so much consequence that you must make a talk about them.

Good dressing, quiet ways, low tones of voice, lips that can wait, and eyes that do not wander,—shyness of personalities, except in certain intimate communions,—to be *light in hand* in conversation, to have ideas, but to be able to make talk, if necessary, without them,—to belong to the company you are in, and not to yourself,—to have nothing in your dress or furniture so fine that you cannot afford to spoil it and get another like it, yet to preserve the harmonies throughout your person and dwelling: I should say that this was a fair capital of manners to begin with.

Under bad manners, as under graver faults, lies very commonly an over-estimate of our special individuality, as distinguished from our generic humanity. It is just here that the very highest society asserts its superior breeding. Among truly elegant people of the highest *ton*, you will find more real equality in social intercourse than in a coun-

try village. As nuns drop their birth-names and become Sister Margaret and Sister Mary, so high-bred people drop their personal distinctions and become brothers and sisters of conversational charity. Nor are fashionable people without their heroism. I believe there are men who have shown as much self-devotion in carrying a lone wall-flower down to the supper-table as ever saint or martyr in the act that has canonised his name. There are Florence Nightingales of the ballroom, whom nothing can hold back from their errands of mercy. They find out the red-handed, gloveless undergraduate of bucolic antecedents, as he squirms in his corner, and distil their soft words upon him like dew upon the green herb. They reach even the poor relation, whose dreary apparition saddens the perfumed atmosphere of the sumptuous drawing-room. I have known one of these angels ask, *of her own accord*, that a desolate middle-aged man, whom nobody seemed to know, should be presented to her by the hostess. He wore no shirt-collar,—he had on black gloves,—and was flourishing a red bandanna handkerchief! Match me this, ye proud children of poverty, who boast of your paltry sacrifices for each other! Virtue in humble life! What is

that to the glorious self-renunciation of a martyr in pearls and diamonds? As I saw this noble woman bending gracefully before the social mendicant,—the white billows of her beauty heaving under the foam of the traitorous laces that half revealed them,—I should have wept with sympathetic emotion, but that tears, except as a private demonstration, are an ill-disguised expression of self-consciousness and vanity, which is inadmissible in good society.

I have sometimes thought, with a pang, of the position in which political chance or contrivance might hereafter place some one of our fellow-citizens. It has happened hitherto, so far as my limited knowledge goes, that the President of the United States has always been what might be called in general terms a gentleman. But what if at some future time the choice of the people should fall upon one on whom that lofty title could not, by any stretch of charity, be bestowed? This may happen,—how soon the future only knows. Think of this miserable man of coming political possibilities,—an unpresentable boor, sucked into office by one of those eddies in the flow of popular sentiment which carry straws and chips into the public harbour, while the

prostrate trunks of the monarchs of the forest hurry down on the senseless stream to the gulf of political oblivion ! Think of him, I say, and of the concentrated gaze of good society through its thousand eyes, all confluent, as it were, in one great burning-glass of ice that shrivels its wretched object in fiery torture, itself cold as the glacier of an unsunned cavern ! No,—there will be angels of good-breeding then as now, to shield the victim of free institutions from himself and from his torturers. I can fancy a lovely woman playfully withdrawing the knife which he would abuse by making it an instrument for the conveyance of food, —or, failing in this kind artifice, sacrificing herself by imitating his use of that implement ; how much harder than to plunge it into her bosom, like Lucretia ! I can see her studying his provincial dialect until she becomes the Champollion of New England or Western or Southern barbarisms. She has learned that *häow* means *what ;* that *thinkin'* is the same thing as *thinking,* or she has found out the meaning of that extraordinary monosyllable, which no single-tongued phonographer can make legible, prevailing on the banks of the Hudson and at its embouchure, and elsewhere,—what they say when they

think they say *first* (*fe-eest*,—*fe* as in the French *le*),—or that *cheer* means *chair*,—or that *urritation* means *irritation*,—and so of other enormities. Nothing surprises her. The highest breeding, you know, comes round to the Indian standard,—to take everything coolly,—*nil admirari*,—if you happen to be learned and like the Roman phrase for the same thing.

If you like the company of people that stare at you from head to foot to see if there is a hole in your coat, or if you have not grown a little older, or if your eyes are not yellow with jaundice, or if your complexion is not a little faded, and so on, and then convey the fact to you, in the style in which the Poor Relation addressed the divinity-student,—go with them as much as you like. I hate the sight of the wretches. Don't for mercy's sake think I hate *them;* the distinction is one my friend or I drew long ago. No matter where you find such people; they are clowns. The rich woman who looks and talks in this way is not half so much a lady as her Irish servant, whose pretty "saving your presence," when she has to say something which offends her natural sense of good manners, has a hint in it of the breeding of courts, and the blood of old Milesian kings,

which very likely runs in her veins,—thinned by two hundred years of potato, which, being an underground fruit, tends to drag down the generations that are made of it to the earth from which it came, and, filling their veins with starch, turn them into a kind of human vegetable.

I say, if you like such people, go with them. But I am going to make a practical application of the example at the beginning of this particular record, which some young people who are going to choose professional advisers by-and-by may remember and thank me for. If you are making choice of a physician, be sure you get one, if possible, with a cheerful and serene countenance. A physician is not—at least, ought not to be—an executioner ; and a sentence of death on his face is as bad as a warrant for execution signed by the Governor. As a general rule, no man has a right to tell another by word or look that he is going to die. It may be necessary in some extreme cases ; but as a rule, it is the last extreme of impertinence which one human being can offer to another. "You have killed me," said a patient once to a physician who had rashly told him he was incurable. He ought to have lived six months, but he was dead in six weeks.

If we will only let Nature and the God of Nature alone, persons will commonly learn their condition as early as they ought to know it, and not be cheated out of their natural birthright of hope of recovery, which is intended to accompany sick people as long as life is comfortable, and is graciously replaced by the hope of heaven, or at least of rest, when life has become a burden which the bearer is ready to let fall.

