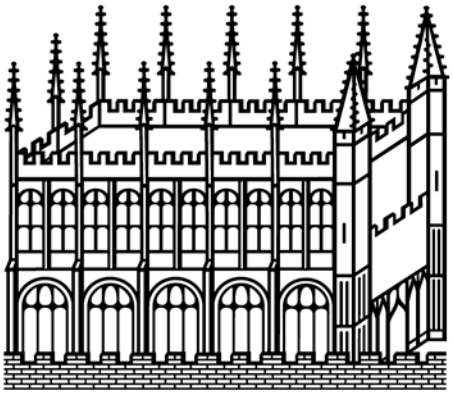

Oliver Wendell Holmes

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THE POET

AT

THE BREAKFAST TABLE

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BY

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Author's Edition

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THE POET

AT

THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

VII.

I WAS very sure that the old Master was hard at work about something,—he is *always* very busy with something,—but I mean something particular.

Whether it was a question of history or of cosmogony, or whether he was handling a test-tube or a blow-pipe ; what he was about I did not feel sure ; but I took it for granted that it was some crucial question or other he was at work on, some point bearing on the thought of the time. For the Master, I have observed, is pretty sagacious in striking for the points where his work will be like to tell. We all know that class of scientific labourers to whom all facts are

alike nourishing mental food, and who seem to exercise no choice whatever, provided only they can get hold of these same indiscriminate facts in quantity sufficient. They browse on them, as the animal to which they would not like to be compared browses on his thistles. But the Master knows the movement of the age he belongs to; and if he seems to be busy with what looks like a small piece of trivial experimenting, one may feel pretty sure that he knows what he is about, and that his minute operations are looking to a result that will help him towards attaining his great end in life,—an insight, so far as his faculties and opportunities will allow, into that order of things which he believes he can study with some prospect of taking in its significance.

I became so anxious to know what particular matter he was busy with, that I had to call upon him to satisfy my curiosity. It was with a little trepidation that I knocked at his door. I felt a good deal as one might have felt on disturbing an alchemist at his work, at the very moment, it might be, when he was about to make projection.

—Come in !—said the Master in his grave, massive tones.

I passed through the library with him

into a little room evidently devoted to his experiments.

—You have come just at the right moment,—he said.—Your eyes are better than mine. I have been looking at this flask, and I should like to have you look at it.

It was a small *matrass*, as one of the elder chemists would have called it, containing a fluid, and hermetically sealed. He held it up at the window ; perhaps you remember the physician holding a flask to the light in Gerard Douw's *Femme hydropique ;* I thought of that fine figure as I looked at him.—Look !—said he,—is it clear or cloudy ?

—You need not ask me that,—I answered. —It is very plainly turbid. I should think that some sediment had been shaken up in it. What is it, *Elixir Vitæ* or *Aurum potabile ?*

—Something that means more than alchemy ever did. Boiled just three hours, and as clear as a bell until within the last few days ; since then has been clouding up.

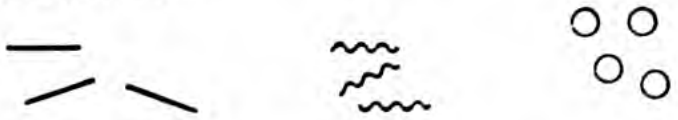
—I began to form a pretty shrewd guess at the meaning of all this, and to think I knew very nearly what was coming next. I was right in my conjecture. The Master broke off the sealed end of his little flask, took out a small portion of the fluid on a

glass rod, and placed it on a slip of glass in the usual way for a microscopic examination.

—One thousand diameters,—he said, as he placed it on the stage of the microscope. —We shall find signs of life, of course.—He bent over the instrument and looked but an instant.

—There they are!—he exclaimed,—look in.

I looked in and saw some objects not very unlike these :—



The straight linear bodies were darting backward and forward in every direction. The wavy ones were wriggling about like eels or water-snakes. The round ones were spinning on their axes and rolling in every direction. All of them were in a state of incessant activity, as if perpetually seeking something and never finding it.

They are tough, the germs of these little bodies, — said the Master. — Three hours' boiling hasn't killed 'em. Now, then, let us see what has been the effect of *six* hours' boiling.

He took up another flask just like the

first, containing fluid and hermetically sealed in the same way.

—Boiled just three hours longer than the other,—he said,—six hours in all. This is the *experimentum crucis*. Do you see any cloudiness in it?

—Not a sign of it; it is as clear as crystal, except that there may be a little sediment at the bottom.

—That is nothing. The liquid is clear. We shall find no signs of life.—He put a minute drop of the liquid under the microscope as before. Nothing stirred. Nothing to be seen but a clear circle of light. We looked at it again and again, but with the same result.

—Six hours kill 'em all, according to this experiment,—said the Master.—Good as far as it goes. One more negative result. Do you know what would have happened if that liquid had been clouded, and we had found life in the sealed flask? Sir, if that liquid had held life in it the Vatican would have trembled to hear it, and there would have been anxious questionings and ominous whisperings in the halls of Lambeth Palace! The accepted cosmogonies on trial, sir! Traditions, sanctities, creeds, ecclesiastical establishments, all shaking to know whether

my little sixpenny flask of fluid looks muddy or not! I don't know whether to laugh or shudder. The thought of an œcumenical council having its leading feature dislocated by my trifling experiment! The thought, again, of the mighty revolution in human beliefs and affairs that might grow out of the same insignificant little phenomenon. A wine-glassful of clear liquid growing muddy. If we had found a wriggle, or a zigzag, or a shoot from one side to the other, in this last flask, what a scare there would have been, to be sure, in the schools of the prophets! Talk about your *megatherium* and your *megalosaurus*,—what are these to the *bacterium* and the *vibrio?* These are the dreadful monsters of to-day. If they show themselves where they have no business, the little rascals frighten honest folks worse than ever people were frightened by the Dragon of Rhodes!

The Master gets going sometimes, there is no denying it, until his imagination runs away with him. He had been trying, as the reader sees, one of those curious experiments in spontaneous generation, as it is called, which have been so often instituted of late years, and by none more thoroughly than by that eminent American student of

nature whose process he had imitated with a result like his.

We got talking over these matters among us the next morning at the breakfast-table.

We must agree they couldn't stand six hours' boiling,—I said.

—Good for the Pope of Rome !—exclaimed the Master.

—The Landlady drew back with a certain expression of dismay in her countenance. She hoped he didn't want the Pope to make any more converts in this country. She had heard a sermon only last Sabbath, and the minister had made it out, she thought, as plain as could be, that the Pope was the Man of Sin and that the Church of Rome was— Well, there was very strong names applied to her in Scripture.

What was good for the Pope was good for your minister too, my dear madam,— said the Master.—Good for everybody that is afraid of what people call "science." If it should prove that dead things come to life of themselves, it would be awkward, you know, because then somebody will get up and say if one dead thing made itself alive another might, and so perhaps the earth peopled itself without any help. Possibly the difficulty wouldn't be so great as

many people suppose. We might perhaps find room for a Creator after all, as we do now, though we see a little brown seed grow till it sucks up the juices of half an acre of ground, apparently all by its own inherent power. That does not stagger us; I am not sure that it would if Mr. Crosse's or Mr. Weekes's *acarus* should show himself all of a sudden, as they said he did, in certain mineral mixtures acted on by electricity.

The Landlady was off soundings, and looking vacant enough by this time.

The Master turned to me.—Don't think too much of the result of our one experiment. It means something, because it confirms those other experiments of which it was a copy; but we must remember that a hundred negatives don't settle such a question. Life does get into the world somehow. You don't suppose Adam had the cutaneous unpleasantness politely called *psora*, do you?

—Hardly,—I answered.—He must have been a walking hospital if he carried all the maladies about him which have plagued his descendants.

—Well, then, how did the little beast which is peculiar to that special complaint intrude himself into the order of things? You don't suppose there was a special act of

creation for the express purpose of bestowing that little wretch on humanity, do you?

I thought, on the whole, I wouldn't answer that question.

—You and I are at work on the same problem,—said the young Astronomer to the Master.—I have looked into a microscope now and then, and I have seen that perpetual dancing about of minute atoms in a fluid, which you call molecular motion. Just so, when I look through my telescope I see the star-dust whirling about in the infinite expanse of ether; or if I do not see its motion, I know that it is only on account of its immeasurable distance. Matter and motion everywhere; void and rest nowhere. You ask why your restless microscopic atoms may not come together and become self-conscious and self-moving organisms. I ask why my telescopic star-dust may not come together and grow and organise into habitable worlds,—the ripened fruit on the branches of the tree Yggdrasil, if I may borrow from our friend the Poet's province. It frighten's people, though, to hear the suggestion that worlds shape themselves from star-mist. It does not trouble them at all to see the watery spheres that round them-

selves into being out of the vapours floating over us; they are nothing but rain-drops. But if a planet can grow as a rain-drop grows, why then—. It was a great comfort to these timid folk when Lord Rosse's telescope resolved certain nebulæ into star-clusters. Sir John Herschel would have told them that this made little difference in accounting for the formation of worlds by aggregation, but at any rate it was a comfort to them.

—These people have always been afraid of the astronomers,—said the Master.—They were shy, you know, of the Copernican system, for a long while; well they might be with an *oubliette* waiting for them if they ventured to think that the earth moved round the sun. Science settled that point finally for them, at length, and then it was all right,—when there was no use in disputing the fact any longer. By-and-by geology began turning up fossils that told extraordinary stories about the duration of life upon our planet. What subterfuges were not used to get rid of their evidence! Think of a man seeing the fossilised skeleton of an animal split out of a quarry, his teeth worn down by mastication, and the remains of food still visible in his interior, and, in

order to get rid of a piece of evidence contrary to the traditions he holds to, seriously maintaining that this skeleton never belonged to a living creature, but was created with just these appearances; a make-believe, a sham, a Barnum's-mermaid contrivance to amuse its Creator and impose upon his intelligent children! And now people talk about geological epochs and hundreds of millions of years in the planet's history as calmly as if they were discussing the age of their deceased great-grandmothers. Ten or a dozen years ago people said Sh! Sh! if you ventured to meddle with any question supposed to involve a doubt of the generally accepted Hebrew traditions. To-day such questions are recognised as perfectly fair subjects for general conversation; not in the basement story, perhaps, or among the rank and file of the curbstone congregations, but among intelligent and educated persons. You may preach about them in your pulpit, you may lecture about them, you may talk about them with the first sensible-looking person you happen to meet, you may write magazine articles about them, and the editor need not expect to receive remonstrances from angry subscribers and withdrawals of subscriptions, as he would have been sure to

not a great many years ago. Why, you may go to a tea-party where the clergyman's wife shows her best cap and his daughters display their shining ringlets, and you will hear the company discussing the Darwinian theory of the origin of the human race as if it were as harmless a question as that of the lineage of a spinster's lapdog. You may see a fine lady who is as particular in her genuflections as any Buddhist or Mohammedan saint in his manifestations of reverence, who will talk over the anthropoid ape, the supposed founder of the family to which we belong, and even go back with you to the acephalous mollusk, first cousin to the clams and mussels, whose rudimental spine was the hinted prophecy of humanity; all this time never dreaming, apparently, that what she takes for a matter of curious speculation involves the whole future of human progress and destiny.

I can't help thinking that if we had talked as freely as we can and do now in the days of the first boarder at this table,—I mean the one who introduced it to the public,—it would have sounded a good deal more aggressively than it does now.—The old Master got rather warm in talking; perhaps the con-

sciousness of having a number of listeners had something to do with it.

—This whole business is an open question, —he said,—and there is no use in saying, "Hush! don't talk about such things!" People do talk about 'em everywhere; and if they don't talk about 'em they think about 'em, and that is worse,—if there is anything bad about such questions, that is. If for the Fall of man, science comes to substitute the RISE of man, sir, it means the utter disintegration of all the spiritual pessimisms which have been like a spasm in the heart and a cramp in the intellect of men for so many centuries. And yet who dares to say that it is not a perfectly legitimate and proper question to be discussed, without the slightest regard to the fears or the threats of Pope or prelate?

Sir, I believe,—the Master rose from his chair as he spoke, and said in a deep and solemn tone, but without any declamatory vehemence,—Sir, I believe that we are at this moment in what will be recognised not many centuries hence as one of the late watches in the night of the dark ages. There is a twilight ray, beyond question. We know something of the universe, a very little, and, strangely enough, we know most

of what is farthest from us. We have weighed the planets and analysed the flames of the sun and stars. We predict their movements as if they were machines we ourselves had made and regulated. We know a good deal about the earth on which we live. But the study of man has been so completely subjected to our preconceived opinions, that we have got to begin all over again. We have studied anthropology through theology; we have now to begin the study of theology through anthropology. Until we have exhausted the human element in every form of belief, and that can only be done by what we may call comparative spiritual anatomy, we cannot begin to deal with the alleged extra-human elements without blundering into all imaginable puerilities. If you think for one moment that there is not a single religion in the world which does not come to us through the medium of a pre-existing language; and if you remember that this language embodies absolutely nothing but human conceptions and human passions, you will see at once that every religion presupposes its own elements as already existing in those to whom it is addressed. I once went to a church in London and heard the famous Edward Irving preach, and heard

some of his congregation speak in the strange words characteristic of their miraculous gift of tongues. I had a respect for the logical basis of this singular phenomenon. I have always thought it was natural that any celestial message should demand a language of its own, only to be understood by divine illumination. All human words tend, of course, to stop short in human meaning. And the more I hear the most sacred terms employed, the more I am satisfied that they have entirely and radically different meanings in the minds of those who use them. Yet they deal with them as if they were as definite as mathematical quantities or geometrical figures. What would become of arithmetic if the figure 2 meant three for one man and five for another and twenty for a third, and all the other numerals were in the same way variable quantities? Mighty intelligent correspondence business men would have with each other! But how is this any worse than the difference of opinion which led a famous clergyman to say to a brother theologian, "Oh, I see, my dear sir, your *God* is my *Devil*."

Man has been studied proudly, contemptuously, rather, from the point of view supposed to be authoritatively settled. The

self-sufficiency of egotistic natures was never more fully shown than in the expositions of the worthlessness and wretchedness of their fellow-creatures given by the dogmatists who have "gone back," as the vulgar phrase is, on their race, their own flesh and blood. Did you ever read what Mr. Bancroft says about Calvin in his article on Jonathan Edwards,—and mighty well said it is too, in my judgment? Let me remind you of it, whether you have read it or not. "Setting himself up over against the privileged classes, he, *with a loftier pride than theirs*, revealed the power of a yet higher order of nobility, not of a registered ancestry of fifteen generations, but one absolutely spotless in its escutcheon, preordained in the council chamber of eternity." I think you 'll find I have got that sentence right, word for word, and there 's a great deal more in it than many good folks who call themselves after the reformer seem to be aware of. The Pope put his foot on the neck of kings, but Calvin and his cohort crushed the whole human race under their heels in the name of the Lord of Hosts. Now, you see, the point that people don't understand is the absolute and utter *humility* of science, in opposition to this doctrinal self-sufficiency. I don't

doubt this may sound a little paradoxical at first, but I think you will find it is all right. You remember the courtier and the monarch,—Louis the Fourteenth, wasn't it?—never mind, give the poor fellows that live by setting you right a chance. "What o'clock is it?" says the king. "Just whatever o'clock your Majesty pleases," says the courtier. I venture to say the monarch was a great deal more humble than the follower, who pretended that his master was superior to such trifling facts as the revolution of the planet. It was the same thing, you remember, with King Canute and the tide on the sea-shore. The king accepted the scientific fact of the tide's rising. The loyal hangers-on, who believed in divine right, were too proud of the company they found themselves in to make any such humiliating admission. But there are people, and plenty of them, to-day, who will dispute facts just as clear to those who have taken the pains to learn what is known about them, as that of the tide's rising. They don't like to admit these facts, because they throw doubt upon some of their cherished opinions. We are getting on towards the last part of this nineteenth century. What we have gained is not so much in positive knowledge, though

that is a good deal, as it is in the freedom of discussion of every subject that comes within the range of observation and inference. How long is it since Mrs. Piozzi wrote, "Let me hope that you will not pursue geology till it leads you into doubts destructive of all comfort in this world and all happiness in the next"?

The Master paused and I remained silent, for I was thinking things I could not say.

—It is well always to have a woman near by when one is talking on this class of subjects. Whether there will be three or four women to one man in heaven is a question which I must leave to those who talk as if they knew all about the future condition of the race to answer. But very certainly there is much more of hearty faith, much more of spiritual life, among women than among men, in this world. They need faith to support them more than men do, for they have a great deal less to call them out of themselves, and it comes easier to them, for their habitual state of dependence teaches them to trust in others. When they become voters, if they ever do, it may be feared that the pews will lose what the ward-rooms gain. Relax a woman's hold on man, and

her knee-joints will soon begin to stiffen. Self-assertion brings out many fine qualities, but it does not promote devotional habits.

I remember some such thoughts as this were passing through my mind while the Master was talking. I noticed that the Lady was listening to the conversation with a look of more than usual interest. We men have the talk mostly to ourselves at this table; the Master, as you have found out, is fond of monologues, and I myself—well, I suppose I must own to a certain love for the reverberated music of my own accents; at any rate, the Master and I do most of the talking. But others help us do the listening. I think I can show that they listen to some purpose. I am going to surprise my reader with a letter which I received very shortly after the conversation took place which I have just reported. It is of course by a special licence, such as belongs to the supreme prerogative of an author, that I am enabled to present it to him. He need ask no questions: it is not his affair how I obtained the right to give publicity to a private communication. I have become somewhat more intimately acquainted with the writer of it than in the earlier period of my connection with this establishment,

and I think I may say have gained her confidence to a very considerable degree.

My dear Sir,—The conversations I have had with you, limited as they have been, have convinced me that I am quite safe in addressing you with freedom on a subject which interests me, and others more than myself. We at our end of the table have been listening, more or less intelligently, to the discussions going on between two or three of you gentlemen on matters of solemn import to us all. This is nothing very new to me. I have been used, from an early period of my life, to hear the discussion of grave questions, both in politics and religion. I have seen gentlemen at my father's table get as warm over a theological point of dispute as in talking over their political differences. I rather think it has always been very much so, in bad as well as in good company; for you remember how Milton's fallen angels amused themselves with disputing on "providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate," and it was the same thing in that club Goldsmith writes so pleasantly about. Indeed, why should not people very often come, in the course of conversation, to the one subject which lies beneath all else about

which we occupy our thoughts? And what more natural than that one should be inquiring about what another has accepted and ceased to have any doubts concerning? It seems to me all right that *at the proper time*, in the *proper place*, those who are less easily convinced than their neighbours should have the fullest liberty of calling to account all the opinions which others receive without question. Somebody must stand sentry at the outposts of belief, and it is a sentry's business, I believe, to challenge every one who comes near him, friend or foe.

I want you to understand fully that I am not one of those poor nervous creatures who are frightened out of their wits when any question is started that implies the disturbance of their old beliefs. I manage to see some of the periodicals, and now and then dip a little way into a new book which deals with these curious questions you were talking about, and others like them. You know they find their way almost everywhere. They do not worry me in the least. When I was a little girl, they used to say that if you put a horse-hair into a tub of water it would turn into a snake in the course of a few days. That did not seem to me so very much stranger than it was that

an egg should turn into a chicken. What can I say to *that?* Only that it is the Lord's doings, and marvellous in my eyes; and if our philosophical friend should find some little live creatures, or what seem to be live creatures, in any of his messes, I should say as much, and no more. You do not think I would shut up my Bible and Prayer-Book, because there is one more thing I do not understand in a world where I understand so very little of all the wonders that surround me?

It may be very wrong to pay any attention to those speculations about the origin of mankind which seem to conflict with the Sacred Record. But perhaps there is some way of reconciling them, as there is of making the seven days of creation harmonise with modern geology. At least, these speculations are curious enough in themselves; and I have seen so many good and handsome children come of parents who were anything but virtuous and comely, that I can believe in almost any amount of improvement taking place in a tribe of living beings, if time and opportunity favour it. I have read in books of natural history that dogs came originally from wolves. When I remember my little Flora, who, as I used to think, could do everything but talk, it does not seem to me

that she was much nearer her savage ancestors than some of the horrid cannibal wretches are to their neighbours the great apes.

You see that I am tolerably liberal in my habit of looking at all these questions. We women drift along with the current of the times, listening, in our quiet way, to the discussions going on round us in books and in conversation, and shift the phrases in which we think and talk with something of the same ease as that with which we change our style of dress from year to year. I doubt if you of the other sex know what an effect this habit of accommodating our *tastes* to changing standards has upon us. Nothing is fixed in them, as you know; the very law of fashion is change. I suspect we learn from our dressmakers to shift the costume of our minds, and slip on the new fashions of thinking all the more easily because we have been accustomed to new styles of dressing every season.

It frightens me to see how much I have written without having yet said a word of what I began this letter on purpose to say. I have taken so much space in "defining my position," to borrow the politicians' phrase,

that I begin to fear you will be out of patience before you come to the part of my letter I care most about your reading.

What I want to say is this. When these matters are talked about before persons of different ages and various shades of intelligence, I think one ought to be very careful that his use of language does not injure the sensibilities, perhaps blunt the reverential feelings, of those who are listening to him. You of the sterner sex say that we women have intuitions, but not logic, as our birthright. I shall not commit my sex by conceding this to be true as a whole, but I will accept the first half of it, and I will go so far as to say that we do not always care to follow out a train of thought until it ends in a blind *cul-de-sac*, as some of what are called the logical people are fond of doing.

Now I want to remind you that religion is not a matter of intellectual luxury to those of us who are interested in it, but something very different. It is our life, and more than our life; for that is measured by pulse-beats, but our religious consciousness partakes of the Infinite, towards which it is constantly yearning. It is very possible that a hundred or five hundred years from now the *forms* of religious belief may be so altered that we

should hardly know them. But the sense of dependence on Divine influence, and the need of communion with the unseen and eternal, will be then just what they are now. It is not the geologist's hammer, or the astronomer's telescope, or the naturalist's microscope, that is going to take away the need of the human soul for that Rock to rest upon which is higher than itself, that Star which never sets, that all-pervading Presence which gives life to all the least moving atoms of the immeasurable universe.

I have no fears for myself, and listen very quietly to all your debates. I go from your philosophical discussions to the reading of Jeremy Taylor's *Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, without feeling that I have unfitted myself in the least degree for its solemn reflections. And, as I have mentioned his name, I cannot help saying that I do not believe that good man himself would have ever shown the bitterness to those who seem to be at variance with the received doctrines, which one may see in some of the newspapers that call themselves "religious." I have kept a few old books from my honoured father's library, and among them is another of his which I always thought had more true Christianity in its title than there is in a good many

whole volumes. I am going to take the book down, or up,—for it is not a little one, —and write out the title, which, I dare say, you remember, and very likely you have the book. *Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying, showing the Unreasonableness of prescribing to other Men's Faith, and the Iniquity of persecuting Different Opinions.*"

Now, my dear sir, I am sure you believe that I *want* to be liberal and reasonable, and not to act like those weak alarmists who, whenever the silly sheep begin to skip as if something was after them, and huddle together in their fright, are sure there must be a bear or a lion coming to eat them up. But for all that, I want to beg you to handle some of these points, which are so involved in the creed of a good many well-intentioned persons that you cannot separate them from it without picking their whole belief to pieces, with more thought for them than you might think at first they were entitled to. I have no doubt you gentlemen are as wise as serpents, and I want you to be as harmless as doves.

The Young Girl who sits by me has, I know, strong religious instincts. Instead of setting her out to ask all sorts of questions, I would rather, if I had my way, en-

courage her to form a habit of attending to religious duties, and make the most of the simple faith in which she was bred. I think there are a good many questions young persons may safely postpone to a more convenient season; and as this young creature is overworked, I hate to have her excited by the fever of doubt which it cannot be denied is largely prevailing in our time.

I know you must have looked on our other young friend, who has devoted himself to the sublimest of the sciences, with as much interest as I do. When I was a little girl I used to write out a line of Young's as a copy in my writing-book—

"An undevout astronomer is mad;"

but I do not now feel quite so sure that the contemplation of all the multitude of remote worlds does not tend to weaken the idea of a personal Deity. It is not so much that nebular theory which worries me, when I think about this subject, as a kind of bewilderment when I try to conceive of a consciousness filling all those frightful blanks of space they talk about. I sometimes doubt whether that young man worships anything but the stars. They tell me that many young students of science like him never see

the inside of a church. I cannot help wishing they did. It humanises people, quite apart from any higher influence it exerts upon them. One reason, perhaps, why they do not care to go to places of worship is that they are liable to hear the questions they know something about handled in sermons by those who know very much less about them. And so they lose a great deal. Almost every human being, however vague his notions of the Power addressed, is capable of being lifted and solemnised by the exercise of public prayer. When I was a young girl we travelled in Europe, and I visited Ferney with my parents; and I remember we all stopped before a chapel, and I read upon its front,—I knew Latin enough to understand it, I am pleased to say,—*Deo erexit Voltaire.* I never forgot it; and knowing what a sad scoffer he was at most sacred things, I could not but be impressed with the fact that even he was not satisfied with himself, until he had shown his devotion in a public and lasting form.

We all want religion sooner or later. I am afraid there are some who have no natural turn for it, as there are persons without an ear for music, to which, if I remember right, I heard one of you comparing what

you called religious genius. But sorrow and misery bring even these to know what it means, in a great many instances. May I not say to you, my friend, that I am one who has learned the secret of the inner life by the discipline of trials in the life of outward circumstance? I can remember the time when I thought more about the shade of colour in a ribbon, whether it matched my complexion or not, than I did about my spiritual interests in this world or the next. It was needful that I should learn the meaning of that text, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

Since I have been taught in the school of trial I have felt, as I never could before, how precious an inheritance is the smallest patrimony of faith. When everything seemed gone from me, I found I had still one possession. The bruised reed that I had never leaned on became my staff. The smoking flax which had been a worry to my eyes burst into flame, and I lighted the taper at it which has since guided all my footsteps. And I am but one of the thousands who have had the same experience. They have been through the depths of affliction, and know the needs of the human soul. It will find its God in the unseen,—Father, Saviour,

Divine Spirit, Virgin Mother,—it must and will breathe its longings and its griefs into the heart of a Being capable of understanding all its necessities and sympathising with all its woes.

I am jealous, yes, I own I am jealous of any word, spoken or written, that would tend to impair that birthright of reverence which becomes for so many in after years the basis of a deeper religious sentiment. And yet, as I have said, I cannot and will not shut my eyes to the problems which may seriously affect our *modes* of conceiving the eternal truths on which, and by which, our souls must live. What a fearful time is this into which we poor sensitive and timid creatures are born! I suppose the life of every century has more or less special resemblance to that of some particular Apostle. I cannot help thinking this century has Thomas for its model. How do you suppose the other Apostles felt when that experimental philosopher explored the wounds of the Being who to them was divine with his inquisitive forefinger? In our time that finger has multiplied itself into ten thousand thousand implements of research, challenging all mysteries, weighing the world as in a balance,

and sifting through its prisms and spectroscopes the light that comes from the throne of the Eternal.

Pity us, dear Lord, pity us! The peace in believing which belonged to other ages is not for us. Again Thy wounds are opened that we may know whether it is the blood of one like ourselves which flows from them, or whether it is a Divinity that is bleeding for His creatures. Wilt Thou not take the doubt of Thy children whom the time commands to *try all things* in the place of the unquestioning faith of earlier and simpler-hearted generations? We too have need of Thee. Thy martyrs in other ages were cast into the flames, but no fire could touch their immortal and indestructible faith. We sit in safety and in peace, so far as these poor bodies are concerned; but our cherished beliefs, the hopes, the trust that stayed the hearts of those we loved who have gone before us, are cast into the fiery furnace of an age which is fast turning to dross the certainties and the sanctities once prized as our most precious inheritance.