Underbred people tease their sick and dying friends to death. The chance of a gentleman or lady with a given mortal ailment to live a certain time is as good again as that of the common sort of coarse people. As you go down the social scale, you reach a point at length where the common talk in sick-rooms is of churchyards and sepulchres, and a kind of perpetual vivisection is for ever carried on upon the person of the miserable sufferer.

And so, in choosing your clergyman, other things being equal, prefer the one of a wholesome and cheerful habit of mind and body. If you can get along with people who carry a certificate in their faces that their goodness is so great as to make them very miserable, your children cannot. And whatever offends one of these little ones cannot be

right in the eyes of Him who loved them so well.

After all, as *you* are a gentleman or a lady, you will probably select gentlemen for your bodily and spiritual advisers, and then all will be right.

This repetition of the above words,—*gentleman* and *lady*,—which could not be conveniently avoided, reminds me what strange uses are made of them by those who ought to know what they mean. Thus, at a marriage ceremony, once, of two very excellent persons who had been at service, instead of, Do you take this man, etc.? and, Do you take this woman? how do you think the officiating clergyman put the questions? It was, Do you, MISS So-and-so, take this GENTLEMAN? and, Do you, MR. This or That, take this LADY?! What would any English duchess, ay, or the Queen of England herself, have thought, if the Archbishop of Canterbury had called her and her bridegroom anything but plain woman and man at such a time?

I don't doubt the Poor Relation thought it was all very fine, if she happened to be in the church; but if the worthy man who uttered these monstrous words—monstrous in such a connection—had known the ludi-

crous surprise, the convulsion of inward disgust and contempt, that seized upon many of the persons who were present, — had guessed what a sudden flash of light it threw on the Dutch gilding, the pinchbeck, the shabby, perking pretension belonging to certain social layers, — so inherent in their whole mode of being, that the holiest offices of religion cannot exclude its impertinences, —the good man would have given his marriage-fee twice over to recall that superb and full-blown vulgarism. Any persons whom it could please could have no better notion of what the words referred to signify than of the meaning of *apsides* and *asymptotes*.

MAN ! Sir ! WOMAN ! Sir ! Gentility is a fine thing, not to be undervalued, as I have been trying to explain ; but humanity comes before that.

> " When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman ? "

The beauty of that plainness of speech and manners which comes from the finest training is not to be understood by those whose *habitat* is below a certain level. Just as the exquisite sea-anemones and all the graceful ocean-flowers die out at some fathoms below the surface, the elegances and suavities of life die out one by one as we sink through

the social scale. Fortunately, the virtues are more tenacious of life, and last pretty well until we get down to the mud of absolute pauperism, where they do not flourish greatly.

—I had almost forgotten about our boarders. As the Model of all the Virtues is about to leave us, I find myself wondering what is the reason we are not all very sorry. Surely we all like good persons. She is a good person. Therefore we like her.—Only we don't.

This brief syllogism, and its briefer negative, involving the principle which some English conveyancer borrowed from a French wit and embodied in the lines by which *Dr. Fell* is made unamiably immortal,—this syllogism, I say, is one that most persons have had occasion to construct and demolish, respecting somebody or other, as I have done for the Model. "Pious and painefull." Why has that excellent old phrase gone out of use? Simply because these good *painefull* or painstaking persons proved to be such nuisances in the long run, that the word "painefull" came, before people thought of it, to mean *paingiving* instead of *painstaking*.

—So, the old fellah 's off to-morrah,—said the young man John.

Old fellow?—said I,—whom do you mean?

Why, the one that came with our little beauty,—the old fellah in petticoats.

—Now that means something,—said I to myself. — These rough young rascals very often hit the nail on the head, if they do strike with their eyes shut. A real woman does a great many things without knowing why she does them; but these pattern machines mix up their intellects with everything they do, just like men. They can't help it, no doubt; but we can't help getting sick of them, either. Intellect is to a woman's nature what her watch-spring skirt is to her dress; it ought to underlie her silks and embroideries, but not to show itself too staringly on the outside.—You don't know, perhaps, but I will tell you;—the brain is the palest of all the internal organs. and the heart the reddest. Whatever comes from the brain carries the hue of the place it came from, and whatever comes from the heart carries the heat and colour of its birthplace.

The young man John did not hear my *soliloquy*, of course, but sent up one more bubble from our sinking conversation, in the form of a statement, that she was at liberty to go to a personage who receives no visits,

as is commonly supposed, from virtuous people.

Why, I ask again (of my reader), should a person who never did anybody any wrong, but, on the contrary, is an estimable and intelligent, nay, a particularly enlightened and exemplary member of society, fail to inspire interest, love, and devotion? Because of the *reversed current* in the flow of thought and emotion. The red heart sends all its instincts up to the white brain to be analysed, chilled, blanched, and so become pure reason, which is just exactly what we do not want of woman as woman. The current should run the other way. The nice, calm, cold thought, which in women shapes itself so rapidly that they hardly know it as thought, should always travel to the lips *viâ* the heart. It does so in those women whom all love and admire. It travels the wrong way in the Model. That is the reason why the Little Gentleman said, "I hate her, I hate her." That is the reason why the young man John called her the "old fellah," and banished her to the company of the great Unpresentable. That is the reason why I, the Professor, am picking her to pieces with scalpel and forceps. That is the reason why the young girl whom she has befriended re-

pays her kindness with gratitude and respect, rather than with the devotion and passionate fondness which lie sleeping beneath the calmness of her amber eyes. I can see her as she sits between this estimable and most correct of personages and the misshapen, crotchety, often violent and explosive little man on the other side of her, leaning and swaying towards him as she speaks, and looking into his sad eyes as if she found some fountain in them at which her soul could quiet its thirst.

Women like the Model are a natural product of a chilly climate and high culture. It is not

> "The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
> Zephyr with Aurora playing,"

when the two meet

> ——"on beds of violets blue,
> And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,"

that claim such women as their offspring. It is rather the east wind, as it blows out of the fogs of Newfoundland, and clasps a clear-eyed wintry noon on the chill bridal couch of a New England ice-quarry.—Don't throw up your cap now, and hurrah as if this were giving up everything, and turning

against the best growth of our latitudes,—the daughters of the soil. The brain-women never interest us like the heart-women; white roses please less than red. But our Northern seasons have a narrow green streak of spring, as well as a broad white zone of winter,—they have a glowing band of summer and a golden stripe of autumn in their many-coloured wardrobe; and women are born to us that wear all these hues of earth and heaven in their souls. Our ice-eyed brain-women are really admirable, if we only ask of them just what they can give, and no more. Only compare them, talking or writing, with one of those babbling, chattering dolls, of warmer latitudes, who do not know enough even to keep out of print, and who are interesting to us only as specimens of *arrest of development* for our psychological cabinets.