You will understand me, my dear sir, and all my solicitudes and apprehensions. Had I never been assailed by the questions

that meet all thinking persons in our time, I might not have thought so anxiously about the risk of perplexing others. I know as well as you must that there are many articles of belief clinging to the skirts of our time which are the bequests of the ages of ignorance that God winked at. But for all that I would train a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, according to the simplest and best creed I could disentangle from those barbarisms, and I would in every way try to keep up in young persons that standard of reverence for all sacred subjects which may, without any violent transition, grow and ripen into the devotion of later years.

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

— ——.

I have thought a good deal about this letter and the writer of it lately. She seemed at first removed to a distance from all of us, but here I find myself in somewhat near relations with her. What has surprised me more than that, however, is to find that she is becoming so much acquainted with the Register of Deeds. Of all persons in

the world, I should least have thought of him as like to be interested in her, and still less, if possible, of her fancying him. I can only say they have been in pretty close conversation several times of late, and, if I dared to think it of so very calm and dignified a personage, I should say that her colour was a little heightened after one or more of these interviews. No! that would be too absurd! But I begin to think nothing is absurd in the matter of the relations of the two sexes; and if this high-bred woman fancies the attentions of a piece of human machinery like this elderly individual, it is none of my business.

I have been at work on some more of the young Astronomer's lines. I find less occasion for meddling with them as he grows more used to versification. I think I could analyse the processes going on in his mind, and the conflict of instincts which he cannot in the nature of things understand. But it is as well to give the reader a chance to find out for himself what is going on in the young man's heart and intellect.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

III.

The snows that glittered on the disk of Mars
Have melted, and the planet's fiery orb
Rolls in the crimson summer of its year;
But what to me the summer or the snow
Of worlds that throb with life in forms unknown,
If life indeed be theirs; I heed not these.
My heart is simply human; all my care
For them whose dust is fashioned like mine own;
These ache with cold and hunger, live in pain,
And shake with fear of worlds more full of woe;
There may be others worthier of my love,
But such I know not save through these I know.

There are two veils of language, hid beneath
Whose sheltering folds, we dare to be ourselves;
And not that other self which nods and smiles
And babbles in our name: the one is Prayer,
Lending its licensed freedom to the tongue
That tells our sorrows and our sins to Heaven;
The other, Verse, that throws its spangled web
Around our naked speech and makes it bold.
I, whose best prayer is silence; sitting dumb
In the great temple where I nightly serve
Him who is throned in light, have dared to claim
The poet's franchise, though I may not hope
To wear his garland; hear me while I tell
My story in such form as poets use,

But breathed in fitful whispers, as the wind
Sighs and then slumbers, wakes and sighs again.

Thou Vision, floating in the breathless air
Between me and the fairest of the stars,
I tell my lonely thoughts as unto thee.
Look not for marvels of the scholar's pen
In my rude measure ; I can only show
A slender-margined, unillumined page,
And trust its meaning to the flattering eye
That reads it in the gracious light of love.
Ah, wouldst thou clothe thyself in breathing shape
And nestle at my side, my voice should lend
Whate'er my verse may lack of tender rhythm
To make thee listen.
I have stood entranced
When, with her fingers wandering o'er the keys,
The white enchantress with the golden hair
Breathed all her soul through some unvalued rhyme ;
Some flower of song that long had lost its bloom ;
Lo ! its dead summer kindled as she sang !
The sweet contralto, like the ringdove's coo,
Thrilled it with brooding, fond, caressing tones,
And the pale minstrel's passion lived again,
Tearful and trembling as a dewy rose
The wind has shaken till it fills the air
With light and fragrance. Such the wondrous charm

A song can borrow when the bosom throbs
That lends it breath.
So from the poet's lips
His verse sounds doubly sweet, for none like him
Feels every cadence of its wave-like flow;
He lives the passion over, while he reads,
That shook him as he sang his lofty strain,
And pours his life through each resounding line,
As ocean, when the stormy winds are hushed,
Still rolls and thunders through his billowy caves.

Let me retrace the record of the years
That made me what I am. A man most wise,
But overworn with toil and bent with age,
Sought me to be his scholar,—me, run wild
From books and teachers,—kindled in my soul
The love of knowledge; led me to his tower,
Showed me the wonders of the midnight realm
His hollow sceptre ruled, or seemed to rule,
Taught me the mighty secrets of the spheres,
Trained me to find the glimmering specks of light
Beyond the unaided sense, and on my chart
To string them one by one, in order due,
As on a rosary a saint his beads.
was his only scholar; I became
The echo to his thought; whate'er he knew
Was mine for asking; so from year to year
We wrought together, till there came a time
When I, the learner, was the master half
Of the twinned being in the dome-crowned tower.

Minds roll in paths like planets ; they revolve
This in a larger, that a narrower ring,
But round they come at last to that same phase,
That selfsame light and shade they showed before.
I learned his annual and his monthly tale,
His weekly axiom and his daily phrase,
I felt them coming in the laden air,
And watched them labouring up to vocal breath,
Even as the first-born at his father's board
Knows ere he speaks the too familiar jest
Is on its way, by some mysterious sign
Forewarned, the click before the striking bell.

He shrivelled as I spread my growing leaves,
Till trust and reverence changed to pitying care ;
He lived for me in what he once had been,
But I for him, a shadow, a defence,
The guardian of his fame, his guide, his staff,
Leaned on so long he fell if left alone.
I was his eye, his ear, his cunning hand,
Love was my spur and longing after fame,
But his the goading thorn of sleepless age
That sees its shortening span, its lengthening shades,
That clutches what it may with eager grasp,
And drops at last with empty, outstretched hands.
All this he dreamed not. He would sit him down
Thinking to work his problems as of old,

And find the star he thought so plain a blur,
The columned figures labyrinthine wilds
Without my comment, blind and senseless scrawls
That vexed him with their riddles; he would strive
And struggle for a while, and then his eye
Would lose its light, and over all his mind
The cold gray mist would settle; and ere long
The darkness fell, and I was left alone.

Alone! no climber of an Alpine cliff,
No Arctic venturer on the waveless sea,
Feels the dread stillness round him as it chills
The heart of him who leaves the slumbering earth
To watch the silent worlds that crowd the sky.

Alone! And as the shepherd leaves his flock
To feed upon the hillside, he meanwhile
Finds converse in the warblings of the pipe
Himself has fashioned for his vacant hour,
So have I grown companion to myself,
And to the wandering spirits of the air
That smile and whisper round us in our dreams.
Thus have I learned to search if I may know
The whence and why of all beneath the stars
And all beyond them, and to weigh my life
As in a balance,—poising good and ill
Against each other,—asking of the Power

That flung me forth among the whirling worlds,
If I am heir to any inborn right,
Or only as an atom of the dust
That every wind may blow where'er it will.

I am not humble; I was shown my place,
Clad in such robes as Nature had at hand;
Took what she gave, not chose; I know no shame,
No fear for being simply what I am.
I am not proud, I hold my every breath
At Nature's mercy. I am as a babe
Borne in a giant's arms, he knows not where;
Each several heart-beat, counted like the coin
A miser reckons, is a special gift
As from an unseen hand; if that withhold
Its bounty for a moment, I am left
A clod upon the earth to which I fall.

Something I find in me that well might claim
The love of beings in a sphere above
This doubtful twilight world of right and wrong;
Something that shows me of the selfsame clay
That creeps or swims or flies in humblest form.
Had I been asked, before I left my bed
Of shapeless dust, what clothing I would wear,
I would have said, More angel and less worm;
But for their sake who are even such as I,
Of the same mingled blood, I would not choose
To hate that meaner portion of myself
Which makes me brother to the least of men.

I dare not be a coward with my lips
Who dare to question all things in my soul ;
Some men may find their wisdom on their knees,
Some prone and grovelling in the dust like slaves ;
Let the meek glow-worm glisten in the dew ;
I ask to lift my taper to the sky
As they who hold their lamps above their heads,
Trusting the larger currents up aloft,
Rather than crossing eddies round their breast,
Threatening with every puff the flickering blaze.

My life shall be a challenge, not a truce !
This is my homage to the mightier powers,
To ask my boldest question, undismayed
By muttered threats that some hysteric sense
Of wrong or insult will convulse the throne
Where wisdom reigns supreme ; and if I err,
They all must err who have to feel their way
As bats that fly at noon ; for what are we
But creatures of the night, dragged forth by day,
Who needs must stumble, and with stammering steps
Spell out their paths in syllables of pain ?

Thou wilt not hold in scorn the child who dares
Look up to thee, the Father,—dares to ask
More than thy wisdom answers. From thy hand
The worlds were cast ; yet every leaflet claims
From that same hand its little shining sphere

Of star-lit dew ; thine image, the great sun,
Girt with his mantle of tempestuous flame,
Glares in mid-heaven ; but to his noontide blaze
The slender violet lifts its lidless eye,
And from his splendour steals its fairest hue,
Its sweetest perfume from his scorching fire.

I may just as well stop here as anywhere, for there is more of the manuscript to come, and I can only give it in instalments.

The young Astronomer had told me I might read any portions of his manuscript I saw fit to certain friends. I tried this last extract on the old Master.

It 's the same story we all have to tell,— said he, when I had done reading.—We are all asking questions nowadays. I should like to hear him read some of his verses himself, and I think some of the other boarders would like to. I wonder if he wouldn't do it, if we asked him ! Poets read their own compositions in a sing-song sort of way ; but they do seem to love 'em so, that I always enjoy it. It makes me laugh a little inwardly to see how they dandle their poetical babies, but I don't let them know it. We must get up a select party of the boarders to hear him read. We 'll send him a regular invitation. I will

put my name at the head of it, and you shall write it.

—That *was* neatly done. How I hate writing such things! But I suppose I must do it.

VIII.

THE Master and I had been thinking for some time of trying to get the young Astronomer round to our side of the table. There are many subjects on which both of us like to talk with him, and it would be convenient to have him nearer to us. How to manage it was not quite so clear as it might have been. The Scarabee wanted to sit with his back to the light, as it was in his present position. He used his eyes so much in studying minute objects, that he wished to spare them all fatigue, and did not like facing a window. Neither of us cared to ask the Man of Letters, so called, to change his place, and of course we could not think of making such a request of the Young Girl or the Lady. So we were at a stand with reference to this project of ours.

But while we were proposing, Fate or Providence disposed everything for us. The Man of Letters, so called, was missing one morning, having folded his tent — that is,

packed his carpet-bag—with the silence of the Arabs, and encamped—that is, taken lodgings—in some locality which he had forgotten to indicate.

The Landlady bore this sudden bereavement remarkably well. Her remarks and reflections, though borrowing the aid of homely imagery and doing occasional violence to the nicer usages of speech, were not without philosophical discrimination.

—I like a gentleman that *is* a gentleman. But there 's a difference in what folks call gentlemen as there is in what you put on table. There is cabbages and there is cauliflowers. There is clams and there is oysters. There is mackerel and there is salmon. And there is some that knows the difference and some that doosn't. I had a little account with that boarder that he forgot to settle before he went off, so all of a suddin. I shan't say anything about it. I 've seen the time when I should have felt bad about losing what he owed me, but it was no great matter; and if he 'll only stay away now he 's gone, I can stand losing it, and not cry my eyes out nor lay awake all night neither. I never had ought to have took him. Where he come from and where he 's gone to is unbeknown to me. If he 'd only smoked

good tobacco, I wouldn't have said a word; but it was such dreadful stuff, it'll take a week to get his chamber sweet enough to show them that asks for rooms. It doos smell like all possest.

—Left any goods?—asked the Salesman.

—Or dockermunts?—added the Member of the Haouse.

The Landlady answered with a faded smile, which implied that there was no hope in that direction. Dr. Benjamin, with a sudden recurrence of youthful feeling, made a fan with the fingers of his right hand, the second phalanx of the thumb resting on the tip of the nose, and the remaining digits diverging from each other, in the plane of the median line of the face,—I suppose this is the way he would have described the gesture, which is almost a specialty of the Parisian *gamin*. That Boy immediately copied it, and added greatly to its effect by extending the fingers of the other hand in a line with those of the first, and vigorously agitating those of the two hands,—a gesture which acts like a puncture on the distended self-esteem of one to whom it is addressed, and cheapens the memory of the absent to a very low figure.

I wish the reader to observe that I treasure up with interest all the words uttered by the Salesman. It must have been noticed that he very rarely speaks. Perhaps he has an inner life, with its own deep emotional, and lofty contemplative elements, but as we see him, he is the boarder reduced to the simplest expression of that term. Yet, like most human creatures, he has generic and specific characters not unworthy of being studied. I notice particularly a certain electrical briskness of movement, such as one may see in a squirrel, which clearly belongs to his calling. The dry-goodsman's life behind his counter is a succession of sudden, snappy perceptions and brief series of co-ordinated spasms, as thus :—

"Purple calico, three-quarters wide, six yards."

Up goes the arm ; bang ! tumbles out the flat roll and turns half a dozen somersets, as if for the fun of the thing ; the six yards of calico hurry over the measuring-nails, hunching their backs up, like six canker-worms ; out jump the scissors ; snip, clip, rip ; the stuff is wisped up, brown-papered, tied, labelled, delivered, and the man is himself again, like a child just come out of a convulsion-fit. Think of a man's having some

hundreds of these semi-epileptic seizures every day, and you need not wonder that he does not say much; these fits take the talk all out of him.

But because he, or any other man, does not say much, it does not follow that he may not have, as I have said, an exalted and intense inner life. I have known a number of cases where a man who seemed thoroughly commonplace and unemotional has all at once surprised everybody by telling the story of his hidden life far more pointedly and dramatically than any playwright or novelist or poet could have told it for him. I will not insult your intelligence, Beloved, by saying *how* he has told it

—We had been talking over the subjects touched upon in the Lady's letter.

—I suppose one man in a dozen—said the Master—ought to be born a sceptic. That was the proportion among the Apostles, at any rate.

—So there was one Judas among them,—I remarked.

—Well,—said the Master,—they 've been whitewashing Judas of late. But never mind him. I did not say there was not one rogue on the average among a dozen men.

I don't see how that would interfere with my proposition. If I say that among a dozen men you ought to find one that weighs over a hundred and fifty pounds, and you tell me that there were twelve men in your club, and one of 'em had red hair, I don't see that you have materially damaged my statement.

—I thought it best to let the old Master have his easy victory, which was more apparent than real, very evidently, and he went on.

—When the Lord sends out a batch of human beings, say a hundred— Did you ever read my book, the new edition of it I mean?

It is rather awkward to answer such a question in the negative, but I said, with the best grace I could, "No, not *the last edition.*"

—Well, I must give you a copy of it. My book and I are pretty much the same thing. Sometimes I steal from my book in my talk without mentioning it, and then I say to myself, "Oh, that won't do; everybody has read my book and knows it by heart." And then the other *I* says,—you know there are two of us, right and left, like a pair of shoes, —the other *I* says, "You 're a—something or other—fool. They haven't read your con-

founded old book; besides, if they have, they have forgotten all about it." Another time, I say, thinking I will be very honest, "I have said something about that in my book;" and then the other *I* says, "What a Balaam's quadruped you are to tell 'em it's in your book; they don't care whether it is or not, if it's anything worth saying; and if it isn't worth saying, what are you braying for?" That is a rather sensible fellow, that other chap we talk with, but an impudent whelp. I never got such abuse from any blackguard in my life as I have from that No. 2 of me, the one that answers the other's questions and makes the comments, and does what in demotic phrase is called the "sarsing."

—I laughed at that. I have just such a fellow always with me, as wise as Solomon, if I would only heed him; but as insolent as Shimei, cursing, and throwing stones and dirt, and behaving as if he had the traditions of the "ape-like human being" born with him rather than civilised instincts. One does not have to be a king to know what it is to keep a king's jester.

—I mentioned my book,—the Master said,—because I have something in it on the subject we were talking about. I should

like to read you a passage here and there out of it, where I have expressed myself a little more freely on some of those matters we handle in conversation. If you don't quarrel with it, I must give you a copy of the book. It 's a rather serious thing to get a copy of a book from the writer of it. It has made my adjectives sweat pretty hard, I know, to put together an answer returning thanks and not lying beyond the twilight of veracity, if one may use a figure. Let me try a little of my book on you, in divided doses, as my friends the doctors say.

—*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili*,—I said, laughing at my own expense. I don't doubt the medicament is quite as good as the patient deserves, and probably a great deal better,—I added, reinforcing my feeble compliment.

[When you pay a compliment to an author, don't qualify it in the next sentence so as to take all the goodness out of it. Now I am thinking of it, I will give you one or two pieces of advice. Be careful to assure yourself that the person you are talking with wrote the article or book you praise. It is not very pleasant to be told, "Well, there, now ! I always liked your writings, but you never did anything half so good as

this last piece," and then to have to tell the blunderer that this last piece isn't yours, but t'other man's. Take care that the phrase or sentence you commend is not one that is in quotation-marks. "The best thing in your piece, I think, is a line I do not remember meeting before; it struck me as very true and well expressed:—

'An honest man's the noblest work of God.'"

"But my dear lady, that line is one which is to be found in a writer of the last century, and not original with me." One ought not to have undeceived her, perhaps, but one is naturally honest, and cannot bear to be credited with what is not his own. The lady blushes, of course, and says she has not read much ancient literature, or some such thing. The pearl upon the Ethiop's arm is very pretty in verse, but one does not care to furnish the dark background for other persons' jewelry.]

I adjourned from the table in company with the old Master to his apartments. He was evidently in easy circumstances, for he had the best accommodations the house afforded. We passed through a reception-room to his library, where everything showed

that he had ample means for indulging the modest tastes of a scholar.

—The first thing, naturally, when one enters a scholar's study or library, is to look at his books. One gets a notion very speedily of his tastes and the range of his pursuits by a glance round his book-shelves.

Of course, you know there are many fine houses where the library is a part of the upholstery, so to speak. Books in handsome binding kept locked under plate-glass in showy dwarf bookcases are as important to stylish establishments as servants in livery, who sit with folded arms, are to stylish equipages. I suppose those wonderful statues with the folded arms do sometimes change their attitude, and I suppose those books with the gilded backs do sometimes get opened, but it is nobody's business whether they do or not, and it is not best to ask too many questions.

This sort of thing is common enough, but there is another case that may prove deceptive if you undertake to judge from appearances. Once in a while you will come on a house where you will find a family of readers and almost no library. Some of the most indefatigable devourers of literature have very few books. They belong to book clubs,

they haunt the public libraries, they borrow of friends, and somehow or other get hold of everything they want, scoop out all it holds for them, and have done with it. When *I* want a book, it is as a tiger wants a sheep. I must have it with one spring, and if I miss it, go away defeated and hungry. And my experience with public libraries is that the first volume of the book I inquire for is out, unless I happen to want the second, when *that* is out.

—I was pretty well prepared to understand the Master's library and his account of it. We seated ourselves in two very comfortable chairs, and I began the conversation.

—I see you have a large and rather miscellaneous collection of books. Did you get them together by accident or according to some preconceived plan?

—Both, sir, both,—the Master answered.—When Providence throws a good book in my way, I bow to its decree and purchase it as an act of piety, if it is reasonably or unreasonably cheap. I *adopt* a certain number of books every year, out of a love for the foundlings and stray children of other people's brains that nobody seems to care for. Look here.

He took down a Greek Lexicon finely bound in calf, and spread it open.

Do you see that Hedericus? I had Greek dictionaries enough and to spare, but I saw that noble quarto lying in the midst of an ignoble crowd of cheap books, and marked with a price which I felt to be an insult to scholarship, to the memory of Homer, sir, and the awful shade of Æschylus. I paid the mean price asked for it, and I wanted to double it, but I suppose it would have been a foolish sacrifice of coin to sentiment. I love that book for its looks and behaviour. None of your "half-calf" economies in that volume, sir! And see how it lies open anywhere! There isn't a book in my library that has such a generous way of laying its treasures before you. From Alpha to Omega, calm, assured rest at any page that your choice or accident may light on. No lifting of a rebellious leaf like an upstart servant that does not know his place and can never be taught manners, but tranquil, well-bred repose. A book may be a perfect gentleman in its aspect and demeanour, and this book would be good company for personages like Roger Ascham and his pupils the Lady Elizabeth and the Lady Jane Grey.

The Master was evidently riding a hobby,

and what I wanted to know was the plan on which he had formed his library. So I brought him back to the point by asking him the question in so many words.

Yes,—he said,—I have a kind of notion of the way in which a library ought to be put together—no, I don't mean that, I mean ought to grow. I don't pretend to say that mine is a model, but it serves my turn well enough, and it represents me pretty accurately. A scholar must shape his own shell, *secrete* it, one might almost say, for secretion is only separation, you know, of certain elements derived from the materials of the world about us. And a scholar's study, with the books lining its walls, is his shell. It isn't a mollusk's shell, either; it 's a caddice-worm's shell. You know about the caddice-worm?

—More or less; less rather than more,—was my humble reply.

Well, sir, the caddice-worm is the larva of a fly, and he makes a case for himself out of all sorts of bits of everything that happen to suit his particular fancy, dead or alive, sticks and stones and small shells with their owners in 'em, living as comfortable as ever. Every one of these caddice-worms has his special fancy as to what he will pick up and

glue together, with a kind of natural cement he provides himself, to make his case out of. In it he lives, sticking his head and shoulders out once in a while, that is all. Don't you see that a student in his library is a caddice-worm in his case? I've told you that I take an interest in pretty much everything, and don't mean to fence out any human interests from the private grounds of my intelligence. Then, again, there is a subject, perhaps I may say there is more than one, that I want to exhaust, to know to the very bottom. And besides, of course I must have my literary *harem*, my *parc aux cerfs*, where my favourites await my moments of leisure and pleasure,—my scarce and precious editions, my luxurious typographical masterpieces; my Delilahs, that take my head in their lap: the pleasant story-tellers and the like; the books I love because they are fair to look upon, prized by collectors, endeared by old associations, secret treasures that nobody else knows anything about; books, in short, that I like for insufficient reasons it may be, but peremptorily, and mean to like and to love and to cherish till death us do part.

Don't you see I have given you a key to the way my library is made up, so that you can *apriorise* the plan according to which I

have filled my bookcases? I will tell you how it is carried out.

In the first place, you see, I have four extensive cyclopædias. Out of these I can get information enough to serve my immediate purpose on almost any subject. These, of course, are supplemented by geographical, biographical, bibliographical, and other dictionaries, including of course lexicons to all the languages I ever meddle with. Next to these come the works relating to my one or two specialties, and these collections I make as perfect as I can. Every library should try to be complete on something, if it were only on the history of pin-heads. I don't mean that I buy all the trashy compilations on my special subjects, but I try to have all the works of any real importance relating to them, old as well as new. In the following compartment you will find the great authors in all the languages I have mastered, from Homer and Hesiod downward to the last great English name. This division, you see, you can make almost as extensive or as limited as you choose. You can crowd the great representative writers into a small compass; or you can make a library consisting only of the different editions of Horace, if you have space and money

enough. Then comes the *Harem*, the shelf or the bookcase of Delilahs, that you have paid wicked prices for, that you love without pretending to be reasonable about it, and would bag in case of fire before all the rest, just as Mr. Townley took the Clytie to his carriage when the anti-Catholic mob threatened his house in 1780. As for the foundlings like my Hedericus, they go among their peers; it is a pleasure to take them from the dusty stall where they were elbowed by plebeian schoolbooks and battered odd volumes, and give them Alduses and Elzevirs for companions.

Nothing remains but the Infirmary. The most painful subjects are the unfortunates that have lost a cover. Bound a hundred years ago, perhaps, and one of the rich old brown covers gone—what a pity! Do you know what to do about it? I'll tell you,—no, I'll *show* you. Look at this volume. *M. T. Ciceronis Opera*,—a dozen of 'em,—one of 'em minus half his cover, a poor one-legged cripple, six months ago,—now see him.

—*He* looked very respectably indeed, both covers dark, ancient, very decently matched; one would hardy notice the fact that they were not twins.

—I'll tell you what I did. You poor devil, said I, you are a disgrace to your family.

We must send you to a surgeon and have some kind of a Taliacotian operation performed on you. (You remember the operation as described in Hudibras, of course.) The first thing was to find a subject of similar age and aspect ready to part with one of his members. So I went to Quidlibet's,—you know Quidlibet and that hieroglyphic sign of his with the omniscient-looking eye as its most prominent feature,—and laid my case before him. I want you, said I, to look up an old book of mighty little value,—one of your ten-cent vagabonds would be the sort of thing,—but an *old* beggar, with a cover like this, and lay it by for me.

And Quidlibet, who is a pleasant body to deal with,—only he has insulted one or two gentlemanly books by selling them to me at very low-bred and shamefully insufficient prices,—Quidlibet, I say, laid by three old books for me to help myself from, and didn't take the trouble even to make me pay the thirty cents for 'em. Well, said I to myself, let us look at our three books that have undergone the last insult short of the trunk-maker's or the paper-mills, and see what they are. There may be something worth looking at in one or the other of 'em.

Now do you know it was with a kind of a

tremor that I untied the package and looked at these three unfortunates, too humble for the companionable dime to recognise as its equal in value. The same sort of feeling you know if you ever tried the Bible-and-key or the *Sortes Virgilianæ*. I think you will like to know what the three books were which had been bestowed upon me *gratis*, that I might tear away one of the covers of the one that best matched my Cicero, and give it to the binder to cobble my crippled volume with.

The Master took the three books from a cupboard and continued.

No. I. An odd volume of *The Adventurer*. It has many interesting things enough, but is made precious by containing Simon Browne's famous Dedication to the Queen of his Answer to Tindal's *Christianity as old as the Creation*. Simon Browne was the *Man without a Soul*. An excellent person, a most worthy dissenting minister, but lying under a strange delusion.

Here is a paragraph from his Dedication :—

" He was once a man ; and of some little name ; but of no worth, as his present unparalleled case makes but too manifest ; for by the immediate hand of an avenging GOD,

his very thinking substance has, for more than seven years, been continually wasting away, till it is wholly perished out of him, if it be not utterly come to nothing. None, no, not the least remembrance of its very ruins, remains, not the shadow of an idea is left, nor any sense that so much as one single one, perfect or imperfect, whole or diminished, ever did appear to a mind within him, or was perceived by it."

Think of this as the Dedication of a book "universally allowed to be the best which that controversy produced," and what a flood of light it pours on the insanities of those self-analysing diarists whose morbid reveries have been so often mistaken for piety! No. I. had something for me, then, besides the cover, which was all it claimed to have worth offering.

No. II. was *A View of Society and Manners in Italy*. Vol. iii. By John Moore, M.D. (*Zeluco* Moore). You know his pleasant book. In this particular volume what interested me most, perhaps, was the very spirited and intelligent account of the miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of Saint Januarius, but it gave me an hour's mighty agreeable reading. So much for Number Two.

No. III. was "An Essay on the Great EFFECTS of Even *Languid* and *Unheeded* Local Motion." By the Hon. Robert Boyle. Published in 1685, and, as appears from other sources, "received with great and general applause." I confess I was a little startled to find how near this earlier philosopher had come to the modern doctrines, such as are illustrated in Tyndall's *Heat considered as a Mode of Motion.* He speaks of "Us, who endeavour to resolve the *Phenomena* of Nature into Matter and Local motion." That sounds like the nineteenth century, but what shall we say to this? "As when a bar of iron or silver, having been well hammered, is newly taken off of the anvil; though the eye can discern no motion in it, yet the touch will readily perceive it to be very hot, and if you spit upon it, the brisk agitation of the insensible parts will become visible in that which they will produce in the liquor." He takes a bar of tin, and tries whether by bending it to and fro two or three times he cannot "procure a considerable internal commotion among the parts;" and having by this means broken or cracked it in the middle, finds, as he expected, that the middle parts had considerably heated each other. There are many

other curious and interesting observations in the volume which I should like to tell you of, but these will serve my purpose.