Good-bye, Model of all the Virtues! We can spare you now. A little clear perfection, undiluted with human weakness, goes a great way. Go! be useful, be honourable and honoured, be just, be charitable, talk pure reason, and help to disenchant the world by the light of an achromatic understanding. Good-bye! Where is my Béranger? I must read a verse or two of "Frétillon."

Fair play for all. But don't claim incompatible qualities for anybody. Justice is a very rare virtue in our community. Everything that public sentiment cares about is put into a Papin's digester, and boiled under high pressure till all is turned into one homogeneous pulp, and the very bones give up their jelly. What are all the strongest epithets of our dictionary to us now? The critics and politicians, and especially the philanthropists, have chewed them, till they are mere wads of syllable-fibre, without a suggestion of their old pungency and power.

Justice! A good man respects the rights even of brute matter and arbitrary symbols. If he writes the same word twice in succession, by accident, he always erases the one that stands *second;* has not the first-comer the prior right? This act of abstract justice, which I trust many of my readers, like myself, have often performed, is a curious anti-illustration, by the way, of the absolute wickedness of human dispositions. Why doesn't a man always strike out the *first* of the two words, to gratify his diabolical love of *in*justice?

So, I say, we owe a genuine, substantial tribute of respect to these filtered intellects which have left their womanhood on the

strainer. They are so clear that it is a pleasure at times to look at the world of thought through them. But the rose and purple tints of richer natures they cannot give us, and it is not just to them to ask it.

Fashionable society gets at these rich natures very often in a way one would hardly at first think of. It loves vitality above all things, sometimes disguised by affected languor, always well kept under by the laws of good-breeding,—but still it loves abundant life, opulent and showy organisations,—the spherical rather than the plane trigonometry of female architecture,—plenty of red blood, flashing eyes, tropical voices, and forms that bear the splendours of dress without growing pale beneath their lustre. Among these you will find the most delicious women you will ever meet,—women whom dress and flattery and the round of city gaieties cannot spoil,—talking with whom, you forget their diamonds and laces, —and around whom all the nice details of elegance, which the cold-blooded beauty next them is scanning so nicely, blend in one harmonious whole, too perfect to be disturbed by the petulant sparkle of a jewel, or the yellow glare of a bangle, or the gay toss of a feather.

There are many things that I, personally, love better than fashion or wealth. Not to speak of those highest objects of our love and loyalty, I think I love ease and independence better than the golden slavery of perpetual *matinées* and *soirées*, or the pleasures of accumulation.

But fashion and wealth are two very solemn realities, which the frivolous class of moralists have talked a great deal of silly stuff about. Fashion is only the attempt to realise Art in living forms and social intercourse. What business has a man who knows nothing about the beautiful, and cannot pronounce the word *view*, to talk about fashion to a set of people who, if one of the quality left a card at their doors, would contrive to keep it on the very top of their heap of the names of their two-story acquaintances, till it was as yellow as the Codex Vaticanus?

Wealth, too,—what an endless repetition of the same foolish trivialities about it! Take the single fact of its alleged uncertain tenure and transitory character. In old times, when men were all the time fighting and robbing each other,—in those tropical countries where the Sabeans and the Chaldeans stole all a man's cattle and camels,

and there were frightful tornadoes and rains of fire from heaven, it was true enough that riches took wings to themselves not unfrequently in a very unexpected way. But, with common prudence in investments, it is not so now. In fact, there is nothing earthly that lasts so well, on the whole, as money. A man's learning dies with him; even his virtues fade out of remembrance; but the dividends on the stocks he bequeathes to his children live and keep his memory green.

I do not think there is much courage or originality in giving utterance to truths that everybody knows, but which get overlaid by conventional trumpery. The only distinction which it is necessary to point out to feeble-minded folk is this: that, in asserting the breadth and depth of that significance which gives to fashion and fortune their tremendous power, we do not indorse the extravagances which often disgrace the one, nor the meanness which often degrades the other.

A remark which seems to contradict a universally current opinion is not generally to be taken "neat," but watered with the ideas of common-sense and commonplace people. So, if any of my young friends

should be tempted to waste their substance on white kids and "all-rounds," or to insist on becoming millionaires at once, by anything I have said, I will give them references to some of the class referred to, well known to the public as providers of literary diluents, who will weaken any truth so that there is not an old woman in the land who cannot take it with perfect impunity.

I am afraid some of the blessed saints in diamonds will think I mean to flatter them. I hope not; —if I do, set it down as a weakness. But there is so much foolish talk about wealth and fashion (which, of course, draw a good many heartless and essentially vulgar people into the glare of their candelabra, but which have a real respectability and meaning, if we will only look at them stereoscopically, with both eyes instead of one), that I thought it a duty to speak a few words for them. Why can't somebody give us a list of things that everybody thinks and nobody says, and another list of things that everybody says and nobody thinks?

Lest my parish should suppose we have forgotten graver matters in these lesser topics, I beg them to drop these trifles and read the following lesson for the day.

THE TWO STREAMS.

Behold the rocky wall
That down its sloping sides
Pours the swift rain-drops, blending, as they fall,
In rushing river-tides !

Yon stream, whose sources run
Turned by a pebble's edge,
Is Athabasca, rolling toward the sun
Through the cleft mountain-ledge.

The slender rill had strayed,
But for the slanting stone,
To evening's ocean, with the tangled braid
Of foam-flecked Oregon.

So from the heights of Will
Life's parting stream descends,
And, as a moment turns its slender rill,
Each widening torrent bends,—

From the same cradle's side,
From the same mother's knee,
One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
One to the Peaceful Sea !

VII.