—Which book furnished you the old cover you wanted?—said I.

—*Did he kill the owl?*—said the Master, laughing. [I suppose you, the reader, know the owl story.]—It was Number Two that lent me one of his covers. Poor wretch! He was one of three, and had lost his two brothers. From him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath. The Scripture had to be fulfilled in his case. But I couldn't help saying to myself, What do you keep writing books for, when the stalls are covered all over with 'em, good books, too, that nobody will give ten cents apiece for, lying there like so many dead beasts of burden, of no account except to strip off their hides? What is the use, I say? I have made a book or two in my time, and I am making another that perhaps will see the light one of these days. But if I had my life to live over again, I think I should go in for silence, and get as near to *Nirvana* as I could. This language is such a paltry tool! The handle of it cuts and the blade doesn't. You muddle yourself by not knowing what you mean by a word,

and send out your unanswered riddles and rebuses to clear up other people's difficulties. It always seems to me that talk is a ripple and thought is a ground-swell. A string of words, that mean pretty much anything, helps you in a certain sense to get hold of a thought, just as a string of syllables that mean nothing helps you to a word ; but it 's a poor business, it 's a poor business, and the more you study *definition* the more you find out how poor it is. Do you know I sometimes think our little entomological neighbour is doing a sounder business than we people that make books about ourselves and our slippery abstractions? A man can see the spots on a bug and count 'em, and tell what their colour is, and put another bug alongside of him and see whether the two are alike or different. And when *he* uses a word he knows just what he means. There is no mistake as to the meaning and identity of *pulex irritans*, confound him !

—What if we should look in, some day, on the Scarabeeist, as he calls himself?— said I.—The fact is the Master had got agoing at such a rate that I was willing to give a little turn to the conversation.

—Oh, very well,—said the Master,—I had some more things to say, but I don't doubt

they 'll keep. And besides, I take an interest in entomology, and have my own opinion on the *meloë* question.

—You don't mean to say you have studied insects as well as solar systems and the order of things generally?

—He looked pleased. All philosophers look pleased when people say to them virtually, "Ye are gods." The Master says he is vain constitutionally, and thanks God that he is. I don't think he has enough vanity to make a fool of himself with it, but the simple truth is he cannot help knowing that he has a wide and lively intelligence, and it pleases him to know it, and to be reminded of it, especially in an oblique and tangential sort of way, so as not to look like downright flattery.

Yes, yes, I have amused a summer or two with insects, among other things. I described a new *tabanus*,—horsefly, you know,—which, I think, had escaped notice. I felt as grand when I showed up my new discovery as if I had created the beast. I don't doubt Herschel felt as if he had made a planet when he first showed the astronomers *Georgium Sidus*, as he called it. And that reminds me of something. I was riding on the outside of a stage-coach from London to

Windsor in the year—never mind the year, but it must have been in June, I suppose, for I bought some strawberries. England owes me a sixpence with interest from date, for I gave the woman a shilling, and the coach contrived to start or the woman timed it so that I just missed getting my change. What an odd thing memory is, to be sure, to have kept such a triviality, and have lost so much that was invaluable! She is a crazy wench, that Mnemosyne; she throws her jewels out of the window and locks up straws and old rags in her strong box.

[*De profundis!* said I to myself, the bottom of the bushel has dropped out! *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis!*]

—But as I was saying, I was riding on the outside of a stage-coach from London to Windsor, when all at once a picture familiar to me from my New England village childhood came upon me like a reminiscence rather than a revelation. It was a mighty bewilderment of slanted masts and spars and ladders and ropes, from the midst of which a vast tube, looking as if it might be a piece of ordnance such as the revolted angels battered the walls of Heaven with, according to Milton, lifted its muzzle defiantly towards the sky. Why, you blessed old rattletrap,

said I to myself, I know you as well as I know my father's spectacles and snuff-box! And that same crazy witch of a Memory, so divinely wise and foolish, travels thirty-five hundred miles or so in a single pulse-beat, makes straight for an old house and an old library and an old corner of it, and whisks out a volume of an old cyclopædia, and there is the picture of which this is the original. Sir William Herschel's great telescope! It was just about as big, as it stood there by the roadside, as it was in the picture, not much different any way. Why should it be? The pupil of your eye is only a gimlet-hole, not so very much bigger than the eye of a sail-needle, and a camel has to go through it before you can see him. You look into a stereoscope and think you see a miniature of a building or a mountain; you don't, you 're made a fool of by your lying *intelligence*, as you call it; you see the building and the mountain just as large as with your naked eye looking straight at the real objects. Doubt it, do you? Perhaps you 'd like to doubt it to the music of a couple of gold five-dollar pieces. If you would, say the word, and man and money, as Messrs. Heenan and Morrissey have it, shall be forthcoming; for I will make you look at a real landscape

with your right eye, and a stereoscopic view of it with your left eye, both at once, and you can slide one over the other by a little management and see how exactly the picture overlies the true landscape. We won't try it now, because I want to read you something out of my book.

—I have noticed that the Master very rarely fails to come back to his original proposition, though he, like myself, is fond of zigzagging in order to reach it. Men's minds are like the pieces on a chess-board in their way of moving. One mind creeps from the square it is on to the next, straight forward, like the pawns. Another sticks close to its own line of thought and follows it as far as it goes, with no heed for others' opinions, as the bishop sweeps the board in the line of his own colour. And another class of minds break through everything that lies before them, ride over argument and opposition, and go to the end of the board, like the castle. But there is still another sort of intellect which is very apt to jump over the thought that stands next and come down in the unexpected way of the knight. But that same knight, as the chess manuals will show you, will contrive to get on to every square of the board in a pretty series of moves that

looks like a pattern of embroidery, and so these zigzagging minds like the Master's, and I suppose my own is something like it, will sooner or later get back to the square next the one they started from.

The Master took down a volume from one of the shelves. I could not help noticing that it was a shelf near his hand as he sat, and that the volume looked as if he had made frequent use of it. I saw, too, that he handled it in a loving sort of way; the tenderness he would have bestowed on a wife and children had to find a channel somewhere, and what more natural than that he should look fondly on the volume which held the thoughts that had rolled themselves smooth and round in his mind like pebbles on a beach, the dreams which, under cover of the simple artifices such as all writers use, told the little world of readers his secret hopes and aspirations, the fancies which had pleased him and which he could not bear to let die without trying to please others with them? I have a great sympathy with authors, most of all with unsuccessful ones. If one had a dozen lives or so, it would all be very well, but to have only a single ticket in the great lottery, and have that drawn a blank, is a rather sad sort of thing. So I

was pleased to see the affectionate kind of pride with which the Master handled his book ; it was a success, in its way, and he looked on it with a cheerful sense that he had a right to be proud of it. The Master opened the volume, and, putting on his large round glasses, began reading, as authors love to read that love their books.

—The only good reason for believing in the stability of the moral order of things is to be found in the tolerable steadiness of human averages. Out of a hundred human beings fifty-one will be found in the long-run on the side of the right, so far as they know it, and against the wrong. They will be organisers rather than disorganisers, helpers and not hinderers in the upward movement of the race. This is the main fact we have to depend on. The right hand of the great organism is a little stronger than the left, that is all.

Now and then we come across a left-handed man. So now and then we find a tribe or a generation, the subject of what we may call moral left-handedness, but that need not trouble us about our formula. All we have to do is to spread the average over a wider territory or a longer period of time. Any

race or period that insists on being left-handed must go under if it comes in contact with a right-handed one. If there were, as a general rule, fifty-one rogues in the hundred instead of forty-nine, all other qualities of mind and body being equally distributed between the two sections, the order of things would sooner or later end in universal disorder. It is the question between the leak and the pumps.

It does not seem very likely that the Creator of all things is taken by surprise at witnessing anything any of his creatures do or think. Men have sought out many inventions, but they can have contrived nothing which did not exist as an idea in the omniscient consciousness to which past, present, and future are alike Now.

We read what travellers tell us about the King of Dahomey, or the Fiji Island people, or the short and simple annals of the celebrities recorded in the Newgate Calendar, and do not know just what to make of these brothers and sisters of the race; but I do not suppose an intelligence even as high as the angelic beings, to stop short there, would see anything very peculiar or wonderful about them, except as everything is wonderful and unlike everything else.

It is very curious to see how science, that is, looking at and arranging the facts of a case with our own eyes and our own intelligence, without minding what somebody else has said, or how some old majority vote went in a pack of intriguing ecclesiastics,—I say it is very curious to see how science is catching up with one superstition after another.

There is a recognised branch of science familiar to all those who know anything of the studies relating to life, under the name of Teratology. It deals with all sorts of monstrosities which are to be met with in living beings, and more especially in animals. It is found that what used to be called *lusus naturæ*, or freaks of nature, are just as much subject to laws as the naturally developed forms of living creatures.

The rustic looks at the Siamese twins, and thinks he is contemplating an unheard-of anomaly ; but there are plenty of cases like theirs in the books of scholars, and though they are not quite so common as double cherries, the mechanism of their formation is not a whit more mysterious than that of the twinned fruits. Such cases do not disturb the average arrangement; we have Changs and Engs at one pole, and Cains

and Abels at the other. One child is born with six fingers on each hand, and another falls short by one or more fingers of his due allowance; but the glover puts his faith in the great law of averages, and makes his gloves with five fingers apiece, trusting nature for their counterparts.

Thinking people are not going to be scared out of explaining or at least trying to explain things by the shrieks of persons whose beliefs are disturbed thereby. Comets were portents to Increase Mather, President of Harvard College; "preachers of Divine wrath, heralds and messengers of evil tidings to the world." It is not so very long since Professor Winthrop was teaching at the same institution. I can remember two of his boys very well, old boys, it is true, they were, and one of them wore a three-cornered cocked hat; but the father of these boys, whom, as I say, I can remember, had to defend himself against the minister of the Old South Church for the impiety of trying to account for earthquakes on natural principles. And his ancestor, Governor Winthrop, would probably have shaken his head over his descendant's dangerous audacity, if one may judge by the solemn way in which he mentions poor Mrs. Hutchinson's unpleasant

experience, which so grievously disappointed her maternal expectations. But people used always to be terribly frightened by those irregular vital products which we now call "interesting specimens" and carefully preserve in jars of alcohol. It took next to nothing to make a panic; a child was born a few centuries ago with six teeth in its head, and about that time the Turks began gaining great advantages over the Christians. Of course there was an intimate connection between the prodigy and the calamity. So said the wise men of that day.

All these out-of-the-way cases are studied connectedly now, and are found to obey very exact rules. With a little management one can even manufacture living monstrosities. Malformed salmon and other fish can be supplied in quantity, if anybody happens to want them.

Now, what all I have said is tending to is exactly this, namely, that just as the celestial movements are regulated by fixed laws, just as bodily monstrosities are produced according to rule, and with as good reason as normal shapes, so obliquities of character are to be accounted for on perfectly natural principles; they are just as capable of classification as the bodily ones, and they all

diverge from a certain average or middle term which is the type of its kind.

If life had been a little longer I would have written a number of essays for which, as it is, I cannot expect to have time. I have set down the titles of a hundred or more, and I have often been tempted to publish these, for according to my idea, the title of a book very often renders the rest of it unnecessary. *Moral Teratology*, for instance, which is marked No. 67 on my list of *Essays Potential, not Actual*, suggests sufficiently well what I should like to say in the pages it would preface. People hold up their hands at a moral monster as if there was no reason for his existence but his own choice. That was a fine specimen we read of in the papers a few years ago,—the Frenchman, it may be remembered, who used to waylay and murder young women, and after appropriating their effects, bury their bodies in a private cemetery he kept for that purpose. It is very natural, and I do not say it is not very proper, to hang such eccentric persons as this; but it is not clear whether his vagaries produce any more sensation at Headquarters than the meek enterprises of the mildest of city missionaries. For the study of Moral Teratology will teach you that you do not

get such a malformed character as that without a long chain of causes to account for it; and if you only knew those causes, you would know perfectly well what to expect. You may feel pretty sure that our friend of the private cemetery was not the child of pious and intelligent parents; that he was not nurtured by the best of mothers, and educated by the most judicious teachers; and that he did not come of a lineage long known and honoured for its intellectual and moral qualities. Suppose that one should go to the worst quarter of the city and pick out the worst-looking child of the worst couple he could find, and then train him up successively at the School for Infant Rogues, the Academy for Young Scamps, and the College for Complete Criminal Education, would it be reasonable to expect a François Xavier or a Henry Martyn to be the result of such a training? The traditionists, in whose presumptuous hands the science of anthropology has been trusted from time immemorial, have insisted on eliminating cause and effect from the domain of morals. When they have come across a moral monster they have seemed to think that he put himself together, having a free choice of all the constituents which make up manhood, and

that consequently no punishment could be too bad for him.

I say, Hang him and welcome, if that is the best thing for society; hate him, in a certain sense, as you hate a rattlesnake, but, if you pretend to be a philosopher, recognise the fact that what you hate in him is chiefly misfortune, and that if you had been born with his villanous low forehead and poisoned instincts, and bred among creatures of the *Races Maudites* whose natural history has to be studied like that of beasts of prey and vermin, you would not have been sitting there in your gold-bowed spectacles and passing judgment on the peccadilloes of your fellow-creatures.

I have seen men and women so disinterested and noble, and devoted to the best works, that it appeared to me if any good and faithful servant was entitled to enter into the joys of his Lord, such as these might be. But I do not know that I ever met with a human being who seemed to me to have a stronger claim on the pitying consideration and kindness of his Maker than a wretched, puny, crippled, stunted child that I saw in Newgate, who was pointed out as one of the most notorious and inveterate little thieves in London. I have no doubt

that some of those who were looking at this pitiable morbid secretion of the diseased social organism thought they were very virtuous for hating him so heartily.

It is natural, and in one sense is all right enough. I want to catch a thief and put the extinguisher on an incendiary as much as my neighbours do; but I have two sides to my consciousness as I have two sides to my heart, one carrying dark, impure blood, and the other the bright stream which has been purified and vivified by the great source of life and death,—the oxygen of the air which gives all things their vital heat, and burns all things at last to ashes.

One side of me loves and hates; the other side of me judges, say rather pleads and suspends judgment. I think, if I were left to myself, I should hang a rogue and then write his apology and subscribe to a neat monument, commemorating, not his virtues, but his misfortunes. I should, perhaps, adorn the marble with emblems, as is the custom with regard to the more regular and normally constituted members of society. It would not be proper to put the image of a lamb upon the stone which marked the resting-place of him of the private cemetery. But I would not hesitate to place the effigy

of a wolf or a hyena upon the monument. I do not judge these animals, I only kill them or shut them up. I presume they stand just as well with their Maker as lambs and kids, and the existence of such beings is a perpetual plea for God Almighty's poor, yelling, scalping Indians, his weasand-stopping Thugs, his despised felons, his murdering miscreants, and all the unfortunates whom we, picked individuals of a picked class of a picked race, scrubbed, combed, and catechised from our cradles upward, undertake to find accommodations for in another state of being where it is to be hoped they will have a better chance than they had in this.

The Master paused, and took off his great round spectacles. I could not help thinking that he looked benevolent enough to pardon Judas Iscariot just at that moment, though his features can knot themselves up pretty formidably on occasion.

—You are somewhat of a phrenologist, I judge, by the way you talk of instinctive and inherited tendencies,—I said.

—They tell me I ought to be,—he answered, parrying my question, as I thought. —I have had a famous chart made out of

my cerebral organs, according to which I ought to have been—something more than a poor *Magister Artium.*

—I thought a shade of regret deepened he lines on his broad, antique-looking forehead, and I began talking about all the sights I had seen in the way of monstrosities, of which I had a considerable list, as you will see when I tell you my weakness in that direction. This, you understand, Beloved, is private and confidential.

I pay my quarter of a dollar and go into all the side-shows that follow the caravans and circuses round the country. I have made friends of all the giants and all the dwarfs. I became acquainted with Monsieur Bihin, *le plus bel homme du monde,* and one of the biggest, a great many years ago, and have kept up my agreeable relations with him ever since. He is a most interesting giant, with a softness of voice and tenderness of feeling which I find very engaging. I was on friendly terms with Mr. Charles Freeman, a very superior giant of American birth, seven feet four, I think, in height, "double-jointed," of mylodon muscularity, the same who in a British prize-ring tossed the Tipton Slasher from one side of the rope to the other, and now lies stretched, poor

fellow ! in a mighty grave in the same soil which holds the sacred ashes of Cribb, and the honoured dust of Burke,—not the one "commonly called the sublime," but that other Burke to whom Nature had denied the sense of hearing lest he should be spoiled by listening to the praises of the admiring circles which looked on his dear-bought triumphs. Nor have I despised those little ones whom that devout worshipper of Nature in her exceptional forms, the distinguished Barnum, has introduced to the notice of mankind. The General touches his chapeau to me, and the Commodore gives me a sailor's greeting. I have had confidential interviews with the double-headed daughter of Africa, —so far, at least, as her twofold personality admitted of private confidences. I have listened to the touching experiences of the Bearded Lady, whose rough cheeks belie her susceptible heart. Miss Jane Campbell has allowed me to question her on the delicate subject of avoirdupois equivalents ; and the armless fair one, whose embrace no monarch could hope to win, has wrought me a watch-paper with those despised digits which have been degraded from gloves to boots in our evolution from the condition of quadrumana.

I hope you have read my experiences as good-naturedly as the old Master listened to them. He seemed to be pleased with my whim, and promised to go with me to see all the side-shows of the next caravan. Before I left him he wrote my name in a copy of the new edition of his book, telling me that it would not all be new to me by a great deal, for he often talked what he had printed to make up for having printed a good deal of what he had talked.

Here is the passage of his poem the young Astronomer read to us.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

IV.

From my lone turret as I look around
O'er the green meadows to the ring of blue,
From slope, from summit, and from half-hid vale
The sky is stabbed with dagger-pointed spires,
Their gilded symbols whirling in the wind,
Their brazen tongues proclaiming to the world,
"Here truth is sold, the only genuine ware;
See that it has our trade-mark! You will buy
Poison instead of food across the way,
The lies of"——this or that, each several name
The standard's blazon and the battle-cry
Of some true-gospel faction, and again
The token of the Beast to all beside.

And grouped round each I see a huddling crowd
Alike in all things save the words they use ;
In love, in longing, hate and fear the same.

Whom do we trust and serve ? We speak of one
And bow to many ; Athens still would find
The shrines of all she worshipped safe within
Our tall barbarian temples, and the thrones
That crowned Olympus mighty as of old.
The God of music rules the Sabbath choir ;
The lyric muse must leave the sacred nine
To help us please the dilettante's ear ;
Plutus limps homeward with us, as we leave
The portals of the temple where we knelt
And listened while the god of eloquence
(Hermes of ancient days, but now disguised
In sable vestments) with that other god
Somnus, the son of Erebus and Nox,
Fights in unequal contest for our souls ;
The dreadful sovereign of the under world
Still shakes his sceptre at us, and we hear
The baying of the triple-throated hound ;
Eros is young as ever, and as fair
The lovely Goddess born of ocean's foam.

These be thy gods, O Israel ! Who is he,
The one ye name and tell us that ye serve,
Whom ye would call me from my lonely tower
To worship with the many-headed throng
Is it the God that walked in Eden's grove
In the cool hour to seek our guilty sire ?

The God who dealt with Abraham as the sons
Of that old patriarch deal with other men?
The jealous God of Moses, one who feels
An image as an insult, and is wroth
With him who made it and his child unborn?
The God who plagued his people for the sin
Of their adulterous king, beloved of him,—
The same who offers to a chosen few
The right to praise him in eternal song
While a vast shrieking world of endless woe
Blends its dread chorus with their rapturous hymn?
Is this the God ye mean, or is it he
Who heeds the sparrow's fall, whose loving heart
as the pitying father's to his child,
Whose lesson to his children is, "Forgive,"
Whose plea for all, "They know not what they do?"

I claim the right of knowing whom I serve,
Else is my service idle; He that asks
My homage asks it from a reasoning soul.
To crawl is not to worship; we have learned
A drill of eyelids, bended neck and knee,
Hanging our prayers on hinges, till we ape
The flexures of the many-jointed worm.
Asia has taught her Allahs and salaams
To the world's children,—we have grown to men!
We who have rolled the sphere beneath our feet

To find a virgin forest, as we lay
The beams of our rude temple, first of all
Must frame its doorway high enough for man
To pass unstooping ; knowing as we do
That He who shaped us last of living forms
Has long enough been served by creeping things,
Reptiles that left their foot-prints in the sand
Of old sea-margins that have turned to stone,
And men who learned their ritual ; we demand
To know him first, then trust him and then love
When we have found him worthy of our love,
Tried by our own poor hearts and not before ;
He must be truer than the truest friend,
He must be tenderer than a woman's love,
A father better than the best of sires ;
Kinder than she who bore us, though we sin
Oftener than did the brother we are told,
We—poor ill-tempered mortals—must forgive,
Though seven times sinning threescore time
and ten.

This is the new world's gospel : Be ye men !
Try well the legends of the children's time ;
Ye are the chosen people, God has led
Your steps across the desert of the deep
As now across the desert of the shore ;
Mountains are cleft before you as the sea
Before the wandering tribe of Israel's sons ;
Still onward rolls the thunderous caravan,
Its coming printed on the western sky,
A cloud by day, by night a pillared flame ;

Your prophets are a hundred unto one
Of them of old who cried, "Thus saith the Lord;"
They told of cities that should fall in heaps,
But yours of mightier cities that shall rise
Where yet the lonely fishers spread their nets,
Where hides the fox and hoots the midnight owl;
The tree of knowledge in your garden grows
Not single, but at every humble door;
Its branches lend you their immortal food,
That fills you with the sense of what ye are,
No servants of an altar hewed and carved
From senseless stone by craft of human hands,
Rabbi, or dervish, brahmin, bishop, bonze,
But masters of the charm with which they work
To keep your hands from that forbidden tree!
  Ye that have tasted that divinest fruit,
Look on this world of yours with opened eyes!
Ye are as gods! Nay, makers of your gods,—
Each day ye break an image in your shrine
And plant a fairer image where it stood:
Where is the Moloch of your fathers' creed,
Whose fires of torment burned for span-long
    babes?
Fit object for a tender mother's love!
Why not? It was a bargain duly made
For these same infants through the surety's act
Intrusted with their all for earth and heaven,
By Him who chose their guardian, knowing well
His fitness for the task,—this, even this,
Was the true doctrine only yesterday
As thoughts are reckoned,—and to-day you hear

In words that sound as if from human tongues
Those monstrous, uncouth horrors of the past
That blot the blue of heaven and shame the earth
As would the saurians of the age of slime,
Awaking from their stony sepulchres
And wallowing hateful in the eye of day!

Four of us listened to these lines as the young man read them,—the Master and myself and our two ladies. This was the little party we got up to hear him read. I do not think much of it was very new to the Master or myself. At any rate, he said to me when we were alone,—

That is the kind of talk the "natural man," as the theologians call him, is apt to fall into.

—I thought it was the Apostle Paul, and not the theologians, that used the term "natural man,"—I ventured to suggest.

—I should like to know where the Apostle Paul learned English?—said the Master, with the look of one who does not mean to be tripped up if he can help himself.—But at any rate,—he continued,—the "natural man," so called, is worth listening to now and then, for he didn't make his nature, and the Devil didn't make it; and if the Almighty made it, I never saw or heard of

anything he made that wasn't worth attending to.

The young man begged the Lady to pardon anything that might sound harshly in these crude thoughts of his. He had been taught strange things, he said, from old theologies, when he was a child, and had thought his way out of many of his early superstitions. As for the Young Girl, our Scheherazade, he said to her that she must have got dreadfully tired (at which she coloured up and said it was no such thing), and he promised that, to pay for her goodness in listening, he would give her a lesson in astronomy the next fair evening, if she would be his scholar, at which she blushed deeper than before, and said something which certainly was not No.

IX.

THERE was no sooner a vacancy on our side of the table, than the Master proposed a change of seats which would bring the young Astronomer into our immediate neighbourhood. The Scarabee was to move into the place of our late unlamented associate, the Man of Letters, so called. I was to take his place, the Master to take mine, and the young man that which had been occupied by the Master. The advantages of this change were obvious. The old Master likes an audience, plainly enough; and with myself on one side of him, and the young student of science, whose speculative turn is sufficiently shown in the passages from his poem, on the other side, he may feel quite sure of being listened to. There is only one trouble in the arrangement, and that is that it brings this young man not only close to us, but also next to our Scheherazade.

I am obliged to confess that he has shown occasional marks of inattention even while

the Master was discoursing in a way that I found agreeable enough. I am quite sure it is no intentional disrespect to the old Master. It seems to me rather that he has become interested in the astronomical lessons he has been giving the Young Girl. He has studied so much alone, that it is naturally a pleasure to him to impart some of his knowledge. As for his young pupil, she has often thought of being a teacher herself, so that she is of course very glad to acquire any accomplishment that may be useful to her in that capacity. I do not see any reason why some of the boarders should have made such remarks as they have done. One cannot teach astronomy to advantage without going out of doors, though I confess that when two young people go out *by daylight* to study the stars, as these young folks have done once or twice, I do not so much wonder at a remark or suggestion from those who have nothing better to do than study their neighbours.

I ought to have told the reader before this that I found, as I suspected, that our innocent-looking Scheherazade was at the bottom of the popgun business. I watched her very closely, and one day, when the little monkey made us all laugh by stopping the

Member of the Haouse in the middle of a speech he was repeating to us,—it was his great effort of the season on a bill for the protection of horn-pout in Little Muddy River,—I caught her making the signs that set him going. At a slight tap of her knife against her plate, he got all ready, and presently I saw her cross her knife and fork upon her plate, and as she did so, pop! went the small piece of artillery. The Member of the Haouse was just saying that this bill hit his constitooents in their most vital—when a pellet hit him in the feature of his countenance most exposed to aggressions and least tolerant of liberties. The Member resented this unparliamentary treatment by jumping up from his chair and giving the small aggressor a good shaking, at the same time seizing the implement which had caused his wrath and breaking it into splinters. The Boy blubbered, the Young Girl changed colour, and looked as if she would cry, and that was the last of these interruptions.

I must own that I have sometimes wished we had the popgun back, for it answered all the purpose of "the previous question" in a deliberative assembly. No doubt the Young Girl was capricious in setting the little engine at work, but she cut short a good many dis-

quisitions that threatened to be tedious. I find myself often wishing for her and her small fellow-conspirator's intervention, in company where I am supposed to be enjoying myself. When my friend the politician gets too far into the personal details of the *quorum pars magna fui*, I find myself all at once exclaiming in mental articulation, Popgun! When my friend the story-teller begins that protracted narrative which has often emptied me of all my voluntary laughter for the evening, he has got but a very little way, when I say to myself, What wouldn't I give for a pellet from that popgun! In short, so useful has that trivial implement proved as a jaw-stopper and a *boricide*, that I never go to a club or a dinner-party, without wishing the company included our Scheherazade and That Boy with his popgun.

How clearly I see now into the mechanism of the Young Girl's audacious contrivance for regulating our table-talk! Her brain is tired half the time, and she is too nervous to listen patiently to what a quieter person would like well enough, or at least would not be annoyed by. It amused her to invent a scheme for managing the headstrong talkers, and also let off a certain spirit of mischief which in some of these nervous girls shows

itself in much more questionable forms. How cunning these half-hysteric young persons are, to be sure! I had to watch a long time before I detected the telegraphic communication between the two conspirators. I have no doubt she had sedulously schooled the little monkey to his business, and found great delight in the task of instruction.