OUR landlady's daughter is a young lady of some pretensions to gentility. She wears her bonnet well back on her head, which is known by all to be a mark of high breeding. She wears her trains very long, as the great ladies do in Europe. To be sure, their dresses are so made only to sweep the tapestried floors of châteaux and palaces; as those odious aristocrats of the other side do not go draggling through the mud in silks and satins, but, forsooth, must ride in coaches when they are in full dress. It is true, that, considering various habits of the American people, also the little accidents which the best-kept sidewalks are liable to, a lady who has swept a mile of them is not exactly in such a condition that one would care to be her neighbour. But then there is no need of being so hard on these slight weaknesses of the poor, dear women as our little deformed gentleman was the other day.

— There are no such women as the Boston women, Sir,—he said.—Forty-two degrees, north latitude, Rome, Sir, Boston, Sir! They had grand women in old Rome, Sir,—and the women bore such men-children as never the world saw before. And so it was here, Sir. I tell you, the revolution the Boston boys started had to run in woman's milk before it ran in man's blood, Sir!

But confound the make-believe women we have turned loose in our streets!—where do *they* come from? Not out of Boston parlours, I trust. Why, there isn't a beast or a bird that would drag its tail through the dirt in the way these creatures do their dresses. Because a queen or a duchess wears long robes on great occasions, a maid-of-all-work or a factory-girl thinks she must make herself a nuisance by trailing through the streets, picking up and carrying about with her—pah! that's what I call getting vulgarity into your bones and marrow. Making believe be what you are not is the essence of vulgarity. Show over dirt is the one attribute of vulgar people. If any man can walk behind one of these women and see what she rakes up as she goes, and not feel squeamish, he has got a tough stomach. I wouldn't let one of 'em into my room, with-

out serving 'em as David served Saul at the cave in the wilderness,—cut off his skirts, Sir ! cut off his skirts !

I suggested, that I had seen some pretty stylish ladies who offended in the way he condemned.

Stylish *women*, I don't doubt,—said the Little Gentleman.—Don't tell me that a true lady ever sacrifices the duty of keeping all about her sweet and clean to the wish of making a vulgar show. I won't believe it of a lady. There are some things that no fashion has any right to touch, and cleanliness is one of those things. If a woman wishes to show that her husband or her father has got money, which she wants and means to spend, but doesn't know how, let her buy a yard or two of silk and pin it to her dress when she goes out to walk, but let her unpin it before she goes into the house ; —there may be poor women that will think it worth disinfecting. It is an insult to a respectable laundress to carry such things into a house for her to deal with. I don't like the Bloomers any too well,—in fact, I never saw but one, and she—or he, or it—had a mob of boys after her, or whatever you call the creature, as if she had been a——

The Little Gentleman stopped short,—

flushed somewhat, and looked round with that involuntary, suspicious glance which the subjects of any bodily misfortune are very apt to cast round them. His eye wandered over the company, none of whom excepting myself and one other, had, probably, noticed the movement. They fell at last on Iris,—his next neighbour, you remember.

—We know in a moment, on looking suddenly at a person, if that person's eyes have been fixed on us. Sometimes we are conscious of it *before* we turn so as to see the person. Strange secrets of curiosity, of impertinence, of malice, of love, leak out in this way. There is no need of Mrs. Felix Lorraine's reflection in the mirror, to tell us that she is plotting evil for us behind our backs. We know it, as we know by the ominous stillness of a child that some mischief or other is going on. A young girl betrays, in a moment, that her eyes have been feeding on the face where you find them fixed, and not merely brushing over it with their pencils of blue or brown light.

A certain involuntary adjustment assimilates us, you may also observe, to that upon which we look. Roses redden the cheeks of her who stoops to gather them, and buttercups turn little people's chins yellow. When

we look at a vast landscape, our chests expand as if we would enlarge to fill it. When we examine a minute object, we naturally contract, not only our foreheads, but all our dimensions. If I *see* two men wrestling,—I wrestle too, with my limbs and features. When a country-fellow comes upon the stage, you will see twenty faces in the boxes putting on the bumpkin expression. There is no need of multiplying instances to reach this generalisation; every person and thing we look upon puts its special mark upon us. If this is repeated often enough, we get a permanent resemblance to it, or, at least, a fixed aspect which we took from it. Husband and wife come to look alike at last, as has often been noticed. It is a common saying of a jockey, that he is "all horse;" and I have often fancied that milkmen get a stiff, upright carriage, and an angular movement of the arm, that remind one of a pump and the working of its handle.

All this came in by accident, just because I happened to mention that the Little Gentleman found that Iris had been looking at him with her soul in her eyes, when his glance rested on her after wandering round the company. What he thought, it is hard to say; but the shadow of suspicion faded

off from his face, and he looked calmly into the amber eyes, resting his cheek upon the hand that wore the red jewel.

—If it were a possible thing,—women are such strange creatures! Is there any trick that love and their own fancies do not play them? Just see how they marry! A woman that gets hold of a bit of manhood is like one of those Chinese wood-carvers who work on any odd, fantastic root that comes to hand, and, if it is only bulbous above and bifurcated below, will always contrive to make a man—such as he is—out of it. I should like to see any kind of a man, distinguishable from a Gorilla, that some good and even pretty woman could not shape a husband out of.

—A child,—yes, if you choose to call her so,—but such a child! Do you know how Art brings all ages together? There is no age to the angels and ideal human forms among which the artist lives, and he shares their youth until his hand trembles and his eye grows dim. The youthful painter talks of white-bearded Leonardo as if he were a brother, and the veteran forgets that Raphael died at an age to which his own is of patriarchal antiquity.

But why this lover of the beautiful should

be so drawn to one whom Nature has wronged so deeply seems hard to explain. Pity, I suppose. They say that leads to love.

—I thought this matter over until I became excited and curious, and determined to set myself more seriously at work to find out what was going on in these wild hearts, and where their passionate lives were drifting. I say wild hearts and passionate lives, because I think I can look through this seeming calmness of youth and this apparent feebleness of organisation, and see that Nature, whom it is very hard to cheat, is only waiting as the sapper waits in his mine, knowing that all is in readiness and the slow-match burning quietly down to the powder. He will leave it by-and-by, and then it will take care of itself.