But now that our Scheherazade has become a scholar instead of a teacher, she seems to be undergoing a remarkable transformation. Astronomy is indeed a noble science. It may well kindle the enthusiasm of a youthful nature. I fancy at times that I see something of that starry light which I noticed in the young man's eyes gradually kindling in hers. But can it be astronomy alone that does it? Her colour comes and goes more readily than when the old Master sat next her on the left. It is having this young man at her side, I suppose. Of course it is. I watch her with great, I may say tender interest. If he would only fall in love with her, seize upon her wandering affections and fancies as the Romans seized the Sabine virgins, lift her out of herself and her listless and weary drudgeries, stop the outflow of this young life which is drain-

ing itself away in forced literary labour—dear me, dear me—if, if, if—

"If I were God
An' ye were Martin Elginbrod!"

I am afraid all this may never be. I fear that he is too much given to lonely study, to self-companionship, to all sorts of questionings, to looking at life as at a solemn show where he is only a spectator. I dare not build up a romance on what I have yet seen. My reader may, but I will answer for nothing. I shall wait and see.

The old Master and I have at last made that visit to the Scarabee which we had so long promised ourselves.

When we knocked at his door he came and opened it, instead of saying, Come in. He was surprised, I have no doubt, at the sound of our footsteps; for he rarely has a visitor, except the little monkey of a boy, and he may have thought a troop of marauders were coming to rob him of his treasures. Collectors feel so rich in the possession of their rarer specimens, that they forget how cheap their precious things seem to common eyes, and are as afraid of being robbed as if they were dealers in diamonds.

They have the name of stealing from each other now and then, it is true, but many of their priceless possessions would hardly tempt a beggar. Values are artificial: you will not be able to get ten cents of the year 1799 for a dime

The Scarabee was reassured as soon as he saw our faces, and he welcomed us not ungraciously into his small apartment. It was hard to find a place to sit down, for all the chairs were already occupied by cases and boxes full of his favourites. I began, therefore, looking round the room. Bugs of every size and aspect met my eyes wherever they turned. I felt for the moment as I suppose a man may feel in a fit of delirium tremens. Presently my attention was drawn towards a very odd-looking insect on the mantelpiece. This animal was incessantly raising its arms as if towards heaven and clasping them together, as though it were wrestling in prayer.

Do look at this creature,—I said to the Master,—he seems to be very hard at work at his devotions.

Mantis religiosa, —said the Master, —I know the praying rogue. Mighty devout and mighty cruel; crushes everything he can master, or impales it on his spiny shanks and

feeds upon it, like a gluttonous wretch as he is. I have seen the *Mantis religiosa* on a larger scale than this, now and then. A sacred insect, sir,—sacred to many tribes of men; to the Hottentots, to the Turks, yes, sir, and to the Frenchmen, who call the rascal *prie dieu*, and believe him to have special charge of children that have lost their way. Doesn't it seem as if there was a vein of satire as well as of fun that ran through the solemn manifestations of creative wisdom? And of deception too—do you see how nearly those dried leaves resemble an insect?

They do, indeed,—I answered,—but not so closely as to deceive me. They *remind* me of an insect, but I could not mistake them for one.

—Oh, you couldn't mistake those dried leaves for an insect, hey? Well, how can you mistake that insect for dried leaves? That is the question; for insect it is,—*phyllum siccifolium*, the "walking leaf," as some have called it.—The Master had a hearty laugh at my expense.

The Scarabee did not seem to be amused at the Master's remarks or at my blunder. Science is always perfectly serious to him; and he would no more laugh over anything

connected with his study, than a clergyman would laugh at a funeral.

They send me all sorts of trumpery,—he said,—Orthoptera and Lepidoptera ; as if a coleopterist—a scarabeeist—cared for such things. This business is no boy's play to me. The insect population of the world is not even catalogued yet, and a lifetime given to the scarabees is a small contribution enough to their study. I like your men of general intelligence well enough,—your Linnæuses and your Buffons and your Cuviers ; but Cuvier had to go to Latreille for his insects, and if Latreille had been able to consult me,—yes, me, gentlemen !—he wouldn't have made the blunders he did about some of the coleoptera.

The old Master, as I think you must have found out by this time,—you, Beloved, I mean who have read every word,—has a reasonably good opinion, as perhaps he has a right to have, of his own intelligence and acquirements. The Scarabee's exultation and glow as he spoke of the errors of the great entomologist which he himself could have corrected, had the effect on the old Master which a lusty crow has upon the feathered champion of the neighbouring barn-yard. He too knew something about

insects. Had he not discovered a new *tabanus?* Had he not made preparations of the very coleoptera the Scarabee studied so exclusively,—preparations which the illustrious Swammerdam would not have been ashamed of, and dissected a *melolontha* as exquisitely as Strauss Durckheim himself ever did it? So the Master, recalling these studies of his and certain difficult and disputed points at which he had laboured in one of his entomological paroxysms, put a question which there can be little doubt was intended to puzzle the Scarabee, and perhaps,—for the best of us is human (I am beginning to love the old Master, but he has his little weaknesses, thank Heaven, like the rest of us),—I say *perhaps*, was meant to show that some folks knew as much about some things as some other folks.

The little dried-up specialist did not dilate into fighting dimensions as—*perhaps*, again —the Master may have thought he would. He looked a mild surprise, but remained as quiet as one of his own beetles when you touch him and he makes believe he is dead. The blank silence became oppressive. Was the Scarabee crushed, as so many of his namesakes are crushed, under the heel of this trampling omniscient?

At last the Scarabee creaked out very slowly, "Did I understand you to ask the following question, to wit?" and so forth; for I was quite out of my depth, and only know that he repeated the Master's somewhat complex inquiry, word for word.

—That was exactly my question,—said the Master,—and I hope it is not uncivil to ask one which seems to me to be a puzzler.

Not uncivil in the least,—said the Scarabee, with something as much like a look of triumph as his dry face permitted,—not uncivil at all, but a rather extraordinary question to ask at this date of entomological history. I settled that question some years ago, by a series of dissections, six-and-thirty in number, reported in an essay I can show you and would give you a copy of, but that I am a little restricted in my revenue, and our Society has to be economical, so I have but this one. You see, sir,—and he went on with elytra and antennæ and tarsi and metatarsi and tracheæ and stomata and wing-muscles and leg-muscles and ganglions, —all plain enough, I do not doubt, to those accustomed to handling dor-bugs and squash-bugs and such undesirable objects of affection to all but naturalists.

He paused when he got through, not for

an answer, for there evidently was none, but to see how the Master would take it. The Scarabee had had it all his own way.

The Master was loyal to his own generous nature. He felt as a peaceful citizen might feel who had squared off at a stranger for some supposed wrong, and suddenly discovered that he was undertaking to chastise Mr. Dick Curtis, "the pet of the Fancy," or Mr. Joshua Hudson, "the John Bull fighter."

He felt the absurdity of his discomfiture, for he turned to me good-naturedly, and said—

"Poor Johnny Raw! What madness could impel
So rum a flat to face so prime a swell?"

To tell the truth, I rather think the Master enjoyed his own defeat. The Scarabee had a right to his victory; a man does not give his life to the study of a single limited subject for nothing, and the moment we come across a first-class expert we begin to take a pride in his superiority. It cannot offend us, who have no right at all to be his match on his own ground. Besides, there is a very curious sense of satisfaction in getting a fair chance to sneer at ourselves and

scoff at our own pretensions. The first person of our dual consciousness has been smirking and rubbing his hands and felicitating himself on his innumerable superiorities, until we have grown a little tired of him. Then, when the other fellow, the critic, the cynic, the Shimei, who has been quiet, letting self-love and self-glorification have their perfect work, opens fire upon the first half of our personality and overwhelms it with that wonderful vocabulary of abuse of which he is the unrivalled master, there is no denying that he enjoys it immensely; and as he is ourself for the moment, or at least the chief portion of ourself (the other half-self retiring into a dim corner of semi-consciousness and cowering under the storm of sneers and contumely,—you follow me perfectly, Beloved, —the way is as plain as the path of the babe to the maternal fount), as, I say, the abusive fellow is the chief part of us for the time, and *he* likes to exercise his slanderous vocabulary, *we* on the whole enjoy a brief season of self-depreciation and self-scolding very heartily.

It is quite certain that both of us, the Master and myself, conceived on the instant a respect for the Scarabee which we had not before felt. He had grappled with one

difficulty at any rate and mastered it. He had settled one thing, at least, so it appeared, in such a way that it was not to be brought up again. And now he was determined, if it cost him the effort of all his remaining days, to close another discussion and put for ever to rest the anxious doubts about the larva of meloë.

—Your thirty-six dissections must have cost you a deal of time and labour,—the Master said.

—What have I to do with time but to fill it up with labour?—answered the Scarabee. —It is my meat and drink to work over my beetles. My holidays are when I get a rare specimen. My rest is to watch the habits of insects,—those that I do not pretend to study. Here is my *muscarium*, my home for house-flies; very interesting creatures; here they breed and buzz and feed and enjoy themselves, and die in a good old age of a few months. My favourite insect lives in this other case; she is at home, but in her private chamber; you shall see her.

He tapped on the glass lightly, and a large, grey, hairy spider came forth from the hollow of a funnel-like web.

—And this is all the friend you have to

love?—said the Master, with a tenderness in his voice which made the question very significant.

—Nothing else loves me better than she does, that I know of,—he answered.

—To think of it! Not even a dog to lick his hand, or a cat to purr and rub her fur against him! O these boarding-houses, these boarding-houses! What forlorn people one sees stranded on their desolate shores! Decayed gentlewomen with the poor wrecks of what once made their households beautiful, disposed around them in narrow chambers as they best may be, coming down day after day, poor souls! to sit at the board with strangers; their hearts full of sad memories which have no language but a sigh, no record but the lines of sorrow on their features; orphans, creatures with growing tendrils and nothing to cling to; lonely rich men, casting about them what to do with the wealth they never knew how to enjoy, when they shall no longer worry over keeping and increasing it; young men and young women, left to their instincts, unguarded, unwatched, save by malicious eyes, which are sure to be found and to find occupation in these miscellaneous collections of human beings; and now and then a shred of

humanity like this little adust specialist, with just the resources needed to keep the "radical moisture" from entirely exhaling from his attenuated organism, and busying himself over a point of science, or compiling a hymn-book, or editing a grammar or a dictionary; —such are the tenants of boarding-houses whom we cannot think of without feeling how sad it is when the wind is not tempered to the shorn lamb; when the solitary, whose hearts are shrivelling, are not set in families!

The Master was greatly interested in the Scarabee's Muscarium.

—I don't remember,—he said,—that I have heard of such a thing as that before. Mighty curious creatures, these same house-flies! Talk about miracles! Was there ever anything more miraculous, so far as our common observation goes, than the coming and the going of these creatures? Why didn't Job ask where the flies come from and where they go to? I did not say that you and I don't know, but how many people do know anything about it? Where are the cradles of the young flies? Where are the cemeteries of the dead ones, or do they die at all except when we kill them? You think all the flies of the year are dead and gone, and there comes a warm day and all at once

there is a general resurrection of 'em ; they had been taking a nap, that is all.

—I suppose you do not trust your spider in the Muscarium?—said I, addressing the Scarabee.

—Not exactly,—he answered,—she is a terrible creature. She loves me, I think, but she is a killer and a cannibal among other insects. I wanted to pair her with a male spider, but it wouldn't do.

—Wouldn't do?—said I,—why not? Don't spiders have their mates as well as other folks?

—O yes, sometimes ; but the females are apt to be particular, and if they don't like the mate you offer them they fall upon him and kill him and eat him up. You see they are a great deal bigger and stronger than the males, and they are always hungry and not always particularly anxious to have one of the other sex bothering round.

—Woman's rights!—said I,—there you have it! Why don't those talking ladies take a spider as their emblem? Let them form arachnoid associations,—spinsters and spiders would be a good motto.

—The Master smiled. I think it was an eleemosynary smile, for my pleasantry seems to me a particularly *basso rilievo*, as I look

upon it in cold blood. But conversation at the best is only a thin sprinkling of occasional felicities set in platitudes and commonplaces. I never heard people talk like the characters in the *School for Scandal*,—I should very much like to.—I say the Master smiled. But the Scarabee did not relax a muscle of his countenance.

—There are persons whom the very mildest of *facetiæ* sets off into such convulsions of laughter, that one is afraid lest they should injure themselves. Even when a jest misses fire completely, so that it is no jest at all, but only a jocular intention, they laugh just as heartily. Leave out the point of your story, get the word wrong on the duplicity of which the pun that was to excite hilarity depended, and they still honour your abortive attempt with the most lusty and vociferous merriment.

There is a very opposite class of persons whom anything in the nature of a joke perplexes, troubles, and even sometimes irritates, seeming to make them think they are trifled with, if not insulted. If you are fortunate enough to set the whole table laughing, one of this class of persons will look inquiringly round, as if something had happened, and, seeing everybody apparently

amused but himself, feel as if he was being laughed at, or at any rate as if something had been said which he was not to hear. Often, however, it does not go so far as this, and there is nothing more than mere insensibility to the cause of other people's laughter, a sort of joke-blindness, comparable to the well-known colour-blindness with which many persons are afflicted as a congenital incapacity.

I have never seen the Scarabee smile. I have seen him take off his goggles,—he breakfasts in these occasionally,—I suppose when he has been tiring his poor old eyes out over night gazing through his microscope,—I have seen him take his goggles off, I say, and stare about him, when the rest of us were laughing at something which amused us, but his features betrayed nothing more than a certain bewilderment, as if we had been foreigners talking in an unknown tongue. I do not think it was a mere fancy of mine that he bears a kind of resemblance to the tribe of insects he gives his life to studying. His shiny black coat; his rounded back, convex with years of stooping over his minute work; his angular movements, made natural to him by his habitual style of manipulation; the aridity of his organism, with

which his voice is in perfect keeping;—all these marks of his special sedentary occupation are so nearly what might be expected, and indeed so much in accordance with the more general fact that a man's aspect is subdued to the look of what he works in, that I do not feel disposed to accuse myself of exaggeration in my account of the Scarabee's appearance. But I think he has learned something else of his coleopterous friends. The beetles never smile. Their physiognomy is not adapted to the display of the emotions; the lateral movement of their jaws being effective for alimentary purposes, but very limited in its gamut of expression. It is with these unemotional beings that the Scarabee passes his life. He has but one object, and that is perfectly serious, to his mind, in fact, of absorbing interest and importance. In one aspect of the matter he is quite right, for if the Creator has taken the trouble to make one of his creatures in just such a way and not otherwise, from the beginning of its existence on our planet in ages of unknown remoteness to the present time, the man who first explains His idea to us is charged with a revelation. It is by no means impossible that there may be angels in the celestial hierarchy to whom it would be new

and interesting. I have often thought that spirits of a higher order than man might be willing to learn something from a human mind like that of Newton, and I see no reason why an angelic being might not be glad to hear a lecture from Mr. Huxley, or Mr. Tyndall, or one of our friends at Cambridge.

I have been sinuous as the Links of Forth seen from Stirling Castle, or as that other river which threads the Berkshire valley and runs, a perennial stream, through my memory,—from which I please myself with thinking that I have learned to wind without fretting against the shore, or forgetting where I am flowing,—sinuous, I say, but not jerky,—no, not jerky or hard to follow for a reader of the right sort, in the prime of life and full possession of his or her faculties.

—All this last page or so, you readily understand, has been my private talk with you, the Reader. The *cue* of the conversation which I interrupted by this digression is to be found in the words "a good motto," from which I begin my account of the visit again.

—Do you receive many visitors,—I mean vertebrates, not articulates? — said the Master.

I thought this question might perhaps

bring *il disiato riso*, the long-wished-for smile, but the Scarabee interpreted it in the simplest zoological sense and neglected its hint of playfulness with the most absolute unconsciousness, apparently, of anything not entirely serious and literal.

—You mean friends, I suppose,—he answered.—I have correspondents, but I have no friends except this spider. I live alone, except when I go to my subsection meetings; I get a box of insects now and then, and send a few beetles to coleopterists in other entomological districts; but science is exacting, and a man that wants to leave his record has not much time for friendship. There is no great chance either for making friends among naturalists. People that are at work on different things do not care a great deal for each other's specialties, and people that work on the same thing are always afraid lest one should get ahead of the other, or steal some of his ideas before he has made them public. There are none too many people you can trust in your laboratory. I thought I had a friend once, but he watched me at work and stole the discovery of a new species from me, and, what is more, had it named after himself. Since that time I have liked spiders better than men. They are

hungry and savage, but at any rate they spin their own webs out of their own insides. I like very well to talk with gentlemen that *play* with my branch of entomology; I do not doubt it amused you, and if *you* want to see anything I can show you, I shall have no scruple in letting you see it. I have never had any complaint to make of amatoors.

—Upon my honour,—I would hold my right hand up and take my Bible-oath, if it was not busy with the pen at this moment, —I do not believe the Scarabee had the least idea in the world of the satire on the student of the Order of Things implied in his invitation to the "amatoor." As for the Master, he stood fire perfectly, as he always does; but the idea that he, who had worked a considerable part of several seasons at examining and preparing insects, who believed himself to have given a new *tabanus* to the catalogue of native diptera, the idea that *he* was playing with science, and might be trusted anywhere as a harmless amateur, from whom no expert could possibly fear any anticipation of his unpublished discoveries, went beyond anything set down in that book of his which contained so much of the strainings of his wisdom.

The poor little Scarabee began fidgeting round about this time, and uttering some half-audible words, apologetical, partly, and involving an allusion to refreshments. As he spoke he opened a small cupboard, and as he did so out bolted an uninvited tenant of the same, long in person, sable in hue, and swift of movement, on seeing which the Scarabee simply said, without emotion, *blatta*, but I, forgetting what was due to good manners, exclaimed *cockroach!*

We could not make up our minds to tax the Scarabee's hospitality already levied upon by the voracious articulate. So we both alleged a state of utter repletion, and did not solve the mystery of the contents of the cupboard,—not too luxurious, it may be conjectured, and yet kindly offered, so that we felt there was a moist filament of the social instinct running like a nerve through that exsiccated and almost anhydrous organism.

We left him with professions of esteem and respect which were real. We had gone, not to scoff, but very probably to smile, and I will not say we did not. But the Master was more thoughtful than usual.

—If I had not solemnly dedicated myself to the study of the Order of Things,—he said,—I do verily believe I would give what

remains to me of life to the investigation of some single point I could utterly eviscerate and leave finally settled for the instruction and, it may be, the admiration of all coming time. The keel ploughs ten thousand leagues of ocean and leaves no trace of its deep-graven furrows. The chisel scars only a few inches on the face of a rock, but the story it has traced is read by a hundred generations. The eagle leaves no track of his path, no memory of the place where he built his nest; but a patient mollusk has bored a little hole in a marble column of the temple of Serapis, and the monument of his labour outlasts the altar and the statue of the divinity

—Whew !—said I to myself,—that sounds a little like what we college boys used to call a "squirt."—The Master guessed my thought and said, smiling—

—That is from one of my old lectures. A man's tongue wags along quietly enough, but his pen begins prancing as soon as it touches paper. I know what you are thinking—you 're thinking this is a *squirt*. That word has taken the nonsense out of a good many high-stepping fellows. But it did a good deal of harm too, and it was a vulgar lot that applied it oftenest.

I am at last perfectly satisfied that our Landlady has no designs on the Capitalist, and as well convinced that any fancy of mine that he was like to make love to her was a mistake. The good woman is too much absorbed in her children, and more especially in "the Doctor," as she delights to call her son, to be the prey of any foolish desire of changing her condition. She is doing very well as it is, and if the young man succeeds, as I have little question that he will, I think it probable enough that she will retire from her position as the head of a boarding-house. We have all liked the good woman who have lived with her,—I mean we three friends who have put ourselves on record. Her talk, I must confess, is a little diffuse and not always absolutely correct, according to the standard of the great Worcester; she is subject to lachrymose cataclysms and semi-convulsive upheavals when she reverts in memory to her past trials, and especially when she recalls the virtues of her deceased spouse, who was, I suspect, an adjunct such as one finds not rarely annexed to a capable matron in charge of an establishment like hers; that is to say, an easy-going, harmless, fetch-and-carry, carve-and-help, get-out-of-the-way kind of neuter, who

comes up three times (as they say drowning people do) every day, namely, at breakfast, dinner, and tea, and disappears, submerged beneath the waves of life, during the intervals of these events.

It is a source of genuine delight to me, who am of a kindly nature enough, according to my own reckoning, to watch the good woman, and see what looks of pride and affection she bestows upon her Benjamin, and how, in spite of herself, the maternal feeling betrays its influence in her dispensations of those delicacies which are the exceptional element in our entertainments. I will not say that Benjamin's mess, like his Scripture namesake's, is five times as large as that of any of the others, for this would imply either an economical distribution to the guests in general or heaping the poor young man's plate in a way that would spoil the appetite of an Esquimau, but you may be sure he fares well if anybody does; and I would have you understand that our Landlady knows what is what as well as who is who.

I begin really to entertain very sanguine expectations of young Doctor Benjamin Franklin. He has lately been treating a patient whose good-will may prove of great importance to him. The Capitalist hurt

one of his fingers somehow or other, and requested our young doctor to take a look at it. The young doctor asked nothing better than to take charge of the case, which proved more serious than might have been at first expected, and kept him in attendance more than a week. There was one very odd thing about it. The Capitalist seemed to have an idea that he was like to be ruined in the matter of bandages,—small strips of worn linen which any old woman could have spared him from her rag-bag, but which, with that strange perversity which long habits of economy give to a good many elderly people, he seemed to think were as precious as if they had been turned into paper and stamped with promises to pay in thousands, from the national treasury. It was impossible to get this whim out of him, and the young doctor had tact enough to humour him in it. All this did not look very promising for the state of mind in which the patient was like to receive his bill for attendance when that should be presented. Doctor Benjamin was man enough, however, to come up to the mark, and sent him in such an account as it was becoming to send a man of ample means who had been diligently and skilfully cared for. He looked forward with some uncer-

tainty as to how it would be received. Perhaps his patient would try to beat him down, and Doctor Benjamin made up his mind to have the whole or nothing. Perhaps he would pay the whole amount, but with a look, and possibly a word, that would make every dollar of it burn like a blister.

Dr. Benjamin's conjectures were not unnatural, but quite remote from the actual fact. As soon as his patient had got entirely well, the young physician sent in his bill. The Capitalist requested him to step into his room with him, and paid the full charge in the handsomest and most gratifying way, thanking him for his skill and attention, and assuring him that he had had great satisfaction in submitting himself to such competent hands, and should certainly apply to him again in case he should have any occasion for a medical adviser. We must not be too sagacious in judging people by the little excrescences of their character. *Ex pede Herculem* may often prove safe enough, but *ex verruca Tullium* is liable to mislead a hasty judge of his fellow-men.

I have studied the people called misers and thought a good deal about them. In former years I used to keep a little gold by me in order to ascertain for myself exactly

the amount of pleasure to be got out of handling it; this being the traditional delight of the old-fashioned miser. It is by no means to be despised. Three or four hundred dollars in double-eagles will do very well to experiment on. There is something very agreeable in the yellow gleam, very musical in the metallic clink, very satisfying in the singular weight, and very stimulating in the feeling that all the world over these same yellow disks are the master-keys that let one in wherever he wants to go, the servants that bring him pretty nearly everything he wants, except virtue, —and a good deal of what passes for that. I confess, then, to an honest liking for the splendours and the specific gravity and the manifold potentiality of the royal metal, and I understand, after a certain imperfect fashion, the delight that an old ragged wretch, starving himself in a crazy hovel, takes in stuffing guineas into old stockings and filling earthen pots with sovereigns, and every now and then visiting his hoards and fingering the fat pieces, and thinking over all that they represent of earthly and angelic and diabolic energy. A miser pouring out his guineas into his palm and bathing his shrivelled and trembling hands in the yellow

heaps before him, is not the prosaic being we are in the habit of thinking him. He is a dreamer, almost a poet. You and I read a novel or a poem to help our imaginations to build up palaces, and transport us into the emotional states and the felicitous conditions of the ideal characters pictured in the book we are reading. But think of him and the significance of the symbols he is handling as compared with the empty syllables and words we are using to build our aerial edifices with ! In this hand he holds the smile of beauty and in that the dagger of revenge. The contents of that old glove will buy him the willing service of many an adroit sinner, and with what that coarse sack contains he can purchase the prayers of holy men for all succeeding time. In this chest is a castle in Spain, a real one, and not only in Spain, but anywhere he will choose to have it. If he would know what is the liberality of judgment of any of the straiter sects, he has only to hand over that box of rouleaux to the trustees of one of its educational institutions for the endowment of two or three professorships. If he would dream of being remembered by coming generations, what monument so enduring as a college building that shall bear his name, and even

when its solid masonry shall crumble give place to another still charged with the same sacred duty of perpetuating his remembrance. Who was Sir Matthew Holworthy, that his name is a household word on the lips of thousands of scholars, and will be centuries hence, as that of Walter de Merton, dead six hundred years ago, is to-day at Oxford? Who was Mistress Holden, that she should be blessed among women by having her name spoken gratefully and the little edifice she caused to be erected preserved as her monument from generation to generation? All these possibilities, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life; the tears of grateful orphans by the gallon; the prayers of Westminster Assembly's Catechism divines by the thousand; the masses of priests by the century;—all these things, and more if more there be that the imagination of a lover of gold is like to range over, the miser hears and sees and feels and hugs and enjoys as he paddles with his lean hands among the sliding, shining, ringing, innocent-looking bits of yellow metal, toying with them as the lion-tamer handles the great carnivorous monster, whose might and whose terrors are child's play to the latent forces and power of harm-doing of the glittering counters played

with in the great game between angels and devils.

I have seen a good deal of misers, and I think I understand them as well as most persons do. But the Capitalist's economy in rags and his liberality to the young doctor are very oddly contrasted with each other. I should not be surprised at any time to hear that he had endowed a scholarship or professorship or built a college dormitory, in spite of his curious parsimony in old linen.

I do not know where our young Astronomer got the notions that he expresses so freely in the lines that follow. I think the statement is true, however, which I see in one of the most popular Cyclopædias, that "the *non-clerical* mind in all ages is disposed to look favourably upon the doctrine of the universal restoration to holiness and happiness of all fallen intelligences, whether human or angelic." Certainly, most of the poets who have reached the heart of men, since Burns dropped the tear for poor "auld Nickie-ben" that softened the stony-hearted theology of Scotland, have had "non-clerical" minds, and I suppose our young friend is in his humble way an optimist like them. What he says in verse is

very much the same thing as what is said in prose in all companies, and thought by a great many who are thankful to anybody that will say it for them,—not a few clerical as well as "non-clerical" persons among them.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

V.

What am I but the creature Thou hast made?
What have I save the blessings Thou hast lent?
What hope I but Thy mercy and Thy love?
Who but myself shall cloud my soul with fear?
Whose hand protect me from myself but Thine?
I claim the rights of weakness, I, the babe,
Call on my sire to shield me from the ills
That still beset my path, not trying me
With snares beyond my wisdom or my strength,
He knowing I shall use them to my harm,
And find a tenfold misery in the sense
That in my childlike folly I have sprung
The trap upon myself as vermin use
Drawn by the cunning bait to certain doom.
Who wrought the wondrous charm that leads us on
To sweet perdition, but the selfsame power
That set the fearful engine to destroy
His wretched offspring (as the Rabbis tell),

And hid its yawning jaws and treacherous springs
In such a show of innocent sweet flowers
It lured the sinless angels and they fell?
Ah! He who prayed the prayer of all mankind
Summed in those few brief words the mightiest plea
For erring souls before the courts of heaven,—
Save us from being tempted,—lest we fall!