One need not wait to see the smoke coming through the roof of a house and the flames breaking out of the windows to know that the building is on fire. Hark! There is a quiet, steady, unobtrusive, crisp, not loud, but very knowing little creeping crackle that is tolerably intelligible. There is a whiff of something floating about, suggestive of toasting shingles. Also a sharp pyroligneous-acid pungency in the air that stings one's eyes. Let us get up and see what is going

on.—Oh,—oh,—oh ! do you know what has got hold of you ? It is the great red dragon that is born of the little red eggs we call *sparks*, with his hundred blowing red manes, and his thousand lashing red tails, and his multitudinous red eyes glaring at every crack and key-hole, and his countless red tongues lapping the beams he is going to crunch presently, and his hot breath warping the panels and cracking the glass and making old timber sweat that had forgotten it was ever alive with sap. Run for your life ! leap ! or you will be a cinder in five minutes, that nothing but a coroner would take for the wreck of a human being !

If any gentleman will have the kindness to stop this runaway comparison, I shall be much obliged to him. All I intended to say was, that we need not wait for hearts to break out in flames to know that they are full of combustibles, and that a spark has got among them. I don't pretend to say or know what it is that brings these two persons together ;—and when I say together, I only mean that there is an evident affinity of some kind or other which makes their commonest intercourse strangely significant, as that each seems to understand a look or a word of the other. When the young girl

laid her hand on the Little Gentleman's arm, —which so greatly shocked the Model, you may remember,—I saw that she had learned the lion-tamer's secret. She masters him, and yet I can see she has a kind of awe of him, as the man who goes into the cage has of the monster that he makes a baby of.

One of two things must happen. The first is love, downright love, on the part of this young girl, for the poor little misshapen man. You may laugh, if you like. But women are apt to love the men who they think have the largest capacity of loving;— and who can love like one that has thirsted all his life long for the smile of youth and beauty, and seen it fly his presence as the wave ebbed from the parched lips of him whose fabled punishment is the perpetual type of human longing and disappointment? What would become of *him*, if this fresh soul should stoop upon him in her first young passion, as the flamingo drops out of the sky upon some lonely and dark lagoon in the marshes of Cagliari, with a flutter of scarlet feathers and a kindling of strange fires in the shadowy waters that hold her burning image?

—Marry her, of course?—Why, no, not *of course*. I should think the chance less, on

the whole, that he would be willing to marry her than she to marry him.

There is one other thing that might happen. If the interest he awakes in her gets to be a deep one, and yet has nothing of love in it, she will glance off from him into some great passion or other. All excitements run to love in women of a certain—let us not say age, but youth. An electrical current passing through a coil of wire makes a magnet of a bar of iron lying within it, but not touching it. So a woman is turned into a love-magnet by a tingling current of life running round her. I should like to see one of them balanced on a pivot properly adjusted, and watch if she did not turn so as to point north and south,—as she would, if the love-currents are like those of the earth our mother.

Pray, do you happen to remember Wordsworth's "Boy of Windermere"? This boy used to put his hands to his mouth, and shout aloud, mimicking the hooting of the owls, who would answer him

> "with quivering peals,
> And long halloos and screams, and echoes loud
> Redoubled and redoubled."

When they failed to answer him, and he hung listening intently for their voices, he

would sometimes catch the faint sound of far-distant waterfalls, or the whole scene around him would imprint itself with new force upon his perceptions.—Read the sonnet, if you please; —it is Wordsworth all over, — trivial in subject, solemn in style, vivid in description, prolix in detail, true metaphysically, but immensely suggestive of "imagination," to use a mild term, when related as an actual fact of a sprightly youngster.

All I want of it is to enforce the principle, that, when the door of the soul is once opened to a guest, there is no knowing who will come in next.

—Our young girl keeps up her early habit of sketching heads and characters. Nobody is, I should think, more faithful and exact in the drawing of the academical figures given her as lessons, but there is a perpetual arabesque of fancies that runs round the margin of her drawings, and there is one book which I know she keeps to run riot in, where, if anywhere, a shrewd eye would be most likely to read her thoughts. This book of hers I mean to see, if I can get at it honourably.

I have never yet crossed the threshold of the Little Gentleman's chamber. How he

lives, when he once gets within it, I can only guess. His hours are late, as I have said; often, on waking late in the night, I see the light through cracks in his window-shutters on the wall of the house opposite. If the times of witchcraft were not over, I should be afraid to be so close a neighbour to a place from which there come such strange noises. Sometimes it is the dragging of something heavy over the floor, that makes me shiver to hear it,—it sounds so like what people that kill other people have to do now and then. Occasionally I hear very sweet strains of music,—whether of a wind or stringed instrument, or a human voice, strange as it may seem, I have often tried to find out, but through the partition I could not be quite sure. If I have not heard a woman cry and moan, and then again laugh as though she would die laughing, I have heard sounds so like them that—I am a fool to confess it—I have covered my head with the bedclothes; for I have had a fancy in my dreams, that I could hardly shake off when I woke up, about that so-called witch that was his great-grandmother or whatever it was,—a sort of fancy that she visited the Little Gentleman,—a young woman in old-fashioned dress, with a red

ring round her white neck,—not a necklace, but a dull stain.