If we are only as the potter's clay,
Made to be fashioned as the artist wills,
And broken into shards if we offend
The eye of him who made us, it is well;
Such love as the insensate lump of clay
That spins upon the swift-revolving wheel
Bears to the hand that shapes its growing form,—
Such love, no more, will be our hearts' return
To the great Master-workman for his care,—
Or would be, save that this, our breathing clay,
Is intertwined with fine innumerous threads
That make it conscious in its framer's hand;
And this He must remember who has filled
These vessels with the deadly draught of life,—
Life, that means death to all it claims. Our love
Must kindle in the ray that streams from heaven,
A faint reflection of the light divine;
The sun must warm the earth before the rose
Can show her inmost heart-leaves to the sun.

He yields some fraction of the Maker's right
Who gives the quivering nerve its sense of pain;
Is there not something in the pleading eye
Of the poor brute that suffers, which arraigns
The law that bids it suffer? Has it not
A claim for some remembrance in the book
That fills its pages with the idle words
Spoken of men? Or is it only clay,
Bleeding and aching in the potter's hand,
Yet all his own to treat it as he will
And when he will to cast it at his feet,
Shattered, dishonoured, lost for evermore?
My dog loves me, but could he look beyond
His earthly master, would his love extend
To Him who— Hush! I will not doubt that He
Is better than our fears, and will not wrong
The least, the meanest of created things!

He would not trust me with the smallest orb
That circles through the sky; he would not give
A meteor to my guidance; would not leave
The colouring of a cloudlet to my hand;
He locks my beating heart beneath its bars
And keeps the key himself; he measures out
The draughts of vital breath that warm my blood,
Winds up the springs of instinct which uncoil,
Each in its season; ties me to my home,
My race, my time, my nation, and my creed
So closely that if I but slip my wris
Out of the band that cuts it to the bone

Men say, "He hath a devil;" he has lent
All that I hold in trust, as unto one
By reason of his weakness and his years
Not fit to hold the smallest shred in fee
Of those most common things he calls his own—
And yet—my Rabbi tells me—he has left
The care of that to which a million worlds
Filled with unconscious life were less than nought,
Has left that mighty universe, the Soul,
To the weak guidance of our baby hands,
Turned us adrift with our immortal charge,
Let the foul fiends have access at their will,
Taking the shape of angels, to our hearts,—
Our hearts already poisoned through and through
With the fierce virus of ancestral sin.
If what my Rabbi tells me is the truth
Why did the choir of angels sing for joy?
Heaven must be compassed in a narrow space,
And offer more than room enough for all
That pass its portals; but the underworld,
The godless realm, the place where demons forge
Their fiery darts and adamantine chains,
Must swarm with ghosts that for a little while
Had worn the garb of flesh, and being heirs
Of all the dulness of their stolid sires,
And all the erring instincts of their tribe,
Nature's own teaching, rudiments of "sin,"
Fell headlong in the snare that could not fail
To trap the wretched creatures shaped of clay
And cursed with sense enough to lose their souls!

Brother, thy heart is troubled at my word ;
Sister, I see the cloud is on thy brow.
He will not blame me, He who sends not peace,
But sends a sword, and bids us strike amain
At Error's gilded crest, where in the van
Of earth's great army, mingling with the best
And bravest of its leaders, shouting loud
The battle-cries that yesterday have led
The host of Truth to victory, but to-day
Are watchwords of the laggard and the slave,
He leads his dazzled cohorts. God has made
This world a strife of atoms and of spheres ;
With every breath I sigh myself away
And take my tribute from the wandering wind
To fan the flame of life's consuming fire ;
So, while my thought has life, it needs must burn,
And burning, set the stubble-fields ablaze,
Where all the harvest long ago was reaped
And safely garnered in the ancient barns,
But still the gleaners, groping for their food,
Go blindly feeling through the close-shorn straw,
While the young reapers flash their glittering steel
Where later suns have ripened nobler grain !

We listened to these lines in silence. They were evidently written honestly, and with feeling, and no doubt meant to be reverential. I thought, however, the Lady looked rather serious as he finished reading.

The Young Girl's cheeks were flushed, but she was not in the mood for criticism.

As we came away the Master said to me —The stubble-fields are mighty slow to take fire. These young fellows catch up with the world's ideas one after another,—they have been tamed a long while, but they find them running loose in their minds, and think they are *ferœ naturœ*. They remind me of young sportsmen who fire at the first feathers they see, and bring down a barn-yard fowl. But the chicken may be worth bagging for all that, he said, good-humouredly.

X.

CAVEAT LECTOR. Let the reader look out for himself. The old Master, whose words I have so frequently quoted and shall quote more of, is a dogmatist who lays down the law, *ex cathedra*, from the chair of his own personality. I do not deny that he has the ambition of knowing something about a greater number of subjects than any one man ought to meddle with, except in a very humble and modest way. And that is not his way. There was no doubt something of humorous bravado in his saying that the actual "order of things" did not offer a field sufficiently ample for his intelligence. But if I found fault with him, which would be easy enough, I should say that he holds and expresses definite opinions about matters that he could afford to leave open questions, or ask the judgment of others about. But I do not want to find fault with him. If he does not settle all the points he speaks of so authoritatively, he sets me thinking about them, and I like

a man as a companion who is not afraid of a half-truth. I know he says some things peremptorily that he may inwardly debate with himself. There are two ways of dealing with assertions of this kind. One may attack them on the false side and perhaps gain a conversational victory. But I like better to take them up on the true side and see how much can be made of that aspect of the dogmatic assertion. It is the only comfortable way of dealing with persons like the old Master.

There have been three famous talkers in Great Britain, either of whom would illustrate what I say about dogmatists well enough for my purpose. You cannot doubt to what three I refer: Samuel the First, Samuel the Second, and Thomas, last of the Dynasty. (I mean the living Thomas and not Thomas B.)

I say *the last* of the Dynasty, for the conversational dogmatist on the imperial scale becomes every year more and more an impossibility. If he is in intelligent company he will be almost sure to find some one who knows more about some of the subjects he generalises upon than any wholesale thinker who handles knowledge by the cargo is like to know. I find myself, at certain

intervals, in the society of a number of experts in science, literature, and art, who cover a pretty wide range taking them all together, of human knowledge. I have not the least doubt that if the great Dr. Samuel Johnson should come in and sit with this company at one of their Saturday dinners, he would be listened to, as he always was, with respect and attention. But there are subjects upon which the great talker could speak magisterially in his time and at his club, upon which so wise a man would express himself guardedly at the meeting where I have supposed him a guest. We have a scientific man or two among us, for instance, who would be entitled to smile at the good Doctor's estimate of their labours, as I give it here :—

"Of those that spin out life in trifles and die without a memorial many flatter themselves with high opinion of their own importance and imagine that they are every day adding some improvement to human life."—"Some turn the wheel of electricity, some suspend rings to a loadstone, and find that what they did yesterday they can do again to-day. Some register the changes of the wind, and die fully convinced that the wind is changeable.

"There are men yet more profound, who have heard that two colourless liquors may produce a colour by union, and that two cold bodies will grow hot if they are mingled; they mingle them, and produce the effect expected, say it is strange, and mingle them again."

I cannot transcribe this extract without an intense inward delight in its wit and a full recognition of its thorough half-truthfulness. Yet if while the great moralist is indulging in these vivacities, he can be imagined as receiving a message from Mr. Boswell or Mrs. Thrale flashed through the depths of the ocean, we can suppose he might be tempted to indulge in another oracular utterance, something like this :—

—A wise man recognises the convenience of a general statement, but he bows to the authority of a particular fact. He who would bound the possibilities of human knowledge by the limitations of present acquirements would take the dimensions of the infant in ordering the habiliments of the adult. It is the province of knowledge to speak and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen. Will the Professor have the kindness to inform me by what steps of gradual development the ring and the loadstone, which

were but yesterday the toys of children and idlers, have become the means of approximating the intelligences of remote continents, and wafting emotions unchilled through the abysses of the no longer unfathomable deep?

—This, you understand, Beloved, is only a conventional imitation of the Doctor's style of talking. He wrote in grand balanced phrases, but his conversation was good, lusty, off-hand familiar talk. He used very often to have it all his own way. If he came back to us we must remember that to treat him fairly we must suppose him on a level with the knowledge of our own time. But that knowledge is more specialised, a great deal, than knowledge was in his day. Men cannot talk about things they have seen from the outside with the same magisterial authority the talking dynasty pretended to. The sturdy old moralist felt grand enough, no doubt, when he said, "He that is growing great and happy by electrifying a bottle wonders how the world can be engaged by trifling prattle about war or peace." Benjamin Franklin was one of these idlers who were electrifying bottles, but he also found time to engage in the trifling prattle about war and peace going on in those times. The talking Doctor hits

him very hard in *Taxation no Tyranny:* "Those who wrote the Address (of the American Congress in 1775), though they have shown no great extent or profundity of mind, are yet probably wiser than to believe it: but they have been taught by some master of mischief how to put in motion the engine of political electricity; to attract by the sounds of Liberty and Property, to repel by those of Popery and Slavery; and to give the great stroke by the name of *Boston.*"

The talking dynasty has always been hard upon us Americans. King Samuel II. says: "It is, I believe, a fact verified beyond doubt, that some years ago it was impossible to obtain a copy of the Newgate Calendar, as they had all been bought up by the Americans, whether to suppress the blazon of their forefathers or to assist in their genealogical researches I could never learn satisfactorily."

As for King Thomas, the last of the monological succession, he made such a piece of work with his prophecies and his sarcasms about our little trouble with some of the Southern States, that we came rather to pity him for his whims and crotchets than to get angry with him for calling us bores and other unamiable names.

I do not think we believe things because considerable people say them, on personal authority, that is, as intelligent listeners very commonly did a century ago. The newspapers have lied that belief out of us. Any man who has a pretty gift of talk may hold his company a little while when there is nothing better stirring. Every now and then a man who may be dull enough prevailingly has a passion of talk come over him which makes him eloquent and silences the rest. I have a great respect for these divine paroxysms, these half-inspired moments of influx when they seize one whom we had not counted among the luminaries of the social sphere. But the man who can give us a fresh experience on anything that interests us overrides everybody else. A great peril escaped makes a great story-teller of a common person enough. I remember when a certain vessel was wrecked long ago, that one of the survivors told the story as well as Defoe could have told it. Never a word from him before; never a word from him since. But when it comes to talking one's common thoughts,—those that come and go as the breath does; those that tread the mental areas and corridors with steady, even footfall, an interminable procession of every

hue and garb,—there are few, indeed, that can dare to lift the curtain which hangs before the window in the breast and throw open the window, and let us look and listen. We are all loyal enough to our sovereign when he shows himself, but sovereigns are scarce. I never saw the absolute homage of listeners but once, that I remember, to a man's common talk, and that was to the conversation of an old man, illustrious by his lineage and the exalted honours he had won, whose experience had lessons for the wisest, and whose eloquence had made the boldest tremble.

All this because I told you to look out for yourselves and not take for absolute truth everything the old Master of our table, or anybody else at it, sees fit to utter. At the same time I do not think that he, or any of us whose conversation I think worth reporting, says anything for the mere sake of saying it and without thinking that it holds some truth, even if it is not unqualifiedly true.

I suppose a certain number of my readers wish very heartily that the young Astronomer whose poetical speculations I am recording would stop trying by searching to find out the Almighty, and sign the Thirty-nine

Articles, or the Westminster Confession of Faith, at any rate slip his neck into some collar or other, and pull quietly in the harness, whether it galled him or not. I say, rather, let him have his talk out; if nobody else asks the questions he asks, some will be glad to hear them, but if you, the reader, find the same questions in your own mind, you need not be afraid to see how they shape themselves in another's intelligence. Do you recognise the fact that we are living in a new time? Knowledge—it excites prejudices to call it science—is advancing as irresistibly, as majestically, as remorselessly as the ocean moves in upon the shore. The courtiers of King Canute (I am not afraid of the old comparison), represented by the adherents of the traditional beliefs of the period, move his chair back an inch at a time, but not until his feet are pretty damp, not to say wet. The rock on which he sat securely a while ago is completely under water. And now people are walking up and down the beach and judging for themselves how far inland the chair of King Canute is like to be moved while they and their children are looking on, at the rate in which it is edging backward. And it is quite too late to go into hysterics about it.

The shore, solid, substantial, a great deal more than eighteen hundred years old, is natural humanity. The beach which the ocean of knowledge—you may call it science if you like—is flowing over, is theological humanity. Somewhere between the Sermon on the Mount and the teachings of Saint Augustine sin was made a transferable chattel. (I leave the interval wide for others to make narrow.)

The doctrine of heritable guilt, with its mechanical consequences, has done for our moral nature what the doctrine of demoniac possession has done in barbarous times and still does among barbarous tribes for disease. Out of that black cloud came the lightning which struck the compass of humanity. Conscience, which from the dawn of moral being had pointed to the poles of right and wrong only as the great current of will flowed through the soul, was demagnetised, paralysed, and knew henceforth no fixed meridian, but stayed where the priest or the council placed it. There is nothing to be done but to polarise the needle over again. And for this purpose we must study the lines of direction of all the forces which traverse our human nature.

We must study man as we have studied

stars and rocks. We need not go, we are told, to our sacred books for astronomy or geology or other scientific knowledge. Do not stop there! Pull Canute's chair back fifty rods at once, and do not wait until he is wet to the knees! Say now, bravely, as you will sooner or later have to say, that we need not go to any ancient records for our anthropology. Do we not all *hope*, at least, that the doctrine of man's being a blighted abortion, a miserable disappointment to his Creator, and hostile and hateful to him from his birth, may give way to the belief that he is the latest terrestrial manifestation of an ever upward-striving movement of divine power? If there lives a man who does not *want* to disbelieve the popular notions about the condition and destiny of the bulk of his race, I should like to have him look me in the face and tell me so.

I am not writing for the basement story or the nursery, and I do not pretend to be, but I say nothing in these pages which would not be said without fear of offence in any intelligent circle, such as clergymen of the higher castes are in the habit of frequenting. There are teachers in type for our grandmothers and our grandchildren who vaccinate the two childhoods with wholesome

doctrine, transmitted harmlessly from one infant to another. But we three men at our table have taken the disease of thinking in the natural way. It is an epidemic in these times, and those who are afraid of it must shut themselves up close or they will catch it.

I hope none of us are wanting in reverence. One at least of us is a regular church-goer, and believes a man may be devout and yet very free in the expression of his opinions on the gravest subjects. There may be some good people who think that our young friend who puts his thoughts in verse is going sounding over perilous depths, and are frightened every time he throws the lead. There is nothing to be frightened at. This is a manly world we live in. Our reverence is good for nothing if it does not begin with self-respect. Occidental manhood springs from that as its basis; Oriental manhood finds the greatest satisfaction in self-abasement. There is no use in trying to graft the tropical palm upon the Northern pine. The same divine forces underlie the growth of both, but leaf and flower and fruit must follow the law of race, of soil, of climate. Whether the questions which assail my young friend have risen in my

reader's mind or not, he knows perfectly well that nobody can keep such questions from springing up in every young mind of any force or honesty. As for the excellent little wretches who grow up in what they are taught, with never a scruple or a query, Protestant or Catholic, Jew or Mormon, Mohammedan or Buddhist, they signify nothing in the intellectual life of the race. If the world had been wholly peopled with such half-vitalised mental negatives, there never would have been a creed like that of Christendom.

I entirely agree with the spirit of the verses I have looked over, in this point at least, that a true man's allegiance is given to that which is highest in his own nature. He reverences truth, he loves kindness, he respects justice. The two first qualities he understands well enough. But the last, justice, at least as between the Infinite and the finite, has been so utterly dehumanised, disintegrated, decomposed, and diabolised in passing through the minds of the half-civilised banditti who have peopled and unpeopled the world for some scores of generations, that it has become a mere algebraic x, and has no fixed value whatever as a human conception.

As for *power*, we are outgrowing all superstition about that. We have not the slightest respect for it as such, and it is just as well to remember this in all our spiritual adjustments. We *fear* power when we cannot master it; but just as far as we can master it, we make a slave and a beast of burden of it without hesitation. We cannot change the ebb and flow of the tides, or the course of the seasons, but we come as near it as we can. We dam out the ocean, we make roses blow in winter and water freeze in summer. We have no more reverence for the sun than we have for a fish-tail gas-burner; we stare into his face with telescopes as at a ballet-dancer with opera-glasses; we pick his rays to pieces with prisms as if they were so many skeins of coloured yarn; we tell him we do not want his company and shut him out like a troublesome vagrant. The gods of the old heathen are the servants of to-day. Neptune, Vulcan, Æolus, and the bearer of the thunderbolt himself, have stepped down from their pedestals and put on our livery. We cannot always master them, neither can we always master our servant, the horse, but we have put a bridle on the wildest natural agencies. The mob of elemental forces is as noisy and turbulent as

ever, but the standing army of civilisation keeps it well under, except for an occasional outbreak.

When I read the Lady's letter printed some time since, I could not help honouring the feeling which prompted her in writing it. But while I respect the innocent incapacity of tender age and the limitations of the comparatively uninstructed classes, it is quite out of the question to act as if matters of common intelligence and universal interest were the private property of a secret society, only to be meddled with by those who know the grip and the password.

We must get over the habit of transferring the limitations of the nervous temperament and of hectic constitutions to the great Source of all the mighty forces of nature, animate and inanimate. We may confidently trust that we have over us a Being thoroughly robust and grandly magnanimous, in distinction from the Infinite Invalid bred in the studies of sickly monomaniacs, who corresponds to a very common human type, but makes us blush for him when we contrast him with a truly noble man, such as most of us have had the privilege of knowing both in public and in private life.

I was not a little pleased to find that the

Lady, in spite of her letter, sat through the young man's reading of portions of his poem with a good deal of complacency. I think I can guess what is in her mind. She believes, as so many women do, in that great remedy for discontent, and doubts about humanity, and questionings of Providence, and all sorts of youthful vagaries,—I mean the love-cure. And she thinks, not without some reason, that these astronomical lessons, and these readings of poetry and daily proximity at the table, and the need of two young hearts that have been long feeling lonely, and youth and nature and "all impulses of soul and sense," as Coleridge has it, will bring these two young people into closer relations than they perhaps have yet thought of; and so that sweet lesson of loving the neighbour whom he has seen may lead him into deeper and more trusting communion with the Friend and Father whom he has not seen.

The Young Girl evidently did not intend that her accomplice should be a loser by the summary act of the Member of the Haouse. I took occasion to ask That Boy what had become of all the popguns. He gave me to understand that popguns were played out,

but that he had got a squirt and a whip, and considered himself better off than before.

This great world is full of mysteries. I can comprehend the pleasure to be got out of the hydraulic engine; but what can be the fascination of a *whip*, when one has nothing to flagellate but the calves of his own legs, I could never understand. Yet a small riding-whip is the most popular article with the miscellaneous New-Englander at all great gatherings,—cattle-shows and Fourth-of-July celebrations. If Democritus and Heraclitus could walk arm in arm through one of these crowds, the first would be in a broad laugh to see the multitude of young persons who were rejoicing in the possession of one of these useless and worthless little commodities; happy himself to see how easily others could purchase happiness. But the second would weep bitter tears to think what a rayless and barren life that must be which could extract enjoyment from the miserable flimsy wand that has such magic attraction for sauntering youths and simpering maidens. What a dynamometer of happiness are these paltry toys, and what a rudimentary vertebrate must be the freckled adolescent whose yearning for the infinite can be stayed even for a single hour by so

trifling a boon from the venal hands of the finite !

Pardon these polysyllabic reflections, Beloved, but I never contemplate these dear fellow-creatures of ours without a delicious sense of superiority to them and to all arrested embryos of intelligence, in which I have no doubt you heartily sympathise with me. It is not merely when I look at the vacuous countenances of the *mastigophori*, the whip-holders, that I enjoy this luxury (though I would not miss that holiday spectacle for a pretty sum of money, and advise you by all means to make sure of it next Fourth of July, if you missed it this), but I get the same pleasure from many similar manifestations.

I delight in Regalia, so called, of the kind not worn by kings, nor obtaining their diamonds from the mines of Golconda. I have a passion for those resplendent titles which are not conferred by a sovereign and would not be the *open sesame* to the courts of royalty, yet which are as opulent in impressive adjectives as any Knight of the Garter's list of dignities. When I have recognised in the everyday name of His Very Worthy High Eminence of some cabalistic association, the inconspicuous individual whose

trifling indebtedness to me for value received remains in a quiescent state and is likely long to continue so, I confess to having experienced a thrill of pleasure. I have smiled to think how grand his magnificent titular appendages sounded in his own ears and what a feeble tintinnabulation they made in mine. The crimson sash, the broad diagonal belt of the mounted marshal of a great procession, so cheap in themselves, yet so entirely satisfactory to the wearer, tickle my heart's root.

Perhaps I should have enjoyed all these weaknesses of my infantile fellow-creatures without an after-thought, except that on a certain literary anniversary when I tie the narrow blue and pink ribbons in my button-hole and show my decorated bosom to the admiring public, I am conscious of a certain sense of distinction and superiority in virtue of that trifling addition to my personal adornments which reminds me that I too have some embryonic fibres in my tolerably well-matured organism.

I hope I have not hurt your feelings, if you happen to be a High and Mighty Grand Functionary in any illustrious Fraternity. When I tell you that a bit of ribbon in my button-hole sets my vanity prancing,

I think you cannot be grievously offended that I smile at the resonant titles which make you something more than human in your own eyes. I would not for the world be mistaken for one of those literary roughs whose brass knuckles leave their mark on the foreheads of so many inoffensive people.

There is a human sub-species characterised by the coarseness of its fibre and the acrid nature of its intellectual secretions. It is to a certain extent penetrative, as all creatures are which are provided with stings. It has an instinct which guides it to the vulnerable parts of the victim on which it fastens. These two qualities give it a certain degree of power which is not to be despised. It might perhaps be less mischievous, but for the fact that the wound where it leaves its poison opens the fountain from which it draws its nourishment.

Beings of this kind can be useful if they will only find their appropriate sphere, which is not literature, but that circle of rough-and-tumble political life where the fine-fibred men are at a discount, where epithets find their subjects poison-proof, and the sting which would be fatal to a literary *débutant* only wakes the eloquence of the

pachydermatous ward-room politican to a fiercer shriek of declamation.

The Master got talking the other day about the difference between races and families. I am reminded of what he said by what I have just been saying myself about coarse-fibred and fine-fibred people.

—We talk about a Yankee, a New-Englander,—he said,—as if all of 'em were just the same kind of animal. "There is knowledge and knowledge," said John Bunyan. There are Yankees and Yankees. Do you know two native trees called pitch pine and white pine respectively? Of course you know 'em. Well, there are pitch-pine Yankees and white-pine Yankees. We don't talk about the inherited differences of men quite as freely, perhaps, as they do in the Old World, but republicanism doesn't alter the laws of physiology. We have a native aristocracy, a superior race, just as plainly marked by nature as of a higher and finer grade than the common run of people as the white pine is marked in its form, its stature, its bark, its delicate foliage, as belonging to the nobility of the forest; and the pitch pine, stubbed, rough, coarse-haired, as of the plebeian order. Only the strange thing is to see in what a capricious

way our natural nobility is distributed. The last born nobleman I have seen, I saw this morning; he was pulling a rope that was fastened to a Maine schooner loaded with lumber. I should say he was about twenty years old, as fine a figure of a young man as you would ask to see, and with a regular Greek outline of countenance, waving hair, that fell as if a sculptor had massed it to copy, and a complexion as rich as a red sunset. I have a notion that the State of Maine breeds the natural nobility in a larger proportion than some other States, but they spring up in all sorts of out-of-the-way places. The young fellow I saw this morning had on an old flannel shirt and a pair of pantaloons that meant hard work, and a cheap cloth cap pushed back on his head so as to let the large waves of hair straggle out over his forehead; he was tugging at his rope with the other sailors, but upon my word I don't think I have seen a young English nobleman of all those whom I have looked upon that answered to the notion of "blood" so well as this young fellow did. I suppose if I made such a levelling confession as this in public, people would think I was looking towards being the labour-reform candidate for President. But I should go on and spoil

my prospects by saying that I don't think the white-pine Yankee is the more generally prevailing growth, but rather the pitch-pine Yankee.

—The Member of the Haouse seemed to have been getting a dim idea that all this was not exactly flattering to the huckleberry districts. His features betrayed the growth of this suspicion so clearly that the Master replied to his look as if it had been a remark. [I need hardly say that this particular member of the General Court was a pitch-pine Yankee of the most thoroughly characterised aspect and flavour.]

—Yes, Sir,—the Master continued,—Sir being anybody that listened,—there is neither flattery nor offence in the views which a physiological observer takes of the forms of life around him. It won't do to draw individual portraits, but the differences of natural groups of human beings are as proper subjects of remark as those of different breeds of horses, and if horses were Houyhnhnms I don't think they would quarrel with us because we made a distinction between a "Morgan" and a "Messenger." The truth is, Sir, the lean sandy soil and the droughts and the long winters and the east winds and the cold storms, and

all sorts of unknown local influences that we can't make out quite so plainly as these, have a tendency to roughen the human organisation and make it coarse, something as it is with the tree I mentioned. Some spots and some strains of blood fight against these influences, but if I should say right out what I think, it would be that the finest human fruit, on the whole, and especially the finest women that we get in New England, are raised under glass.

—Good gracious!—exclaimed the Landlady,—under glass!—

—Give me cowcumbers raised in the open air,—said the Capitalist, who was a little hard of hearing.

—Perhaps,—I remarked,—it might be as well if you would explain this last expression of yours. Raising human beings under glass I take to be a metaphorical rather than a literal statement of your meaning.—

—No, Sir!—replied the Master, with energy,—I mean just what I say, Sir. Under glass, and with a south exposure. During the hard season, of course,—for in the heats of summer the tenderest hot-house plants are not afraid of the open air. *Protection* is what the transplanted Aryan requires in this New England climate. Keep

him, and especially keep *her*, in a wide street of a well-built city eight months of the year; good solid brick walls behind her, good sheets of plate-glass, with the sun shining warm through them, in front of her, and you have put her in the condition of the pine-apple, from the land of which, and not from that of the other kind of pine, her race started on its travels. People don't know what a gain there is to health by living in cities, the best parts of them of course, for we know too well what the worst parts are. In the first place you get rid of the noxious emanations which poison so many country localities with typhoid fever and dysentery; not wholly rid of them, of course, but to a surprising degree. Let me tell you a doctor's story. I was visiting a Western city a good many years ago; it was in the autumn, the time when all sorts of malarious diseases are about. The doctor I was speaking of took me to see the cemetery just outside the town,—I don't know how much he had done to fill it, for he didn't tell me, but I 'll tell you what he did say.

"Look round," said the doctor. "There isn't a house in all the ten-mile circuit of country you can see over, where there isn't one person, at least, shaking with fever and

ague. And yet you needn't be afraid of carrying it away with you, for as long as your home is on a paved street you are safe."

—I think it likely—the Master went on to say—that my friend the doctor put it pretty strongly, but there is no doubt at all that while all the country round was suffering from intermittent fever, the paved part of the city was comparatively exempted. What do you do when you build a house on a damp soil,—and there are damp soils pretty much everywhere? Why you floor the cellar with cement, don't you? Well, the soil of a city is cemented all over, one may say, with certain qualifications of course. A first-rate city house is a regular *sanatorium*. The only trouble is, that the little good-for-nothings that come of utterly used-up and worn-out stock, and ought to die, can't die, to save their lives. So they grow up to dilute the vigour of the race with skim-milk vitality. They would have died, like good children, in most average country places; but eight months of shelter in a regulated temperature, in a well-sunned house, in a duly moistened air, with good sidewalks to go about on in all weather, and four months of the cream of summer and the fresh milk of Jersey cows, make the little sham organ-

isations — the worm-eaten windfalls, for that 's what they look like—hang on to the boughs of life like "froze-n-thaws;" regular struldbrugs they come to be, a good many of 'em.

—The Scarabee's ear was caught by that queer word of Swift's, and he asked very innocently what kind of bugs he was speaking of, whereupon That Boy shouted out, Straddlebugs! to his own immense amusement and the great bewilderment of the Scarabee, who only saw that there was one of those unintelligible breaks in the conversation which made other people laugh, and drew back his antennæ as usual, perplexed, but not amused.

I do not believe the Master had said all he was going to say on this subject, and of course all these statements of his are more or less one-sided. But that some invalids do much better in cities than in the country is indisputable, and that the frightful dysenteries and fevers which have raged like pestilences in many of our country towns are almost unknown in the better built sections of some of our large cities is getting to be more generally understood since our well-to-do people have annually emigrated in such numbers from the cemented surface

of the city to the steaming soil of some of the dangerous rural districts. If one should contrast the healthiest country residences with the worst city ones, the result would be all the other way, of course, so that there are two sides to the question, which we must let the doctors pound in their great mortar, infuse and strain, hoping that they will present us with the clear solution when they have got through these processes. One of our chief wants is a complete sanitary map of every State in the Union.

The balance of our table, as the reader has no doubt observed, has been deranged by the withdrawal of the Man of Letters, so called, and only the side of the deficiency changed by the removal of the young Astronomer into our neighbourhood. The fact that there was a vacant chair on the side opposite us had by no means escaped the notice of That Boy. He had taken advantage of his opportunity and invited in a schoolmate whom he evidently looked upon as a great personage. This boy or youth was a good deal older than himself, and stood to him apparently in the light of a patron and instructor in the ways of life. A very jaunty, knowing young gentleman he was, good-

looking, smartly dressed, smooth-cheeked as yet, curly-haired, with a roguish eye, a sagacious wink, a ready tongue, as I soon found out; and as I learned could catch a ball on the fly with any boy of his age; not quarrelsome, but if he had to strike, hit from the shoulder; the pride of his father (who was a man of property and a civic dignitary), and answering to the name of Johnny.

I was a little surprised at the liberty That Boy had taken in introducing an extra peptic element at our table, reflecting as I did that a certain number of avoirdupois ounces of nutriment which the visitor would dispose of corresponded to a very appreciable pecuniary amount, so that he was levying a contribution upon our Landlady which she might be inclined to complain of. For the *Caput mortuum* (or dead-head, in vulgar phrase) is apt to be furnished with a *Venter vivus*, or, as we may say, a lively appetite. But the Landlady welcomed the new-comer very heartily.

—Why! *how—do—you—do—Johnny?!* with the notes of interrogation and of admiration both together as here represented.

Johnny signified that he was doing about as well as could be expected under the cir-

cumstances, having just had a little difference with a young person whom he spoke of as "Pewter-jaw" (I suppose he had worn a dentist's tooth-straightening contrivance during his second dentition), which youth he had finished off, as he said, in good shape, but at the expense of a slight—epistaxis, we will translate his vernacular expression.

—The three ladies all looked sympathetic, but there did not seem to be any great occasion for it, as the boy had come all right, and seemed to be in the best of spirits.

—And how is your father and your mother? —asked the Landlady.

—Oh, the Governor and the Head Centre? A 1, both of 'em. Prime order for shipping, —warranted to stand any climate. The Governor says he weighs a hunderd and seventy-five pounds. Got a chin-tuft just like Ed'in Forest. D'd y' ever see Ed'in Forest play Metamora? Bully, I tell *you!* My old gentleman means to be Mayor or Governor or President or something or other before he goes off the handle, you 'd better b'lieve. *He's* smart,—and I 've heard folks say I take after him.—

—Somehow or other I felt as if I had seen this boy before, or known something about him. Where did he get those expressions

"A 1" and "prime" and so on? They must have come from somebody who has been in the retail dry-goods business, or something of that nature. I have certain vague reminiscences that carry me back to the early times of this boarding-house.—Johnny.—Landlady knows his father well.—Boarded with her, no doubt.—There was somebody by the name of John, I remember perfectly well, lived with her. I remember both my friends mèntioned him, one of them very often. I wonder if this boy isn't a son of his! I asked the Landlady after breakfast whether this was not, as I had suspected, the son of that former boarder.

—To be sure he is,—she answered,—and jest such a good-natur'd sort of creatur' as his father was. I always liked John, as we used to call his father. He did love fun, but he was a good soul, and stood by me when I was in trouble, always. He went into business on his own account after a while, and got merried, and settled down into a family man. They tell me he is an amazing smart business man,—grown wealthy, and his wife's father left her money. But I can't help calling him John,—law, we never thought of calling him anything else, and he always laughs and says, "That 's right."

This is his oldest son, and everybody calls him Johnny. That Boy of ours goes to the same school with his boy, and thinks there never was anybody like him,—you see there was a boy undertook to impose on our boy, and Johnny gave the other boy a good licking, and ever since that he is always wanting to have Johnny round with him and bring him here with him,—and when those two boys get together, there never was boys that was so chock full of fun and sometimes mischief, but not very bad mischief, as those two boys be. But I like to have him come once in a while when there is room at the table, as there is now, for it puts me in mind of the old times, when my old boarders was all round me, that I used to think so much of,—not that my boarders that I have now an't very nice people, but I did think a dreadful sight of the gentleman that made that first book; it helped me on in the world more than ever he knew of,—for it was as good as one of them Brandreth's Pills advertisements, and didn't cost me a cent, and that young lady he merried too, she was nothing but a poor young schoolma'am when she come to my house, and now—and she deserved it all too, for she was always just the same, rich or poor, and she isn't a bit

prouder now she wears a camel's-hair shawl, than she was when I used to lend her a woollen one to keep her poor dear little shoulders warm when she had to go out and it was storming,—and then there was that old gentleman,—I can't speak about him, for I never knew how good he was till his will was opened, and then it was too late to thank him. . . .

I respected the feeling which caused the interval of silence, and found my own eyes moistened as I remembered how long it was since that friend of ours was sitting in the chair where I now sit, and what a tidal wave of change has swept over the world and more especially over this great land of ours, since he opened his lips and found so many kind listeners.

The young Astronomer has read us another extract from his manuscript. I ran my eye over it, and so far as I have noticed it is correct enough in its versification. I suppose we are getting gradually over our hemispherical provincialism, which allowed a set of monks to pull their hoods over our eyes and tell us there was no meaning in any religious symbolism but our own. If I am mistaken about this advance I am very glad to print

the young man's somewhat outspoken lines to help us in that direction.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

VI.

The time is racked with birth-pangs; every hour
Brings forth some gasping truth, and truth new-born
Looks a misshapen and untimely growth,
The terror of the household and its shame,
A monster coiling in its nurse's lap
That some would strangle, some would only starve;
But still it breathes, and passed from hand to hand,
And suckled at a hundred half-clad breasts,
Comes slowly to its stature and its form,
Calms the rough ridges of its dragon-scales,
Changes to shining locks its snaky hair,
And moves transfigured into angel guise,
Welcomed by all that cursed its hour of birth,
And folded in the same encircling arms
That cast it like a serpent from their hold!

If thou wouldst live in honour, die in peace,
Have the fine words the marble-workers learn
To carve so well, upon thy funeral-stone,

And earn a fair obituary, dressed
In all the many-coloured robes of praise,
Be deafer than the adder to the cry
Of that same foundling truth, until it grows
To seemly favour, and at length has won
The smiles of hard-mouthed men and light-lipped dames;
Then snatch it from its meagre nurse's breast,
Fold it in silk and give it food from gold;
So shalt thou share its glory when at last
It drops its mortal vesture, and revealed
In all the splendour of its heavenly form,
Spreads on the startled air its mighty wings!

Alas! how much that seemed immortal truth
That heroes fought for, martyrs died to save,
Reveals its earth-born lineage, growing old
And limping in its march, its wings unplumed,
Its heavenly semblance faded like a dream!
Here in this painted casket, just unsealed,
Lies what was once a breathing shape like thine,
Once loved as thou art loved; there beamed the eyes
That looked on Memphis in its hour of pride,
That saw the walls of hundred-gated Thebes,
And all the mirrored glories of the Nile.
See how they toiled that all-consuming time
Might leave the frame immortal in its tomb;
Filled it with fragrant balms and odorous gums
That still diffuse their sweetness through the air,

And wound and wound with patient fold on fold
The flaxen bands thy hand has rudely torn !
Perchance thou yet canst see the faded stain
Of the sad mourner's tear.
But what is this ?
The sacred beetle, bound upon the breast
Of the blind heathen ! Snatch the curious prize,
Give it a place among thy treasured spoils
Fossil and relic,—corals, encrinites,
The fly in amber and the fish in stone,
The twisted circlet of Etruscan gold,
Medal, intaglio, poniard, poison-ring —
Place for the Memphian beetle with thine hoard !

Ah ! longer than thy creed has blest the world
This toy, thus ravished from thy brother's breast,
Was to the heart of Mizraim as divine,
As holy, as the symbol that we lay
On the still bosom of our white-robed dead,
And raise above their dust that all may know
Here sleeps an heir of glory. Loving friends,
With tears of trembling faith and choking sobs,
And prayers to those who judge of mortal deeds,
Wrapped this poor image in the cerement's fold
That Isis and Osiris, friends of man,
Might know their own and claim the ransomed soul.

An idol? Man was born to worship such!
An idol is an image of his thought;
Sometimes he carves it out of gleaming stone,
And sometimes moulds it out of glittering gold,
Or rounds it in a mighty frescoed dome,
Or lifts it heavenward in a lofty spire,
Or shapes it in a cunning frame of words,
Or pays his priest to make it day by day;
For sense must have its god as well as soul;
A new-born Dian calls for silver shrines,
And Egypt's holiest symbol is our own,
The sign we worship as did they of old
When Isis and Osiris ruled the world.
Let us be true to our most subtle selves,
We long to have our idols like the rest.
Think! when the men of Israel had their God
Encamped among them, talking with their chief,
Leading them in the pillar of the cloud
And watching o'er them in the shaft of fire,
They still must have an image; still they longed
For somewhat of substantial, solid form
Whereon to hang their garlands, and to fix
Their wandering thoughts, and gain a stronger hold
For their uncertain faith, not yet assured
If those same meteors of the day and night
Were not mere exhalations of the soil.
Are we less earthly than the chosen race?
Are we more neighbours of the living God
Than they who gathered manna every morn,
Reaping where none had sown, and heard the voice

Of him who met the Highest in the mount,
And brought them tables, graven with His hand?
Yet these must have their idol, brought their gold,
That star-browed Apis might be god again,
Yea, from their ears the women brake the rings
That lent such splendours to the gypsy brown
Of sunburnt cheeks,—what more could woman do
To show her pious zeal? They went astray,
But nature led them as it leads us all.
We too, who mock at Israel's golden calf
And scoff at Egypt's sacred scarabee,
Would have our amulets to clasp and kiss,
And flood with rapturous tears, and bear with us
To be our dear companions in the dust,
Such magic works an image in our souls!

Man is an embryo; see at twenty years
His bones, the columns that uphold his frame
Not yet cemented, shaft and capital,
Mere fragments of the temple incomplete.
At twoscore, threescore, is he then full grown?
Nay, still a child, and as the little maids
Dress and undress their puppets, so he tries
To dress a lifeless creed, as if it lived,
And change its raiment when the world cries shame!
We smile to see our little ones at play
So grave, so thoughtful, with maternal care
Nursing the wisps of rags they call their babes;—

Does He not smile who sees us with the toys
We call by sacred names, and idly feign
To be what we have called them? He is still
The Father of this helpless nursery-brood,
Whose second childhood joins so close its first,
That in the crowding, hurrying years between
We scarce have trained our senses to their task
Before the gathering mist has dimmed our eyes,
And with our hollowed palm we help our ear,
And trace with trembling hand our wrinkled names,
And then begin to tell our stories o'er,
And see—not hear—the whispering lips that say,
"You know——? Your father knew him.—This is he,
Tottering and leaning on the hireling's arm,"—
And so, at length, disrobed of all that clad
The simple life we share with weed and worm,
Go to our cradles, naked as we came.

XI.

I SUPPOSE there would have been even more remarks upon the growing intimacy of the young Astronomer and his pupil, if the curiosity of the boarders had not in the meantime been so much excited at the apparently close relation which had sprung up between the Register of Deeds and the Lady. It was really hard to tell what to make of it. The Register appeared at the table in a new coat. Suspicious. The Lady was evidently deeply interested in him, if we could judge by the frequency and the length of their interviews. On at least one occasion he has brought a lawyer with him, which naturally suggested the idea that there were some property arrangements to be attended to, in case, as seems probable against all reasons to the contrary, these two estimable persons, so utterly unfitted, as one would say, to each other, contemplated an alliance. It is no pleasure to me to record an arrangement of this kind. I frankly confess I do not know what to make of it. With her

tastes and breeding, it is the last thing that I should have thought of,—her uniting herself with this most commonplace and mechanical person, who cannot even offer her the elegancies and luxuries to which she might seem entitled on changing her condition.

While I was thus interested and puzzled I received an unexpected visit from our Landlady. She was evidently excited, and by some event which was of a happy nature, for her countenance was beaming and she seemed impatient to communicate what she had to tell. Impatient or not, she must wait a moment, while I say a word about her. Our Landlady is as good a creature as ever lived. She is a little negligent of grammar at times, and will get a wrong word now and then ; she is garrulous, circumstantial, associates facts by their accidental cohesion rather than by their vital affinities, is given to choking and tears on slight occasions, but she has a warm heart, and feels to her boarders as if they were her blood-relations.

She began her conversation abruptly.—I expect I'm a going to lose one of my boarders,—she said.

—You don't seem very unhappy about it,

madam,—I answered.—We all took it easily when the person who sat on our side of the table quitted us in such a hurry, but I do not think there is anybody left that either you or the boarders want to get rid of—unless it is myself,—I added modestly.

—You! said the Landlady—you! No indeed. When I have a quiet boarder that 's a small eater, I don't want to lose him. You don't make trouble, you don't find fault with your vit—[Dr. Benjamin had schooled his parent on this point and she altered the word] with your food, and you know when you 've had enough.

—I really felt proud of this eulogy, which embraces the most desirable excellences of a human being in the capacity of boarder.

The Landlady began again.—I 'm going to lose—at least, I suppose I shall—one of the best boarders I ever had,—that Lady that 's been with me so long.

—I thought there was something going on between her and the Register,—I said.

—Something! I should think there was! About three months ago he began making her acquaintance. I thought there was something particular. I didn't quite like to watch 'em very close, but I couldn't help overhearing some of the things he said to

her, for, you see, he used to follow her up into the parlour,—they talked pretty low, but I could catch a word now and then. I heard him say something to her one day about "bettering her condition," and she seemed to be thinking very hard about it, and turning of it over in her mind, and I said to myself, She doesn't want to take up with him, but she feels dreadful poor, and perhaps he has been saving and has got money in the bank, and she doesn't want to throw away a chance of bettering herself without thinking it over. But dear me,—says I to myself,—to think of her walking up the broad aisle into meeting alongside of such a homely, rusty-looking creatur' as that! But there 's no telling what folks will do when poverty has got hold of 'em.

—Well, so I thought she was waiting to make up her mind, and he was hanging on in hopes she 'd come round at last, as women do half the time, for they don't know their own minds, and the wind blows both ways at once with 'em as the smoke blows out of the tall chimlies,—east out of this one and west out of that,—so it 's no use looking at 'em to know what the weather is.

—But yesterday she comes up to me after breakfast, and asks me to go up with her

into her little room. Now, says I to myself, I shall hear all about it. I saw she looked as if she 'd got some of her trouble off her mind, and I guessed that it was settled, and so, says I to myself, I must wish her joy and hope it 's all for the best, whatever I think about i

—Well, she asked me to set down, and then she begun. She said that she was expecting to have a change in her condition of life, and had asked me up so that I might have the first news of it. I am sure—says I —I wish you both joy. Merriage is a blessed thing when folks is well sorted, and it is an honourable thing, and the first meracle was at the merriage in Canaan. It brings a great sight of happiness with it, as I 've had a chance of knowing, for my—hus—

The Landlady showed her usual tendency to "break" from the conversational pace just at this point, but managed to rein in the rebellious diaphragm, and resumed her narrative.

—Merriage !—says she,—pray who has said anything about merriage ?—

—I beg your pardon, ma'am,—says I,— I thought you had spoke of changing your condition, and I— She looked so I stopped right short.

—Don't say another word, says she, but just listen to what I am going to tell you.

—My friend, says she, that you have seen with me so often lately, was hunting among his old Record books, when all at once he come across an old deed that was made by somebody that had my family name. He took it into his head to read it over, and he found there was some kind of a condition that if it wasn't kept, the property would all go back to them that was the heirs of the one that gave the deed, and that he found out was me. Something or other put it into his head, says she, that the company that owned the property—it was ever so rich a company, and owned land all round everywhere—hadn't kept to the conditions. So he went to work, says she, and hunted through his books, and he inquired all round, and he found out pretty much all about it, and at last he come to me—it 's my boarder, you know, that says all this—and says he, Ma'am, says he, if you have any kind of fancy for being a rich woman you 've only got to say so. I didn't know what he meant, and I began to think, says she, he must be crazy. But he explained it all to me, how I 'd nothing to do but go to court and I could get a sight of property back. Well,

so she went on telling me—there was ever so much more that I suppose was all plain enough, but I don't remember it all—only I know my boarder was a good deal worried at first at the thought of taking money that other people thought was theirs, and the Register he had to talk to her, and he brought a lawyer and *he* talked to her, and her friends *they* talked to her, and the upshot of it all was that the company agreed to settle the business by paying her, well, I don't know just how much, but enough to make her one of the rich folks again.

I may as well add here, that, as I have since learned, this is one of the most important cases of releasing right of re-entry for condition broken which has been settled by arbitration for a considerable period. If I am not mistaken the Register of Deeds will get something more than a new coat out of this business, for the Lady very justly attributes her change of fortunes to his sagacity and his activity in following up the hint he had come across by mere accident.

So my supernumerary fellow-boarder, whom I would have dispensed with as a cumberer of the table, has proved a minis-

tering angel to one of the personages whom I most cared for.

One would have thought that the most scrupulous person need not have hesitated in asserting an unquestioned legal and equitable claim simply because it had lain a certain number of years in abeyance. But before the Lady could make up her mind to accept her good fortune she had been kept awake many nights in doubt and inward debate whether she should avail herself of her rights. If it had been private property, so that another person must be made poor that she should become rich, she would have lived and died in want rather than claim her own. I do not think any of us would like to turn out the possessor of a fine estate enjoyed for two or three generations on the faith of unquestioned ownership by making use of some old forgotten instrument, which accident had thrown in our way.

But it was all nonsense to indulge in any sentiment in a case like this, where it was not only a right, but a duty which she owed herself and others in relation with her, to accept what providence, as it appeared, had thrust upon her, and when no suffering would be occasioned to anybody. Common

sense told her not to refuse it. So did several of her rich friends, who remembered about this time that they had not called upon her for a good while, and among them Mrs. Midas Goldenrod.

Never had that lady's carriage stood before the door of our boarding-house so long, never had it stopped so often, as since the revelation which had come from the Registry of Deeds. Mrs. Midas Goldenrod was not a bad woman, but she loved and hated in too exclusive and fastidious a way to allow us to consider her as representing the highest ideal of womanhood. She hated narrow, ill-ventilated courts, where there was nothing to see if one looked out of the window but old men in dressing-gowns and old women in caps; she hated little dark rooms with air-tight stoves in them; she hated rusty bombazine gowns and last year's bonnets; she hated gloves that were not as fresh as new-laid eggs, and shoes that had grown bulgy and wrinkled in service; she hated common crockery-ware and tea-spoons of slight constitution; she hated second appearances on the dinner-table; she hated coarse napkins and table-cloths; she hated to ride in the horse-cars; she hated to walk except for short distances, when she was tired of sitting in

her carriage. She loved with sincere and undisguised affection a spacious city mansion and a charming country villa, with a seaside cottage for a couple of months or so; she loved a perfectly appointed household, a cook who was up to all kinds of *salmis* and *vol-au-vents*, a French maid, and a stylish-looking coachman, and the rest of the people necessary to help one live in a decent manner; she loved pictures that other people said were first-rate, and which had at least cost first-rate prices; she loved books with handsome backs, in showy cases; she loved heavy and richly wrought plate; fine linen and plenty of it; dresses from Paris frequently, and as many as could be got in without troubling the custom-house; Russia sables and Venetian point lace; diamonds, and good big ones; and, speaking generally, she loved dear things in distinction from cheap ones, the real article and not the economical substitute.

For the life of me I cannot see anything Satanic in all this. Tell me, Beloved, only between ourselves, if some of these things are not desirable enough in their way, and if you and I could not make up our minds to put up with some of the least objectionable of them without any great inward struggle?

Even in the matter of ornaments there is something to be said. Why should we be told that the New Jerusalem is paved with gold, and that its twelve gates are each of them a pearl, and that its foundations are garnished with sapphires and emeralds and all manner of precious stones, if these are not among the most desirable of objects? And is there anything very strange in the fact that many a daughter of earth finds it a sweet foretaste of heaven to wear about her frail earthly tabernacle these glittering reminders of the celestial city?

Mrs. Midas Goldenrod was not so entirely peculiar and anomalous in her likes and dislikes; the only trouble was that she mixed up these accidents of life too much with life itself, which is so often serenely or actively noble and happy without reference to them. She valued persons chiefly according to their external conditions, and of course the very moment her relative, the Lady of our breakfast-table, began to find herself in a streak of sunshine she came forward with a lighted candle to show her which way her path lay before her.

The Lady saw all this, how plainly, how painfully! yet she exercised a true charity for the weakness of her relative. Sensible

people have as much consideration for the frailties of the rich as for those of the poor. There is a good deal of excuse for them. Even you and I, philosophers and philanthropists as we may think ourselves, have a dislike for the enforced economies, proper and honourable though they certainly are, of those who are two or three degrees below us in the scale of agreeable living.

—These are very worthy persons you have been living with, my dear,—said Mrs. Midas —[the "My dear" was an expression which had flowered out more luxuriantly than ever before in the new streak of sunshine]—eminently respectable parties, I have no question, but then we shall want you to move as soon as possible to our quarter of the town, where we can see more of you than we have been able to in this queer place.

It was not very pleasant to listen to this kind of talk, but the Lady remembered her annual bouquet, and her occasional visits from the rich lady, and restrained the inclination to remind her of the humble sphere from which she herself, the rich and patronising personage, had worked her way up (if it was up) into that world which she seemed to think was the only one where a human being could find life worth having. Her

cheek flushed a little, however, as she said to Mrs. Midas that she felt attached to the place where she had been living so long. She doubted, she was pleased to say, whether she should find better company in any circle she was like to move in than she left behind her at our boarding-house. I give the old Master the credit of this compliment. If one does not agree with half of what he says, at any rate he always has something to say, and entertains and lets out opinions and whims and notions of one kind and another that one can quarrel with if he is out of humour, or carry away to think about if he happens to be in the receptive mood.

But the Lady expressed still more strongly the regret she should feel at leaving her young friend, our Scheherazade. I cannot wonder at this. The Young Girl has lost what little playfulness she had in the earlier months of my acquaintance with her. I often read her stories partly from my interest in her, and partly because I find merit enough in them to deserve something better than the rough handling they got from her coarse-fibred critic, whoever he was. I see evidence that her thoughts are wandering from her task, that she has fits of melan-

choly, and bursts of tremulous excitement, and that she has as much as she can do to keep herself at all to her stated, inevitable, and sometimes almost despairing literary labour. I have had some acquaintance with vital phenomena of this kind, and know something of the nervous nature of young women and its "magnetic storms," if I may borrow an expression from the physicists, to indicate the perturbations to which they are liable. She is more in need of friendship and counsel now than ever before, it seems to me, and I cannot bear to think that the Lady, who has become like a mother to her, is to leave her to her own guidance.

It is plain enough what is at the bottom of this disturbance. The astronomical lessons she has been taking have become interesting enough to absorb too much of her thoughts, and she finds them wandering to the stars or elsewhere, when they should be working quietly in the editor's harness.

The Landlady has her own views on this matter which she communicated to me something as follows :—

—I don't quite like to tell folks what a lucky place my boarding-house is, for fear I should have all sorts of people crowding in to be my boarders for the sake of their

chances. Folks come here poor and they go away rich. Young women come here without a friend in the world, and the next thing that happens is a gentleman steps up to 'em and says, "If you 'll take me for your pardner for life, I 'll give you a good home and love you ever so much besides;" and off goes my young lady-boarder into a fine three-story house, as grand as the governor's wife, with everything to make her comfortable, and a husband to care for her into the bargain. That 's the way it is with the young ladies that comes to board with me, ever since the gentleman that wrote the first book that advertised my establishment (and never charged me a cent for it neither) merried the schoolma'am. And I think—but that 's between you and me—that it 's going to be the same thing right over again between that young gentleman and this young girl here—if she doosn't kill herself with writing for them newspapers,—it 's too bad they don't pay her more for writing her stories, for I read one of 'em that made me cry so the Doctor — my Doctor Benjamin — said, "Ma, what makes your eyes look so?" and wanted to rig a machine up and look at 'em, but I told him what the matter was, and that he needn't fix up his peeking contriv-

ances on my account,—anyhow she 's a nice young woman as ever lived, and as industrious with that pen of hers as if she was at work with a sewing-machine, — and there ain't much difference, for that matter, between sewing on shirts and writing on stories,—one way you work with your foot, and the other way you work with your fingers, but I rather guess there 's more headache in the stories than there is in the stitches, because you don't have to think quite so hard while your foot 's going as you do when your fingers is at work, scratch, scratch, scratch, scribble, scribble, scribble.

It occurred to me that this last suggestion of the Landlady was worth considering by the soft-handed, broadcloth-clad spouters to the labouring classes,—so called in distinction from the idle people who only contrive the machinery and discover the processes and lay out the work and draw the charts and organise the various movements which keep the world going and make it tolerable. The organ-blower works harder with his muscles, for that matter, than the organ-player, and may perhaps be exasperated into thinking himself a down-trodden martyr because he does not receive the same pay for his services.

I will not pretend that it needed the Landlady's sagacious guess about the young Astronomer and his pupil to open my eyes to certain possibilities, if not probabilities, in that direction. Our Scheherazade kept on writing her stories according to the agreement, so many pages for so many dollars, but some of her readers began to complain that they could not always follow her quite so well as in her earlier efforts. It seemed as if she must have fits of absence. In one instance her heroine began as a blonde and finished as a brunette; not in consequence of the use of any cosmetic, but through simple inadvertence. At last it happened in one of her stories that a prominent character who had been killed in an early page, not equivocally, but mortally, definitively killed, done for, and disposed of, reappeared as if nothing had happened towards the close of her narrative. Her mind was on something else, and she had got two stories mixed up and sent her manuscript without having looked it over. She told this mishap to the Lady, as something she was dreadfully ashamed of, and could not possibly account for. It had cost her a sharp note from the publisher, and would be as good as a dinner to some half-starved Bohemian of the critical press.