Of course you don't suppose that I have any foolish superstitions about the matter, —I, the Professor, who have seen enough to take all that nonsense out of any man's head! It is not our beliefs that frighten us half so much as our fancies. A man not only believes, but knows he runs a risk, whenever he steps into a railroad car; but it doesn't worry him much. On the other hand, carry that man across a pasture a little way from some dreary country-village, and show him an old house where there were strange deaths a good many years ago, and there are rumours of ugly spots on the walls,—the old man hung himself in the garret, that is certain, and ever since the country-people have called it "the haunted house,"—the owners haven't been able to let it since the last tenants left on account of the noises,—so it has fallen into sad decay, and the moss grows on the rotten shingles of the roof, and the clapboards have turned black, and the windows rattle like teeth that chatter with fear, and the walls of the house begin to lean as if its knees were shaking,—take the man who didn't mind the real risk of the cars to that old house, on

some dreary November evening, and ask him to sleep there alone,—how do you think he will like it ? He doesn't believe one word of ghosts,—but then he knows, that, whether waking or sleeping, his imagination will people the haunted chambers with ghostly images. It is not what we *believe*, as I said before, that frightens us commonly, but what we *conceive*. A principle that reaches a good way, if I am not mistaken. I say, then, that, if these odd sounds coming from the Little Gentleman's chamber sometimes make me nervous, so that I cannot get to sleep, it is not because I suppose he is engaged in any unlawful or mysterious way. The only wicked suggestion that ever came into my head was one that was founded on the landlady's story of his having a pile of gold ; it was a ridiculous fancy ; besides, I suspect the story of *sweating* gold was only one of the many fables got up to make the Jews odious, and afford a pretext for plundering them. As for the sound like a woman laughing and crying, I never said it *was* a woman's voice ; for, in the first place, I could only hear indistinctly ; and, secondly, he may have an organ, or some queer instrument or other, with what they call the *vox humana* stop. If he moves his bed round to

get away from the window, or for any such reason, there is nothing very frightful in that simple operation. Most of our foolish conceits explain themselves in some such simple way. And yet, for all that, I confess, that, when I woke up the other evening, and heard, first a sweet complaining cry, and then footsteps, and then the dragging sound,—nothing but his bed, I am quite sure,—I felt a stirring in the roots of my hair as the feasters did in Keats's terrible poem of *Lamia*.

There is nothing very odd in my feeling nervous when I happen to lie awake and get listening for sounds. Just keep your ears open any time after midnight, when you are lying in bed in a lone attic of a dark night. What horrid, strange, suggestive, unaccountable noises you will hear! The *stillness* of night is a vulgar error. All the dead things seem to be alive. Crack! That is the old chest of drawers; you never hear it crack in the daytime. Creak! There's a door ajar; *you know you shut them all.* Where can that latch be that rattles so? Is anybody trying it softly? or, worse than any *body*, is—? (Cold shiver.) Then a sudden gust that jars all the windows;—very strange!—there does not seem to be

any wind about that it belongs to. When it stops, you hear the worms boring in the powdery beams overhead. Then steps outside,—a stray animal, no doubt. All right,—but a gentle moisture breaks out all over you; and then something like a whistle or a cry,—another gust of wind, perhaps; that accounts for the rustling that just made your heart roll over and tumble about, so that it felt more like a live rat under your ribs than a part of your own body; then a crash of something that has fallen,—blown over, very likely——*Pater noster, qui es in cœlis!* for you are damp and cold, and sitting bolt upright, and the bed trembling so that the death-watch is frightened and has stopped ticking!

No,—night is an awful time for strange noises and secret doings. Who ever dreamed, till one of our sleepless neighbours told us of it, of that Walpurgis gathering of birds and beasts of prey,—foxes, and owls, and crows, and eagles, that come from all the country round on moonshiny nights to crunch the clams and muscles, and peck out the eyes of dead fishes that the storm has thrown on Chelsea Beach? Our old mother Nature has pleasant and cheery tones enough for us when she comes in her dress of blue and

gold over the eastern hill-tops; but when she follows us up-stairs to our beds in her suit of black velvet and diamonds, every creak of her sandals and every whisper of her lips is full of mystery and fear.

You understand, then, distinctly, that I do not believe there is anything about this singular little neighbour of mine which is as it should not be. Probably a visit to his room would clear up all that has puzzled me, and make me laugh at the notions which began, I suppose, in nightmares, and ended by keeping my imagination at work so as almost to make me uncomfortable at times. But it is not so easy to visit him as some of our other boarders, for various reasons which I will not stop to mention. I think some of them are rather pleased to get "the Professor" under their ceilings.

The young man John, for instance, asked me to come up one day and try some "old Burbon," which he said was A 1. On asking him what was the number of his room, he answered, that it was forty-'leven, sky-parlour floor, but that I shouldn't find it, if he didn't go ahead to show me the way. I followed him to his *habitat*, being very willing to see in what kind of warren he burrowed, and thinking I might pick up

something about the boarders who had excited my curiosity.

Mighty close quarters they were where the young man John bestowed himself and his furniture; this last consisting of a bed, a chair, a bureau, a trunk, and numerous pegs with coats and "pants" and "vests,"—as he was in the habit of calling waistcoats and pantaloons or trousers,—hanging up as if the owner had melted out of them. Several prints were pinned up unframed,—among them that grand national portrait-piece, "Barnum presenting Ossian E. Dodge to Jenny Lind," and a picture of a famous trot, in which I admired anew the cabalistic air of that imposing array of expressions, and especially the Italicised word, "Dan Mace *names* b. h. Major Slocum," and "Hiram Woodruff *names* g. m. Lady Smith." "Best three in five. Time:—2:40, 2:46, 2:50."

That set me thinking how very odd this matter of trotting horses is, as an index of the mathematical exactness of the laws of living mechanism. I saw Lady Suffolk trot a mile in 2:26. Flora Temple has trotted close down to 2:20; and Ethan Allen in 2:25, or less. Many horses have trotted their mile under 2:30; none that I remember in public as low down as 2:20. From five to ten

seconds, then, in about a hundred and sixty is the whole range of the maxima of the present race of trotting horses. The same thing is seen in the running of men. Many can run a mile in five minutes; but when one comes to the fractions below, they taper down until somewhere about 4 : 30 the maximum is reached. Averages of masses have been studied more than averages of maxima and minima. We know from the Registrar-General's Reports, that a certain number of children—say from one to two dozen—die every year in England from drinking hot water out of spouts of tea-kettles. We know, that, among suicides, women and men past a certain age almost never use fire-arms. A woman who has made up her mind to die is still afraid of a pistol or a gun. Or is it that the explosion would derange her costume? I say, averages of masses we have; but our tables of maxima we owe to the sporting men more than to the philosophers. The lesson their experience teaches is, that Nature makes no leaps,—does nothing *per saltum*. The greatest brain that ever lived, no doubt, was only a small fraction of an idea ahead of the second best. Just look at the chess-players. Leaving out the phenomenal exceptions, the nice shades that separate the

skilful ones show how closely their brains approximate,—almost as closely as chronometers. Such a person is a "*knight*-player," —he must have that piece given him. Another must have two pawns. Another, "pawn and two," or one pawn and two moves. Then we find one who claims "pawn and move," holding himself, with this fractional advantage, a match for one who would be pretty sure to beat him playing even.—So much are minds alike; and you and I think we are "peculiar,"—that Nature broke her jelly-mould after shaping our cerebral convolutions! So I reflected, standing and looking at the picture.