The Lady listened to all this very thoughtfully, looking at her with great tenderness, and said, "My poor child!" Not another word then, but her silence meant a good deal.

When a *man* holds his tongue it does not signify much. But when a *woman* dispenses with the office of that mighty member, when she sheathes her natural weapon at a trying moment, it means that she trusts to still more formidable enginery; to tears it may be, a solvent more powerful than that with which Hannibal softened the Alpine rocks, or to the heaving bosom, the sight of which has subdued so many stout natures, or, it may be, to a sympathising, quieting look which says "Peace, be still!" to the winds and waves of the little inland ocean, in a language that means more than speech.

While these matters were going on the Master and I had many talks on many subjects. He had found me a pretty good listener, for I had learned that the best way of getting at what was worth having from him was to wind him up with a question and let him run down all of himself. It is easy to turn a good talker into an insufferable bore by contradicting him, and putting questions for him to stumble over,—that is if he

is not a bore already, as "good talkers" are apt to be, except now and then.

We had been discussing some knotty points one morning when he said all at once—

—Come into my library with me. I want to read you some new passages from an interleaved copy of my book. You haven't read the printed part yet. I gave you a copy of it, but nobody reads a book that is given to him. Of course not. Nobody but a fool expects him to. He reads a little in it here and there, perhaps, and he cuts all the leaves if he cares enough about the writer, who will be sure to call on him some day, and if he is left alone in his library for five minutes will have hunted every corner of it until he has found the book he sent,—if it is to be found at all, which doesn't always happen, if there 's a penal colony anywhere in a garret or closet for typographical offenders and vagrants.

—What do you do when you receive a book you don't want, from the author?—said I.

—Give him a good-natured adjective or two if I can, and thank him, and tell him I am lying under a sense of obligation to him.

—That is as good an excuse for lying as almost any,—I said.

—Yes, but look out for the fellows that send you a copy of their book to trap you into writing a bookseller's advertisement for it. I got caught so once, and never heard the end of it and never shall hear it.—He took down an elegantly bound volume, on opening which appeared a flourishing and eminently flattering dedication to himself. —There,—said he,—what could I do less than acknowledge such a compliment in polite terms, and hope and expect the book would prove successful, and so forth, and so forth? Well, I get a letter every few months from some new locality where the man that made that book is covering the fences with his placards, asking me whether I wrote that letter which he keeps in stereotype and has kept so any time these dozen or fifteen years. *Animus tuus oculus*, as the freshmen used to say. If Her Majesty, the Queen of England, sends you a copy of her *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands*, be sure you mark your letter of thanks for it *Private!*

We had got comfortably seated in his library in the meantime, and the Master had taken up his book. I noticed that every other page was left blank, and that he had written in a good deal of new matter.

—I tell you what,—he said,—there 's so much intelligence about nowadays in books and newspapers and talk that it 's mighty hard to write without getting something or other worth listening to into your essay or your volume. The foolishest book is a kind of leaky boat on a sea of wisdom ; some of the wisdom will get in anyhow. Every now and then I find something in my book that seems so good to me, I can't help thinking it must have leaked in. I suppose other people discover that it came through a leak, full as soon as I do. You must write a book or two to find out how much and how little you know and have to say. Then you must read some notices of it by somebody that loves you and one or two by somebody that hates you. You 'll find yourself a very odd piece of property after you 've been through these experiences. They 're trying to the constitution; I'm always glad to hear that a friend is as well as can be expected after he 's had a book.

You mustn't think there are no better things in these pages of mine than the ones I 'm going to read you, but you may come across something here that I forgot to say when we were talking over these matters.

He began, reading from the manuscript portion of his book—

—We find it hard to get and to keep any private property in thought. Other people are all the time saying the same things we are hoarding to say when we get ready. [He looked up from his book just here and said, "Don't be afraid, I am not going to quote *Pereant.*"] One of our old boarders—the one that called himself "The Professor," I think it was—said some pretty audacious things about what he called "pathological piety," as I remember, in one of his papers. And here comes along Mr. Galton, and shows in detail from religious biographies that there is a frequent correlation between an unusually devout disposition and a weak constitution." Neither of them appeared to know that John Bunyan had got at the same fact long before them. He tells us, "The more healthy the lusty man is, the more prone he is unto evil." If the converse is true, no wonder that good people, according to Bunyan, are always in trouble and terror, for he says —

"A Christian man is never long at ease;
When one fright's gone, another doth him seize."

If invalidism and the nervous timidity

which is apt to go with it are elements of spiritual superiority, it follows that pathology and toxicology should form a most important part of a theological education, so that a divine might know how to keep a parish in a state of chronic bad health in order that it might be virtuous.

It is a great mistake to think that a man's religion is going to rid him of his natural qualities. "Bishop Hall" (as you may remember to have seen quoted elsewhere) "prefers Nature before Grace in the Election of a wife, because, saith he, it will be a hard Task, where the Nature is peevish and froward, for Grace to make an entire conquest while Life lasteth."

"Nature" and "Grace" have been contrasted with each other in a way not very respectful to the Divine omnipotence. Kings and queens reign "by the Grace of God," but a sweet, docile, pious disposition, such as is born in some children and grows up with them,—that congenital gift which good Bishop Hall would look for in a wife,—is attributed to "Nature." In fact "Nature" and "Grace," as handled by the scholastics, are nothing more nor less than two hostile Divinities in the Pantheon of post-classical polytheism.

What is the secret of the profound interest which "Darwinism" has excited in the minds and hearts of more persons than dare to confess their doubts and hopes? It is because it restores "Nature" to its place as a true divine manifestation. It is that it removes the traditional curse from that helpless infant lying in its mother's arms. It is that it lifts from the shoulders of man the responsibility for the fact of death. It is that, if it is true, woman can no longer be taunted with having brought down on herself the pangs which make her sex a martyrdom. If development upward is the general law of the race; if we have grown by natural evolution out of the cave-man, and even less human forms of life, we have everything to hope from the future. That the question can be discussed without offence shows that we are entering on a new era, a Revival greater than that of Letters, the Revival of Humanity.

The prevalent view of "Nature" has been akin to that which long reigned with reference to disease. This used to be considered as a distinct entity apart from the processes of life, of which it is one of the manifestations. It was a kind of demon to be attacked with things of odious taste and

smell: to be fumigated out of the system as the evil spirit was driven from the bridal-chamber in the story of Tobit. The Doctor of earlier days, even as I can remember him, used to exorcise the demon of disease with recipes of odour as potent as that of the angel's diabolifuge,—the smoke from a fish's heart and liver, duly burned,—"the which smell when the evil spirit had smelled he fled into the uttermost parts of Egypt." The very moment that disease passes into the category of vital processes, and is recognised as an occurrence absolutely necessary, inevitable, and as one may say, normal under certain given conditions of constitution and circumstance, the medicine-man loses his half-miraculous endowments. The mythical serpent is untwined from the staff of Esculapius, which thenceforth becomes a useful walking-stick, and does not pretend to be anything more.

Sin, like disease, is a vital process. It is a function, and not an entity. It must be studied as a section of anthropology. No preconceived idea must be allowed to interfere with our investigation of the deranged spiritual function, any more than the old ideas of demoniacal possession must be allowed to interfere with our study of epilepsy.

Spiritual pathology is a proper subject for direct observation and analysis, like any other subject involving a series of living actions.

In these living actions everything is progressive. There are sudden changes of character in what is called "conversion" which, at first, hardly seem to come into line with the common laws of evolution. But these changes have been long preparing, and it is just as much in the order of nature that certain characters should burst all at once from the rule of evil propensities, as it is that the evening primrose should explode, as it were, into bloom with audible sound, as you may read in Keats's "Endymion," or observe in your own garden.

There is a continual tendency in men to fence in themselves and a few of their neighbours, who agree with them in their ideas, as if they were an exception to their race. We must not allow any creed or religion whatsoever to confiscate to its own private use and benefit the virtues which belong to our common humanity. The Good Samaritan helped his wounded neighbour simply because he was a suffering fellow-creature. Do you think your charitable act is more acceptable than the Good Samaritan's, because

you do it in the name of Him who made the memory of that kind man immortal? Do you mean that you would not give the cup of cold water for the sake simply and solely of the poor, suffering fellow-mortal, as willingly as you now do, professing to give it for the sake of Him who is not thirsty or in need of any help of yours? We must ask questions like this, if we are to claim for our common nature what belongs to it.

The scientific study of man is the most difficult of all branches of knowledge. It requires, in the first place, an entire new terminology to get rid of that enormous load of prejudices with which every term applied to the malformations, the functional disturbances, and the organic diseases of the moral nature is at present burdened. Take that one word *Sin*, for instance: all those who have studied the subject from nature and not from books know perfectly well that a certain fraction of what is so called is nothing more or less than a symptom of hysteria; that another fraction is the index of a limited degree of insanity; that still another is the result of a congenital tendency which removes the act we sit in judgment upon from the sphere of self-determination, if not entirely, at least to such an extent

that the subject of the tendency cannot be judged by any normal standard.

To study nature without fear is possible, but without reproach, impossible. The man who worships in the temple of knowledge must carry his arms with him as our Puritan fathers had to do when they gathered in their first rude meeting-houses. It is a fearful thing to meddle with the ark which holds the mysteries of creation. I remember that when I was a child the tradition was whispered round among us little folks that if we tried to count the stars we should drop down dead. Nevertheless, the stars have been counted and the astronomer has survived. This nursery legend is the child's version of those superstitions which would have strangled in their cradles the young sciences now adolescent and able to take care of themselves, and which, no longer daring to attack these, are watching with hostile aspect the rapid growth of the comparatively new science of man.

The real difficulty of the student of nature at this time is to reconcile absolute freedom and perfect fearlessness with that respect for the past, that reverence for the spirit of reverence wherever we find it, that tenderness for the weakest fibres by which the hearts of our

fellow-creatures hold to their religious convictions, which will make the transition from old belief to a larger light and liberty an interstitial change and not a violent mutilation.

I remember once going into a little church in a small village some miles from a great European capital. The special object of adoration in this humblest of places of worship was a *bambino*, a holy infant, done in wax, and covered with cheap ornaments such as a little girl would like to beautify her doll with. Many a good Protestant of the old Puritan type would have felt a strong impulse to seize this "idolatrous" figure and dash it to pieces on the stone floor of the little church. But one must have lived a while among simple-minded pious Catholics to know what this poor waxen image and the whole baby-house of *bambinos* mean for a humble, unlettered, unimaginative peasantry. He will find that the true office of this *eidolon* is to fix the mind of the worshipper, and that in virtue of the devotional thoughts it has called forth so often for so many years in the mind of that poor old woman who is kneeling before it, it is no longer a wax doll for her, but has undergone a transubstantiation quite as real as that of the Eucharist. The moral is that

we must not roughly smash other people's idols because we know, or think we know, that they are of cheap human manufacture.

—Do you think cheap manufactures encourage idleness?—said I.

The Master stared. Well he might, for I had been getting a little drowsy, and wishing to show that I had been awake and attentive, asked a question suggested by some words I had caught, but which showed that I had not been taking the slightest idea from what he was reading me. He stared, shook his head slowly, smiled good-humouredly, took off his great round spectacles, and shut up his book.

—*Sat prata biberunt*,—he said. A sick man that gets talking about himself, a woman that gets talking about her baby, and an author that begins reading out of his own book, never know when to stop. You 'll think of some of these things you 've been getting half asleep over by-and-by. I don't want you to believe anything I say, I only want you to try to see what makes me believe it.

My young friend, the Astronomer, has, I suspect, been making some addition to his manuscript. At any rate some of the lines he read us in the afternoon of this same day

had never enjoyed the benefit of my revision, and I think they had but just been written. I noticed that his manner was somewhat more excited than usual, and his voice just towards the close a little tremulous. Perhaps I may attribute his improvement to the effect of my criticisms, but whatever the reason, I think these lines are very nearly as correct as they would have been if I had looked them over.

WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

VII.

What if a soul redeemed, a spirit that loved
While yet on earth and was beloved in turn,
And still remembered every look and tone
Of that dear earthly sister who was left
Among the unwise virgins at the gate,—
Itself admitted with the bridegroom's train,—
What if this spirit redeemed, amid the host
Of chanting angels, in some transient lull
Of the eternal anthem, heard the cry
Of its lost darling, whom in evil hour
Some wilder pulse of nature led astray
And left an outcast in a world of fire,
Condemned to be the sport of cruel fiends,
Sleepless, unpitying, masters of the skill

To wring the maddest ecstasies of pain
From worn-out souls that only ask to die,—
Would it not long to leave the bliss of Heaven,—
Bearing a little water in its hand
To moisten those poor lips that plead in vain
With Him we call our Father? Or is all
So changed in such as taste celestial joy
They hear unmoved the endless wail of woe,
The daughter in the same dear tones that hushed
Her cradled slumbers; she who once had held
A babe upon her bosom from its voice
Hoarse with its cry of anguish, yet the same?

No! not in ages when the Dreadful Bird
Stamped his huge footprints, and the Fearful Beast
Strode with the flesh about those fossil bones
We build to mimic life with pygmy hands,—
Not in those earliest days when men ran wild
And gashed each other with their knives of stone,
When their low foreheads bulged in ridgy brows
And their flat hands were callous in the palm
With walking in the fashion of their sires,
Grope as they might to find a cruel god
To work their will on such as human wrath
Had wrought its worst to torture, and had left
With rage unsated, white and stark and cold,
Could hate have shaped a demon more malign
Than him the dead men mummied in their creed
And taught their trembling children to adore!
Made in *his* image! Sweet and gracious souls

Dear to my heart by nature's fondest names,
Is not your memory still the precious mould
That lends its form to Him who hears my prayer?
Thus only I behold him, like to them,
Long-suffering, gentle, ever slow to wrath,
If wrath it be that only wounds to heal,
Ready to meet the wanderer ere he reach
The door he seeks, forgetful of his sin,
Longing to clasp him in a father's arms,
And seal his pardon with a pitying tear!

Four gospels tell their story to mankind,
And none so full of soft, caressing words
That bring the Maid of Bethlehem and her Babe
Before our tear-dimmed eyes, as his who learned
In the meek service of his gracious art
The tones which like the medicinal balms
That calm the sufferer's anguish, soothe our souls.
—O that the loving woman, she who sat
So long a listener at her Master's feet,
Had left us Mary's Gospel,—all she heard
Too sweet, too subtle for the ear of man!
Mark how the tender-hearted mothers read
The messages of love between the lines
Of the same page that loads the bitter tongue
Of him who deals in terror as his trade
With threatening words of wrath that scorch like flame!
They tell of angels whispering round the bed

Of the sweet infant smiling in its dream,
Of lambs enfolded in the Shepherd's arms,
Of Him who blessed the children ; of the land
Where crystal rivers feed unfading flowers,
Of cities golden-paved with streets of pearl,
Of the white robes the winged creatures wear,
The crowns and harps from whose melodious strings
One long, sweet anthem flows for evermore !
—We too had human mothers, even as Thou,
Whom we have learned to worship as remote
From mortal kindred, wast a cradled babe.
The milk of woman filled our branching veins,
She lulled us with her tender nursery-song,
And folded round us her untiring arms,
While the first unremembered twilight year
Shaped us to conscious being ; still we feel
Her pulses in our own,—too faintly feel ;
Would that the heart of woman warmed our creeds !
Not from the sad-eyed hermit's lonely cell,
Not from the conclave where the holy men
Glare on each other, as with angry eyes
They battle for God's glory and their own,
Till, sick of wordy strife, a show of hands
Fixes the faith of ages yet unborn,—
Ah, not from these the listening soul can hear
The Father's voice that speaks itself divine !
Love must be still our Master ; till we learn
What he can teach us of a woman's heart,
We know not His, whose love embraces all.

There are certain nervous conditions peculiar to women in which the common effects of poetry and of music upon their sensibilities are strangely exaggerated. It was not perhaps to be wondered at that Octavia fainted when Virgil in reading from his great poem came to the line beginning *Tu Marcellus eris.* It is not hard to believe the story told of one of the two Davidson sisters, that the singing of some of Moore's plaintive melodies would so impress her as almost to take away the faculties of sense and motion. But there must have been some special cause for the singular nervous state into which this reading threw the Young Girl, our Scheherazade. She was doubtless tired with overwork and troubled with the thought that she was not doing herself justice, and that she was doomed to be the helpless prey of some of those corbies who not only pick out corbies' eyes, but find no other diet so nutritious and agreeable.

Whatever the cause may have been, her heart heaved tumultuously, her colour came and went, and though she managed to avoid a scene by the exercise of all her self-control, I watched her very anxiously, for I was afraid she would have had a hysteric turn, or in one of her pallid moments that she

would have fainted and fallen like one dead before us.

I was very glad, therefore, when evening came, to find that she was going out for a lesson on the stars. I knew the open air was what she needed, and I thought the walk would do her good, whether she made any new astronomical acquisitions or not.

It was now late in the autumn, and the trees were pretty nearly stripped of their leaves. There was no place so favourable as the Common for the study of the heavens. The skies were brilliant with stars, and the air was just keen enough to remind our young friends that the cold season was at hand. They wandered round for a while, and at last found themselves under the Great Elm, drawn thither, no doubt, by the magnetism it is so well known to exert over the natives of its own soil and those who have often been under the shadow of its outstretched arms. The venerable survivor of its contemporaries that flourished in the days when Blackstone rode beneath it on his bull was now a good deal broken by age, yet not without marks of lusty vitality. It had been wrenched and twisted and battered by so many scores of winters that some of its limbs were crippled and many of its joints were

shaky, and but for the support of the iron braces that lent their strong sinews to its more infirm members it would have gone to pieces in the first strenuous north-easter or the first sudden and violent gale from the south-west. But there it stood, and there it stands as yet,—though its obituary was long ago written after one of the terrible storms that tore its branches,—leafing out hopefully in April as if it were trying in its dumb language to lisp "Our Father," and dropping its slender burden of foliage in October as softly as if it were whispering Amen!

Not far from the ancient and monumental tree lay a small sheet of water, once agile with life and vocal with evening melodies, but now stirred only by the swallow as he dips his wing, or by the morning bath of the English sparrows, those high-headed, thick-bodied, full-feeding, hot-tempered little John Bulls that keep up such a swashing and swabbing and spattering round all the water basins, one might think from the fuss they make about it that a bird never took a bath before, and that they were the missionaries of ablution to the unwashed Western world.

There are those who speak lightly of this small aqueous expanse, the eye of the sacred enclosure, which has looked unwinking on

the happy faces of so many natives and the curious features of so many strangers. The music of its twilight minstrels has long ceased, but their memory lingers like an echo in the name it bears. Cherish it, inhabitants of the two-hilled city, once three-hilled; ye who have said to the mountain, "Remove hence," and turned the sea into dry land! May no contractor fill his pockets by undertaking to fill thee, thou granite-girdled lakelet, or drain the civic purse by drawing off thy waters! For art thou not the Palladium of our Troy? Didst thou not, like the Divine image which was the safeguard of Ilium, fall from the skies, and if the Trojan could look with pride upon the heaven-descended form of the Goddess of Wisdom, cannot he who dwells by thy shining oval look in that mirror and contemplate Himself,—the Native of Boston?

There must be some fatality which carries our young men and maidens in the direction of the Common when they have anything very particular to exchange their views about. At any rate I remember two of our young friends brought up here a good many years ago, and I understand that there is one path across the enclosure which a young man

must not ask a young woman to take with him unless he means business, for an action will hold for breach of promise, if she consents to accompany him, and he chooses to forget his obligations.

Our two young people stood at the western edge of the little pool, studying astronomy in the reflected firmament. The Pleiades were trembling in the wave before them, and the three great stars of Orion,—for these constellations were both glittering in the eastern sky.

"There is no place too humble for the glories of heaven to shine in," she said.

"And their splendour makes even this little pool beautiful and noble," he answered. "Where is the light to come from that is to do as much for our poor human lives?"

A simple question enough, but the young girl felt her colour change as she answered, "From friendship, I think."

—Grazing only as yet,—not striking full,—hardly hitting at all,—but there are questions and answers that come so very near, the wind of them alone almost takes the breath away.

There was an interval of silence. Two young persons can stand looking at water for a long time without feeling the necessity

of speaking. Especially when the water is alive with stars and the young persons are thoughtful and impressible. The water seems to do half the thinking while one is looking at it; its movements are felt in the brain very much like thought. When I was in full training as a *flaneur*, I could stand on the Pont Neuf with the other experts in the great science of passive cerebration and look at the river for half an hour with so little mental articulation that when I moved on it seemed as if my thinking-marrow had been asleep and was just waking up refreshed after its nap.

So the reader can easily account for the interval of silence. It is hard to tell how long it would have lasted, but just then a lubberly intrusive boy threw a great stone, which convulsed the firmament,—the one at their feet, I mean. The six Pleiades disappeared as if in search of their lost sister; the belt of Orion was broken asunder, and a hundred worlds dissolved back into chaos. They turned away and strayed off into one of the more open paths, where the view of the sky over them was unobstructed. For some reason or other the astronomical lesson did not get on very fast this evening.

Presently the young man asked his pupil—

—Do you know what the constellation directly over our heads is?

—Is it not Cassiopeia?—she asked a little hesitatingly.

—No, it is Andromeda. You ought not to have forgotten her, for I remember showing you a double star, the one in her right foot, through the equatorial telescope. You have not forgotten the double star,—the two that shone for each other and made a little world by themselves?

—No, indeed,—she answered, and blushed, and felt ashamed because she had said *indeed*, as if it had been an emotional recollection.

The double-star allusion struck another dead silence. She would have given a week's pay to any invisible attendant that would have cut her stay-lace.

At last: Do you know the story of Andromeda?—he said.

—Perhaps I did once, but suppose I don't remember it.

He told her the story of the unfortunate maiden chained to a rock and waiting for a sea-beast that was coming to devour her, and how Perseus came and set her free, and won her love with her life. And then he began something about a young man chained to *his* rock, which was a star-gazer's tower,

a prey by turns to ambition, and lonely self-contempt and unwholesome scorn of the life he looked down upon after the serenity of the firmament, and endless questionings that led him nowhere,—and now he had only one more question to ask. He loved her. Would she break his chain ?—He held both his hands out towards her, the palms together, as if they were fettered at the wrists. She took hold of them very gently ; parted them a little ; then wider—wider—and found herself all at once folded, unresisting, in her lover's arms.

So there was a new double-star in the living firmament. The constellations seemed to kindle with new splendours as the student and the story-teller walked homeward in their light ; Alioth and Algol looked down on them as on the first pair of lovers they shone over, and the autumn air seemed full of harmonies as when the morning stars sang together.

XII.

THE old Master had asked us, the young Astronomer and myself, into his library, to hear him read some passages from his interleaved book. We three had formed a kind of little club without knowing it from the time when the young man began reading those extracts from his poetical reveries which I have reproduced in these pages. Perhaps we agreed in too many things,—I suppose if we could have had a good hard-headed, old-fashioned New England divine to meet with us it might have acted as a wholesome corrective. For we had it all our own way; the Lady's kindly remonstrance was taken in good part, but did not keep us from talking pretty freely, and as for the Young Girl, she listened with the tranquillity and fearlessness which a very simple trusting creed naturally gives those who hold it. The fewer outworks to the citadel of belief, the fewer points there are to be threatened and endangered.

The reader must not suppose that I even attempt to reproduce everything exactly as it took place in our conversations, or when we met to listen to the Master's prose or to the young Astronomer's verse. I do not pretend to give all the pauses and interruptions by question or otherwise. I could not always do it if I tried, but I do not want to, for oftentimes it is better to let the speaker or reader go on continuously, although there may have been many breaks in the course of the conversation or reading. When, for instance, I by-and-by reproduce what the Landlady said to us, I shall give it almost without any hint that it was arrested in its flow from time to time by various expressions on the part of the hearers.

I can hardly say what the reason of it was, but it is very certain that I had a vague sense of some impending event as we took our seats in the Master's library. He seemed particularly anxious that we should be comfortably seated, and shook up the cushions of the arm-chairs himself, and got them into the right places.

Now go to sleep—he said—or listen,—just which you like best. But I am going to begin by telling you both a secret.

Liberavi animam meam. That is the

meaning of my book and of my literary life, if I may give such a name to that party-coloured shred of human existence. I have unburdened myself in this book, and in some other pages, of what I was born to say. Many things that I have said in my ripe days have been aching in my soul since I was a mere child. I say aching, because they conflicted with many of my inherited beliefs, or rather traditions. I did not know then that two strains of blood were striving in me for the mastery,—two! twenty, perhaps,—twenty thousand, for aught I know,—but represented to me by two,—paternal and maternal. Blind forces in themselves; shaping thoughts as they shaped features and battled for the moulding of constitution and the mingling of temperament.

Philosophy and poetry came to me before I knew their names.

Je fis mes premiers vers, sans savoir les écrire.

Not verses so much as the stuff that verses are made of. I don't suppose that the thoughts which came up of themselves in my mind were so mighty different from what come up in the minds of other young folks. And that's the best reason I could

give for telling 'em. I don't believe anything I 've written is as good as it seemed to me when I wrote it,—he stopped, for he was afraid he was lying,—not *much* that I 've written, at any rate,—he said—with a smile at the honesty which made him qualify his statement. But I do know this: I have struck a good many chords, first and last, in the consciousness of other people. I confess to a tender feeling for my little brood of thoughts. When they have been welcomed and praised it has pleased me, and if at any time they have been rudely handled and spitefully entreated it has cost me a little worry. I don't despise reputation, and I should like to be remembered as having said something worth lasting well enough to last.

But all that is nothing to the main comfort I feel as a writer. I have got rid of something my mind could not keep to itself and rise as it was meant to into higher regions. I saw the aeronauts the other day emptying from the bags some of the sand that served as ballast. It glistened a moment in the sunlight as a slender shower, and then was lost and seen no more as it scattered itself unnoticed. But the air-ship rose higher as the sand was poured out, and

so it seems to me I have felt myself getting above the mists and clouds whenever I have lightened myself of some portion of the mental ballast I have carried with me. Why should I hope or fear when I send out my book? I have had my reward, for I have wrought out my thought, I have said my say, I have freed my soul. I can afford to be forgotten.

Look here!—he said. I keep oblivion always before me.—He pointed to a singularly perfect and beautiful trilobite which was lying on a pile of manuscripts.—Each time I fill a sheet of paper with what I am writing, I lay it beneath this relic of a dead world, and project my thought forward into eternity as far as this extinct crustacean carries it backward. When my heart beats too lustily with vain hopes of being remembered, I press the cold fossil against it and it grows calm. I touch my forehead with it, and its anxious furrows grow smooth. Our world, too, with all its breathing life, is but a leaf to be folded with the other strata, and if I am only patient, by-and-by I shall be just as famous as imperious Cæsar himself, embedded with me in a conglomerate.

He began reading:—"There is no new

thing under the sun," said the Preacher. He would not say so now, if he should come to life for a little while, and have his photograph taken, and go up in a balloon, and take a trip by railroad, and a voyage by steamship, and get a message from General Grant by the cable, and see a man's leg cut off without its hurting him. If it did not take his breath away and lay him out as flat as the Queen of Sheba was knocked over by the splendours of his court, he must have rivalled our Indians in the *nil admirari* line.