— I say, Governor,—broke in the young man John,—them hosses 'll stay jest as well, if you 'll only set down. I 've had 'em this year, and they haven't stirred.—He spoke, and handed the chair towards me,—seating himself, at the same time, on the end of the bed.

You have lived in this house some time? —I said,—with a note of interrogation at the end of the statement.

Do I look as if I 'd lost much flesh?—said he,—answering my question by another.

No,—said I;—for that matter, I think you do credit to "the bountifully furnished

table of the excellent lady who provides so liberally for the company that meets around her hospitable board."

[The sentence in quotation-marks was from one of those disinterested editorials in small type, which I suspect to have been furnished by a friend of the landlady's, and paid for as an advertisement. This impartial testimony to the superior qualities of the establishment and its head attracted a number of applicants for admission, and a couple of new boarders made a brief appearance at the table. One of them was of the class of people who grumble if they don't get canvas-backs and woodcocks every day, for three-fifty per week. The other was subject to somnambulism, or walking in the night, when he ought to have been asleep in his bed. In this state he walked into several of the boarders' chambers, his eyes wide open, as is usual with somnambulists, and, from some odd instinct or other, wishing to know what the hour was, got together a number of their watches, for the purpose of comparing them, as it would seem. Among them was a repeater, belonging to our young Marylander. He happened to wake up while the somnambulist was in his chamber, and, not knowing his infirmity, caught hold of

him and gave him a dreadful shaking, after which he tied his hands and feet, and so left him till morning, when he introduced him to a gentleman used to taking care of such cases of somnambulism.]

If you, my reader, will please to skip backward, over this parenthesis, you will come to our conversation, which it has interrupted.

It a'n't the feed,—said the young man John,—it 's the old woman's looks when a fellah lays it in too strong. The feed 's well enough. After geese have got tough, 'n' turkeys have got strong, 'n' lamb 's got old, 'n' veal 's pretty nigh beef, 'n' sparragrass 's growin' tall 'n' slim 'n' scattery about the head, 'n' green peas are gettin' so big 'n' hard they 'd be dangerous if you fired 'em out of a revolver, we get hold of all them delicacies of the season. But it 's too much like feedin' on live folks and devourin' widdah's substance, to lay yourself out in the eatin' way, when a fellah 's as hungry as the chap that said a turkey was too much for one 'n' not enough for two. I can't help lookin' at the old woman. Corned-beef-days she 's tolerable calm. Roastin'-days she worries some, 'n' keeps a sharp eye on the chap that carves. But when there 's any-

thing in the poultry line, it seems to hurt her feelin's so to see the knife goin' into the breast and joints comin' to pieces, that there 's no comfort in eatin'. When I cut up an old fowl and help the boarders, I always feel as if I ought to say, Won't you have a slice of widdah ?—instead of chicken.

The young man John fell into a train of reflections which ended in his producing a Bologna sausage, a plate of "crackers," as we Boston folks call certain biscuits, and the bottle of whisky described as being A 1.

Under the influence of the crackers and sausage, he grew cordial and communicative.

It was time, I thought, to sound him as to those of our boarders who had excited my curiosity.

What do you think of our young Iris ?—I began.

Fust-rate little filly ;—he said.—Pootiest and nicest little chap I 've seen since the schoolma'am left. Schoolma'am was a brown-haired one,—eyes coffee-colour. This one has got wine-coloured eyes,—'n' that 's the reason they turn a fellah's head, I suppose.

This is a splendid blonde,—I said,—the other was a brunette. Which style do you like best ?

Which do I like best, boiled mutton or

roast mutton?—said the young man John. Like 'em both,—it a'n't the colour of 'em makes the goodness. I've been kind of lonely since schoolma'am went away. Used to like to look at her. I never said anything particular to her, that I remember, but—

I don't know whether it was the cracker and sausage, or that the young fellow's feet were treading on the hot ashes of some longing that had not had time to cool, but his eye glistened as he stopped.

I suppose she wouldn't have looked at a fellah like me,—he said,—but I come pretty near tryin'. If she had said, Yes, though, I shouldn't have known what to have done with her. Can't marry a woman nowadays till you're so deaf you have to cock your head like a parrot to hear what she says, and so long-sighted you can't see what she looks like nearer than arm's-length.

Here is another chance for you,—I said. —What do you want nicer than such a young lady as Iris?

It's no use,—he answered.—I look at them girls and feel as the fellah did when he missed catchin' the trout.—'To'od 'a' cost more butter to cook him 'n' he's worth, —says the fellah.—Takes a whole piece o' goods to cover a girl up nowadays. I'd as

lief undertake to keep a span of elephants, —and take an ostrich to board too,— as to marry one of 'em. What 's the use? Clerks and counter-jumpers a'n't anything. Sparra-grass and green peas a'n't for them,—not while they 're young and tender. Hossback-ridin' a'n't for them,—except once a year,— on Fast-day. And marryin' a'n't for them. Sometimes a fellah feels lonely, and would like to have a nice young woman, to tell her how lonely he feels. And sometimes a fellah, —here the young man John looked very confidential, and, perhaps, as if a little ashamed of his weakness,—sometimes a fellah would like to have one o' them small ones to trot on his knee and push about in a little wagon, —a kind of a little Johnny, you know ;—it 's odd enough, but, it seems to me, nobody can afford them little articles, except the folks that are so rich they can buy everything, and the folks that are so poor they don't want anything. It makes nice boys of us young fellahs, no doubt! And it 's pleasant to see fine young girls sittin', like shopkeepers behind their goods, waitin', and waitin', and waitin', 'n' no customers,—and the men lingerin' round and lookin' at the goods, like folks that want to be customers, but haven't got the money!

Do you think the deformed gentlemen means to make love to Iris?—I said.

What! Little Boston ask that girl to marry him! Well, now, that 's comin' of it a little too strong. Yes, I guess she will marry him and carry him round in a basket, like a lame bantam: Look here!—he said, mysteriously;—one of the boarders swears there 's a woman comes to see him, and that he has heard her singin' and screechin'. I should like to know what he 's about in that den of his. He lays low 'n' keeps dark,—and, I tell you, there 's a good many of the boarders would like to get into his chamber, but he don't seem to want 'em. Biddy could tell somethin' about what she 's seen when she 's been to put his room to rights. She 's a Paddy 'n' a fool, but she knows enough to keep her tongue still. All I know is, I saw her crossin' herself one day when she came out of that room. She looked pale enough, 'n' I heard her mutterin' somethin' or other about the Blessed Virgin. If it hadn't been for the double doors to that chamber of his, I 'd have had a squint inside before this; but, somehow or other, it never seems to happen that they 're both open at once.

What do you think he employs himself about?—said I.

The young man John winked.

I waited patiently for the thought, of which this wink was the blossom, to come to fruit in words.

I don't believe in witches,—said the young man John.

Nor I.

We were both silent for a few minutes.

— Did you ever see the young girl's drawing-books ?—I said, presently.

All but one,—he answered ;—she keeps a lock on that, and won't show it. Ma'am Allen (the young rogue sticks to that name, in speaking of the gentleman with the *diamond*), Ma'am Allen tried to peek into it one day when she left it on the sideboard. "If you please," says she,—'n' took it from him, 'n' gave him a look that made him curl up like a caterpillar on a hot shovel. I only wish he hadn't, and had jest given her a little saas, for I 've been takin' boxin'-lessons, 'n' I 've got a new way of counterin' I want to try on to somebody.

— The end of all this was, that I came away from the young fellow's room, feeling that there were two principal things that I had to live for, for the next six weeks or six months, if it should take so long. These

were, to get a sight of the young girl's drawing-book, which I suspected had her heart shut up in it, and to get a look into the Little Gentleman's room.

I don't doubt you think it rather absurd that I should trouble myself about these matters. You tell me, with some show of reason, that all I shall find in the young girl's book will be some outlines of angels with immense eyes, traceries of flowers, rural sketches, and caricatures, among which I shall probably have the pleasure of seeing my own features figuring. Very likely. But I 'll tell you what *I* think I shall find. If this child has idealised the strange little bit of humanity over which she seems to have spread her wings like a brooding dove, —if, in one of those wild vagaries that passionate natures are so liable to, she has fairly sprung upon him with her clasping nature, as the sea-flowers fold about the first stray shell-fish that brushes their outspread tentacles, depend upon it, I shall find the marks of it in this drawing-book of hers,—if I can ever get a look at it,—fairly, of course, for I would not play tricks to satisfy my curiosity.

Then, if I can get into this Little Gentleman's room under any fair pretext, I shall,

no doubt, satisfy myself in five minutes that he is just like other people, and that there is no particular mystery about him.

The night after my visit to the young man John, I made all these and many more reflections. It was about two o'clock in the morning,—bright starlight,—so light that I could make out the time on my alarm-clock,—when I woke up trembling and very moist. It was the heavy, drawing sound, as I had often heard it before, that waked me. Presently a window was softly closed. I had just begun to get over the agitation with which we always awake from nightmare dreams, when I heard the sound which seemed to me as of a woman's voice,—the clearest, purest soprano which one could well conceive of. It was not loud, and I could not distinguish a word, if it was a woman's voice; but there were recurring phrases of sound and snatches of rhythm that reached me, which suggested the idea of complaint, and sometimes, I thought, of passionate grief and despair. It died away at last,—and then I heard the opening of a door, followed by a low, monotonous sound, as of one talking,—and then the closing of a door,—and presently the light on the opposite wall disappeared, and all was still for the night.

By George! this gets interesting,—I said, as I got out of bed for a change of night-clothes.

I had this in my pocket the other day, but thought I wouldn't read it at our celebration. So I read it to the boarders instead, and print it to finish off this record with.

ROBINSON OF LEYDEN.

He sleeps not here; in hope and prayer
  His wandering flock had gone before,
But he, the shepherd, might not share
  Their sorrows on the wintry shore.

Before the *Speedwell's* anchor swung,
  Ere yet the *Mayflower's* sail was spread,
While round his feet the Pilgrims clung,
  The pastor spake, and thus he said:—

"Men, brethren, sisters, children dear!
  God calls you hence from over sea;
Ye may not build by Haerlem Meer,
  Nor yet along the Zuyder-Zee.

"Ye go to bear the saving word
  To tribes unnamed and shores untrod:
Heed well the lessons ye have heard
  From those old teachers taught of God.

"Yet think not unto them was lent
All light for all the coming days,
And Heaven's eternal wisdom spent
In making straight the ancient ways.

"The living fountain overflows
For every flock, for every lamb,
Nor heeds, though angry creeds oppose
With Luther's dike or Calvin's dam."

He spake; with lingering, long embrace,
With tears of love and partings fond,
They floated down the creeping Maas,
Along the isle of Ysselmond.

They passed the frowning towers of Briel,
The "Hook of Holland's" shelf of sand,
And grated soon with lifting keel
The sullen shores of Fatherland.

No home for these!—too well they knew
The mitred king behind the throne;—
The sails were set, the pennons flew,
And westward ho! for worlds unknown.

—And these were they who gave us birth,
The Pilgrims of the sunset wave,
Who won for us this virgin earth,
And freedom with the soil they gave.

The pastor slumbers by the Rhine,—
In alien earth the exiles lie,—
Their nameless graves our holiest shrine,
His words our noblest battle-cry !

Still cry them, and the world shall hear,
Ye dwellers by the storm-swept sea !
Ye *have* not built by Haerlem Meer,
Nor on the land-locked Zuyder Zee !

END OF VOL. I.

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