For all that, it is a strange thing to see what numbers of new things are really old. There are many modern contrivances that are of as early date as the first man, if not thousands of centuries older. Everybody knows how all the arrangements of our telescopes and microscopes are anticipated in the eye, and how our best musical instruments are surpassed by the larynx. But there are some very odd things any anatomist can tell, showing how our recent contrivances are anticipated in the human body. In the alimentary canal are certain pointed eminences called *villi*, and certain ridges called *valvulæ conniventes*. The makers of heating apparatus have exactly reproduced the first in the "pot" of their furnaces, and the second in

many of the radiators to be seen in our public buildings. The object in the body and the heating apparatus is the same; to increase the extent of surface.—We mix hair with plaster (as the Egyptians mixed straw with clay to make bricks) so that it shall hold more firmly. But before man had any artificial dwelling the same contrivance of mixing fibrous threads with a cohesive substance had been employed in the jointed fabric of his own spinal column. India-rubber is modern, but the yellow animal substance which is elastic like that, and serves the same purpose in the animal economy which that serves in our mechanical contrivances, is as old as the mammalia. The dome, the round and the Gothic arch, the groined roof, the flying buttress, are all familiar to those who have studied the bony frame of man. All forms of the lever and all the principal kinds of hinges are to be met with in our own frames. The valvular arrangements of the blood-vessels are unapproached by any artificial apparatus, and the arrangements for preventing friction are so perfect that two surfaces will play on each other for fourscore years or more and never once trouble their owner by catching or rubbing so as to be felt or heard.

But stranger than these repetitions are the coincidences one finds in the manners and speech of antiquity and our own time. In the days when Flood Ireson was drawn in the cart by the Mænads of Marblehead, that fishing town had the name of nurturing a young population not over fond of strangers. It used to be said that if an unknown landsman showed himself in the streets the boys would follow after him, crying, "Rock him! Rock him! He 's got a long-tailed coat on!"

Now if one opens the *Odyssey*, he will find that the Phæacians, three thousand years ago, were wonderfully like these youthful Marbleheaders. The blue-eyed Goddess who convoys Ulysses, under the disguise of a young maiden of the place, gives him some excellent advice. "Hold your tongue," she says, "and don't look at anybody or ask any questions, for these are seafaring people, and don't like to have strangers round or anybody that does not belong here.

Who would have thought that the saucy question, "Does your mother know you 're out?" was the very same that Horace addressed to the bore who attacked him in the *Via Sacra?*

Interpellandi locus hic erat; Est tibi mater?
Cognati, queis te salvo est opus?

And think of the London Cockney's prefix of the letter *h* to innocent words beginning with a vowel having its prototype in the speech of the vulgar Roman, as may be seen in the verses of Catullus—

C*h*ommoda dicebat, siquando commoda vellet
Dicere, et *h*insidias Arrius insidias.
Et tum mirifice sperabat se esse locutum,
Cum quantum poterat, dixerat *h*insidias . . .
Hoc misso in Syriam, requierant omnibus aures . . .
Cum subito affertur nuncius horribilis;
Ionios fluctus, postquam illuc Arrius isset,
Jam non Ionios esse, sed *H*ionios.

—Our neighbours of Manhattan have an excellent jest about our crooked streets which, if they were a little more familiar with a native author of unquestionable veracity, they would strike out from the letter of "Our Boston Correspondent" where it is a source of perennial hilarity. It is worth while to reprint, for the benefit of whom it may concern, a paragraph from the authentic history of the venerable Diedrich Knickerbocker—

"The sage council, as has been mentioned in a preceding chapter, not being able to determine upon any plan for the building of

their city,—the cows, in a laudable fit of patriotism, took it under their peculiar charge, and as they went to and from pasture, established paths through the bushes, on each side of which the good folks built their houses; which is one cause of the rambling and picturesque turns and labyrinths which distinguish certain streets of New York at this very day."

—When I was a little boy there came to stay with us for a while a young lady with a singularly white complexion. Now I had often seen the masons slacking lime, and I thought it was the whitest thing I had ever looked upon. So I always called this fair visitor of ours *Slacked Lime*. I think she is still living in a neighbouring State, and I am sure she has never forgotten the fanciful name I gave her. But within ten or a dozen years I have seen this very same comparison going the round of the papers, and credited to a Welsh poet, David Ap Gwyllym, or something like that, by name.

—I turned a pretty sentence enough in one of my lectures about finding poppies springing up amidst the corn; as if it had been foreseen by nature that wherever there should be hunger that asked for food, there would be pain that needed relief,—and many years

afterwards I had the pleasure of finding that Mistress Piozzi had been beforehand with me in suggesting the same moral reflection.

—I should like to carry some of my friends to see a giant bee-hive I have discovered. Its hum can be heard half a mile, and the great white swarm counts its tens of thousands. They pretend to call it a planing-mill, but if it is not a bee-hive it is so like one that if a hundred people have not said so before me, it is very singular that they have not. If I wrote verses I would try to bring it in, and I suppose people would start up in a dozen places, and say, "Oh, that bee-hive simile is mine,—and besides, did not Mr. Bayard Taylor call the snowflakes 'white bees'?"

I think the old Master had chosen these trivialities on purpose to amuse the young Astronomer and myself, if possible, and so make sure of our keeping awake while he went on reading, as follows:—

—How the sweet souls of all time strike the same note, the same because it is in unison with the divine voice that sings to them! I read in the *Zend Avesta*, "No earthly man with a hundred-fold strength speaks so much evil as Mithra with heavenly

strength speaks good. No earthly man with a hundred-fold strength does so much evil as Mithra with heavenly strength does good."

And now leave Persia and Zoroaster, and come down with me to our own New England and one of our old Puritan preachers. It was in the dreadful days of the Salem Witchcraft delusion that one Jonathan Singletary, being then in the prison at Ipswich, gave his testimony as to certain fearful occurrences, —a great noise, as of many cats climbing, skipping, and jumping, of throwing about of furniture, and of men walking in the chambers, with crackling and shaking as if the house would fall upon him.

"I was at present," he says, "something affrighted; yet considering what I had lately heard made out by Mr. Mitchel at Cambridge, that there is more good in God than there is evil in sin, and that although God is the greatest good and sin the greatest evil, yet the first Being of evil cannot weane the scales or overpower the first Being of good: so considering that the authour of good was of greater power than the authour of evil, God was pleased of his goodness to keep me from being out of measure frighted."

I shall always bless the memory of this poor, timid creature for saving that dear re-

membrance of "Matchless Mitchel." How many, like him, have thought they were preaching a new gospel, when they were only reaffirming the principles which underlie the Magna Charta of humanity, and are common to the noblest utterances of all the nobler creeds! But spoken by those solemn lips to those stern, simple-minded hearers, the words I have cited seem to me to have a fragrance like the precious ointment of spikenard with which Mary anointed her Master's feet. I can see the little bare meeting-house, with the godly deacons, and the grave matrons, and the comely maidens, and the sober manhood of the village, with the small group of college students sitting by themselves under the shadow of the awful Presidential Presence, all listening to that preaching, which was, as Cotton Mather says, "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice;" and as the holy pastor utters those blessed words, which are not of any one church or age, but of all time, the humble place of worship is filled with their perfume, as the house where Mary knelt was filled with the odour of the precious ointment.

—The Master rose, as he finished reading

this sentence, and, walking to the window, adjusted a curtain which he seemed to find a good deal of trouble in getting to hang just as he wanted it.

He came back to his arm-chair, and began reading again—

—If men would only open their eyes to the fact which stares them in the face from history, and is made clear enough by the slightest glance at the condition of mankind, that humanity is of immeasurably greater importance than their own or any other particular belief, they would no more attempt to make private property of the grace of God than to fence in the sunshine for their own special use and enjoyment.

We are all tattooed in our cradles with the beliefs of our tribe; the record may seem superficial, but it is indelible. You cannot educate a man wholly out of the superstitious fears which were early implanted in his imagination; no matter how utterly his reason may reject them, he will still feel as the famous woman did about ghosts, *Je n'y crois pas, mais je les crains*,—"I don't believe in them, but I am afraid of them, nevertheless."

—As people grow older they come at

length to live so much in memory that they often think with a kind of pleasure of losing their dearest blessings. Nothing can be so perfect while we possess it as it will seem when remembered. The friend we love best may sometimes weary us by his presence or vex us by his infirmities. How sweet to think of him as he will be to us after we have outlived him ten or a dozen years! *Then* we can recall him in his best moments, bid him stay with us as long as we want his company, and send him away when we wish to be alone again. One might alter Shenstone's well-known epitaph to suit such a case :—

Heu ! quanto minus est cum te vivo versari
Quam erit (vel *esset*) tui mortui reminisse !

"Alas ! how much less the delight of thy living presence
Than will (or would) be that of remembering thee when thou hast left us !"

I want to stop here—I the Poet—and put in a few reflections of my own, suggested by what I have been giving the reader from the Master's book, and in a similar vein.

—How few things there are that do not change their whole aspect in the course of a single generation ! The landscape around

us is wholly different. Even the outlines of the hills that surround us are changed by the creeping of the villages with their spires and school-houses up their sides. The sky remains the same, and the ocean. A few old churchyards look very much as they used to, except, of course, in Boston, where the gravestones have been rooted up and planted in rows with walks between them, to the utter disgrace and ruin of our most venerated cemeteries. The Registry of Deeds and the Probate Office show us the same old folios, where we can read our grandfather's title to his estate (if we had a grandfather and he happened to own anything), and see how many pots and kettles there were in his kitchen by the inventory of his personal property.

Among living people none remain so long unchanged as the actors. I can see the same Othello to-day, if I choose, that I saw when I was a boy smothering Mrs. Duff-Desdemona with the pillow, under the instigations of Mr. Cooper-Iago. A few stone heavier than he was then, no doubt, but the same truculent blackamoor that took by the thr-r-r-oat the circumcised dog in Aleppo, and told us about it in the old Boston Theatre. In the course of a fortnight, if I care to cross the

water, I can see Mademoiselle Dejazet in the same parts I saw her in under Louis Philippe, and be charmed by the same grace and vivacity which delighted my grandmother (if she was in Paris, and went to see her in the part of *Fanchon toute seule* at the *Théâtre des Capucines*) in the days when the great Napoleon was still only First Consul.

The graveyard and the stage are pretty much the only places where you can expect to find your friends as you left them, five-and-twenty or fifty years ago.—I have noticed, I may add, that old theatre-goers bring back the past with their stories more vividly than men with any other experiences. There were two old New-Yorkers that I used to love to sit talking with about the stage. One was a scholar and a writer of note; a pleasant old gentleman, with the fresh cheek of an octogenarian Cupid. The other not less noted in his way, deep in local lore, large-brained, full-blooded, of somewhat perturbing and tumultuous presence. It was good to hear them talk of George Frederic Cooke, of Kean, and the lesser stars of those earlier constellations. Better still to breakfast with old Samuel Rogers, as some of my readers have done more than once, and hear him answer to the question

who was the best actor he remembered, "I think, on the whole, Garrick."

If we did but know how to question these charming old people before it is too late! About ten years, more or less, after the generation in advance of our own has all died off, it occurs to us all at once, "There! I can ask my old friend what he knows of that picture which must be a Copley; of that house and its legends about which there is such a mystery. He (or she) must know all about that." Too late! Too late!

Still, now and then one saves a reminiscence that means a good deal by means of a casual question. I asked the first of those old New-Yorkers the following question: "Who, on the whole, seemed to you the most considerable person you ever met?"

Now it must be remembered that this was a man who had lived in a city that calls itself the metropolis, one who had been a member of the State and the National Legislature, who had come in contact with men of letters and men of business, with politicians and members of all the professions, during a long and distinguished public career. I paused for his answer with no little curiosity. Would it be one of the great ex-Presidents whose names were known to all

the world? Would it be the silver-tongued orator of Kentucky or the "Godlike" champion of the Constitution, our New England Jupiter Capitolinus? Who would it be?

"Take it altogether," he answered very deliberately, "I should say Colonel Elisha Williams was the most notable personage that I have met with."

—Colonel Elisha Williams! And who might he be, forsooth? A gentleman of singular distinction, you may be well assured, even though you are not familiar with his name; but as I am not writing a biographical dictionary, I shall leave it to my reader to find out who and what he was.

—One would like to live long enough to witness certain things which will no doubt come to pass by-and-by. I remember that when one of our good kind-hearted old millionaires was growing very infirm, his limbs failing him, and his trunk getting packed with the infirmities which mean that one is bound on a long journey, he said very simply and sweetly, "I don't care about living a great deal longer, but I *should* like to live long enough to find out how much old —— —— (a many-millioned fellow-citizen) is worth." And without committing myself on the longevity question, I confess I

should like to live long enough to see a few things happen that are like to come, sooner or later.

I want to hold the skull of Abraham in my hand. They will go through the Cave of Macpelah at Hebron, I feel sure, in the course of a few generations at the furthest, and as Dr. Robinson knows of nothing which should lead us to question the correctness of the tradition which regards this as the place of sepulture of Abraham and the other patriarchs, there is no reason why we may not find his mummied body in perfect preservation, if he was embalmed after the Egyptian fashion. I suppose the tomb of David will be explored by a commission in due time, and I should like to see the phrenological developments of that great king and divine singer and warm-blooded man. If, as seems probable, the anthropological section of society manages to get round the curse that protects the bones of Shakespeare, I should like to see the dome which rounded itself over his imperial brain.—Not that I am what is called a phrenologist, but I am curious as to the physical developments of these fellow-mortals of mine, and a little in want of a sensation.

I should like to live long enough to see the

course of the Tiber turned, and the bottom of the river thoroughly dredged. I wonder if they would find the seven-branched golden candlestick brought from Jerusalem by Titus, and said to have been dropped from the Milvian bridge. I have often thought of going fishing for it some year when I wanted a vacation, as some of my friends used to go to Ireland to fish for salmon. There was an attempt of that kind, I think, a few years ago. We all know how it looks well enough, from the figure of it on the Arch of Titus, but I should like to "heft" it in my own hand, and carry it home and shine it up (excuse my colloquialisms), and sit down and look at it, and think and think and think until the Temple of Solomon built up its walls of hewn stone and its roofs of cedar around me as noiselessly as when it rose, and "there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building."

All this, you will remember, Beloved, is a digression on my own account, and I return to the old Master, whom I left smiling at his own alteration of Shenstone's celebrated inscription. He now begins reading again—

—I want it to be understood that I consider that a certain number of persons are at

liberty to dislike me peremptorily, without showing cause, and that they give no offence whatever in so doing.

If I did not cheerfully acquiesce in this sentiment towards myself on the part of others, I should not feel at liberty to indulge my own aversions. I try to cultivate a Christian feeling to all my fellow-creatures, but inasmuch as I must also respect truth and honesty, I confess to myself a certain number of inalienable dislikes and prejudices, some of which may possibly be shared by others. Some of these are purely instinctive, for others I can assign a reason. Our likes and dislikes play so important a part in the Order of Things that it is well to see on what they are founded.

There are persons I meet occasionally who are too intelligent by half for my liking. They know my thoughts beforehand, and tell me what I was going to say. Of course, they are masters of all my knowledge, and a good deal besides; have read all the books I have read, and in later editions; have had all the experiences I have been through, and more too. In my private opinion every mother's son of them will lie at any time rather than confess ignorance.

—I have a kind of dread, rather than

hatred, of persons with a large excess of vitality; great feeders, great laughers, great story-tellers, who come sweeping over their company with a huge tidal wave of animal spirits and boisterous merriment. I have pretty good spirits myself, and enjoy a little mild pleasantry, but I am oppressed and extinguished by these great lusty, noisy creatures, and feel as if I were a mute at a funeral when they get into full blast.

—I cannot get along much better with those drooping, languid people, whose vitality falls short as much as that of the others is in excess. I have not life enough for two; I wish I had. It is not very enlivening to meet a fellow-creature whose expression and accents say, "You are the hair that breaks the camel's back of my endurance, you are the last drop that makes my cup of woe run over;" persons whose heads drop on one side like those of toothless infants, whose voices recall the tones in which our old snuffling choir used to wail out the verses of

"Life is the time to serve the Lord."

—There is another style which does not captivate me. I recognise an attempt at the *grand manner* now and then, in persons who are well enough in their way, but of no par-

ticular importance, socially or otherwise. Some family tradition of wealth or distinction is apt to be at the bottom of it, and it survives all the advantages that used to set it off. I like family pride as well as my neighbours, and respect the high-born fellow-citizen whose progenitors have not worked in their shirt-sleeves for the last two generations full as much as I ought to. But *grand-père oblige ;* a person with a known grandfather is too distinguished to find it necessary to put on airs. The few Royal Princes I have happened to know were very easy people to get along with, and had not half the social knee-action I have often seen in the collapsed dowagers who lifted their eyebrows at me in my earlier years.

—My heart does not warm as it should do towards the persons, not intimates, who are always *too* glad to see me when we meet by accident, and discover all at once that they have a vast deal to unbosom themselves of to me.

—There is one blameless person whom I cannot love and have no excuse for hating. It is the innocent fellow-creature, otherwise inoffensive to me, whom I find I have involuntarily joined on turning a corner. I suppose the Mississippi which was flowin

quietly along, minding its own business, hates the Missouri for coming into it all at once with its muddy stream. I suppose the Missouri in like manner hates the Mississippi for diluting with its limpid but insipid current the rich reminiscences of the varied soils through which its own stream has wandered. I will not compare myself to the clear or the turbid current, but I will own that my heart sinks when I find all of a sudden I am in for a corner confluence, and I cease loving my neighbour as myself until I can get away from him.

—These antipathies are at least weaknesses; they may be sins in the eye of the Recording Angel. I often reproach myself with my wrong-doings. I should like sometimes to thank Heaven for saving me from some kinds of transgression, and even for granting me some qualities that if I dared I should be disposed to call virtues. I should do so, I suppose, if I did not remember the story of the Pharisee. That ought not to hinder me. The parable was told to illustrate a single virtue, humility, and the most unwarranted inferences have been drawn from it as to the whole character of the two parties. It seems not at all unlikely, but rather probable, that the Pharisee was a

fairer dealer, a better husband, and a more charitable person than the Publican, whose name has come down to us "linked with one virtue," but who may have been guilty, for aught that appears to the contrary, of "a thousand crimes." Remember how we limit the application of other parables. The Lord, it will be recollected, commended the unjust steward because he had done *wisely*. His shrewdness was held up as an example, but after all he was a miserable swindler, and deserved the state-prison as much as many of our financial operators. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican is a perpetual warning against spiritual pride. But it must not frighten any one of us out of being thankful that he is not, like this or that neighbour, under bondage to strong drink or opium, that he is not an Erie-Railroad Manager, and that his head rests in virtuous calm on his own pillow. If he prays in the morning to be kept out of temptation as well as for his daily bread, shall he not return thanks at night that he has not fallen into sin as well as that his stomach has been filled? I do not think the poor Pharisee has ever had fair play, and I am afraid a good many people sin with the comforting, half-latent intention of smit-

ing their breasts afterwards and repeating the prayer of the Publican.

(*Sensation.*)

This little movement which I have thus indicated seemed to give the Master new confidence in his audience. He turned over several pages until he came to a part of the interleaved volume where we could all see he had written in a passage of new matter *in red ink* as of special interest.

—I told you, he said, in Latin, and I repeat it in English, that I have freed my soul in these pages,—I have spoken my mind. I have read you a few extracts, most of them of rather slight texture, and some of them, you perhaps thought, whimsical. But I meant, if I thought you were in the right mood for listening to it, to read you some paragraphs which give in small compass the pith, the marrow, of all that my experience has taught me. Life is a fatal complaint, and an eminently contagious one. I took it early, as we all do, and have treated it all along with the best palliatives I could get hold of, inasmuch as I could find no radical cure for its evils, and have so far managed to keep pretty comfortable under it.

It is a great thing for a man to put the

whole meaning of his life into a few paragraphs, if he does it so that others can make anything out of it. If he conveys his wisdom after the fashion of the old alchemists, he may as well let it alone. He must talk in very plain words, and that is what I have done. You want to know what a certain number of scores of years have taught me that I think best worth telling. If I had half a dozen square inches of paper, and one penful of ink, and five minutes to use them in for the instruction of those who come after me, what should I put down in writing? That is the question.

Perhaps I should be wiser if I refused to attempt any such brief statement of the most valuable lesson that life has taught me. I am by no means sure that I had not better draw my pen through the page that holds the quintessence of my vital experiences, and leave those who wish to know what it is to distil it themselves from my many printed pages. But I have excited your curiosity, and I see that you are impatient to hear what the wisdom, or the folly, it may be, of a life shows for, when it is crowded into a few lines as the fragrance of a gardenful of roses is concentrated in a few drops of perfume.

—By this time I confess I was myself a little excited. *What was he going to tell us?* The young Astronomer looked upon him with an eye as clear and steady and brilliant as the evening star, but I could see that he too was a little nervous, wondering what would come next.

The old Master adjusted his large round spectacles, and began—

—It has cost me fifty years to find my place in the Order of Things. I had explored all the sciences; I had studied the literature of all ages; I had travelled in many lands; I had learned how to follow the working of thought in men and of sentiment and instinct in women. I had examined for myself all the religions that could make out any claim for themselves. I had fasted and prayed with the monks of a lonely convent; I had mingled with the crowds that shouted glory at camp-meetings; I had listened to the threats of Calvinists and the promises of Universalists; I had been a devout attendant on a Jewish Synagogue; I was in correspondence with an intelligent Buddhist; and I met frequently with the inner circle of Rationalists, who believed in the persistence of Force, and the identity of alimentary substances

with virtue, and were reconstructing the universe on this basis, with absolute exclusion of all Supernumeraries. In these pursuits I had passed the larger part of my half-century of existence, as yet with little satisfaction. It was on the morning of my fiftieth birthday that the solution of the great problem I had sought so long came to me as a simple formula, with a few grand but obvious inferences. I will repeat the substance of this final intuition—

The one central fact in the Order of Things which solves all questions is—

At this moment we were interrupted by a knock at the Master's door. It was most inopportune, for he was on the point of the great disclosure, but common politeness compelled him to answer it, and as the step which we had heard was that of one of the softer-footed sex, he chose to rise from his chair and admit his visitor.

This visitor was our Landlady. She was dressed with more than usual nicety, and her countenance showed clearly that she came charged with an important communication.

—I didn't know there was company with you,—said the Landlady,—but it 's jest as well. I 've got something to tell my

boarders that I don't want to tell them, and if I must do it, I may as well tell you all at once as one to a time. I 'm a going to give up keeping boarders at the end of this year,—I mean come the end of December.

She took out a white handkerchief, at hand in expectation of what was to happen, and pressed it to her eyes. There was an interval of silence. The Master closed his book and laid it on the table. The young Astronomer did not look as much surprised as I should have expected. I was completely taken aback,—I had not thought of such a sudden breaking up of our little circle.

When the Landlady had recovered her composure, she began again—

The Lady that 's been so long with me is going to a house of her own,—one she has bought back again, for it used to belong to her folks. It 's a beautiful house, and the sun shines in at the front windows all day long. She 's going to be wealthy again, but it doosn't make any difference in her ways. I 've had boarders complain when I was doing as well as I knowed how for them, but I never heerd a word from her that wasn't as pleasant as if she 'd been talking to the

Governor's lady. I've knowed what it was to have women-boarders that find fault,—there's some of 'em would quarrel with me and everybody at my table; they would quarrel with the Angel Gabriel if he lived in the house with 'em, and scold at him and tell him he was always dropping his feathers round, if they couldn't find anything else to bring up against him.

Two other boarders of mine has given me notice that they was expecting to leave come the first of January. I could fill up their places easy enough, for ever since that first book was wrote that called people's attention to my boarding-house, I've had more wanting to come than I wanted to keep.

But I'm getting along in life, and I ain't quite so rugged as I used to be. My daughter is well settled and my son is making his own living. I've done a good deal of hard work in my time, and I feel as if I had a right to a little rest. There's nobody knows what a woman that has the charge of a family goes through, but God Almighty that made her. I've done my best for them that I loved, and for them that was under my roof. My husband and my children was well cared for when they lived, and he and them little ones that I buried has white

marble head-stones and foot-stones, and an iron fence round the lot, and a place left for me betwixt him and the . . .

Some has always been good to me,—some has made it a little of a strain to me to get along. When a woman's back aches with overworking herself to keep her house in shape, and a dozen mouths are opening at her three times a day, like them little young birds that split their heads open so you can a'most see into their empty stomachs, and one wants this and another wants that, and provisions is dear and rent is high, and nobody to look to,—then a sharp word cuts, I tell you, and a hard look goes right to your heart. I 've seen a boarder make a face at what I set before him, when I had tried to suit him jest as well as I knew how, and I haven't cared to eat a thing myself all the rest of that day, and I 've laid awake without a wink of sleep all night. And then when you come down the next morning all the boarders stare at you and wonder what makes you so low-spirited, and why you don't look as happy and talk as cheerful as one of them rich ladies that has dinner-parties, where they 've nothing to do but give a few orders, and somebody comes and cooks their dinner, and somebody else comes and puts flowers on the

table, and a lot of men dressed up like ministers come and wait on everybody, as attentive as undertakers at a funeral.

And that reminds me to tell you that I 'm a going to live with my daughter. Her husband 's a very nice man, and when he isn't following a corpse, he 's as good company as if he was a member of the city council. My son, he 's a going into business with the old Doctor he studied with, and he 's a going to board with me at my daughter's for a while, —I suppose *he* 'll be getting a wife before long. [This with a pointed look at our young friend, the Astronomer.]

It isn't but a little while longer that we are going to be together, and I want to say to you gentlemen, as I mean to say to the others and as I have said to our two ladies, that I feel more obligated to you for the way you 've treated me than I know very well how to put into words. Boarders sometimes expect too much of the ladies that provides for them. Some days the meals are better than other days ; it can't help being so. Sometimes the provision-market isn't well supplied, sometimes the fire in the cooking-stove doesn't burn so well as it does other days ; sometimes the cook isn't so lucky as she might be. And there *is*

boarders who is always laying in wait for the days when the meals is not quite so good as they commonly be, to pick a quarrel with the one that is trying to serve them so as that they shall be satisfied. But you 've all been good and kind to me. I suppose I 'm not quite so spry and quick-sighted as I was a dozen years ago, when my boarder wrote that first book so many have asked me about. But now I 'm going to stop taking boarders. I don't believe you 'll think much about what I didn't do,—because I couldn't,—but remember that at any rate I tried honestly to serve you. I hope God will bless all that set at my table, old and young, rich and poor, merried and single, and single that hopes soon to be merried. My husband that 's dead and gone always believed that we all get to heaven sooner or later,—and sence I 've grown older and buried so many that I 've loved I 've come to feel that perhaps I should meet all of them that I 've known here—or at least as many of 'em as I wanted to—in a better world. And though I don't calculate there is any boarding-houses in heaven, I hope I shall some time or other meet them that has set round my table one year after another, all together, where there is no fault-finding with the food and no

occasion for it,—and if I do meet them and you there—or anywhere,—if there is anything I can do for you . . .

. . . Poor dear soul! Her ideas had got a little mixed, and her heart was overflowing, and the white handkerchief closed the scene with its timely and greatly needed service.

—What a pity, I have often thought, that she came in just at that precise moment! For the old Master was on the point of telling us, and through one of us the reading world,—I mean that fraction of it which has reached this point of the record,—at any rate, of telling you, Beloved, through my pen, his solution of a great problem we all have to deal with. We were some weeks longer together, but he never offered to continue his reading. At length I ventured to give him a hint that our young friend and myself would both of us be greatly gratified if he would begin reading from his unpublished page where he had left off.

—No, sir,—he said,—better not, better not. That which means so much to me, the writer, might be a disappointment, or at least a puzzle, to you, the listener. Besides, if you 'll take my printed book and be at the trouble of thinking over what it says, and put that with what you 've heard me say, and

then make those comments and reflections which will be suggested to a mind in so many respects like mine as is your own,—excuse my good opinion of myself,—(It is a high compliment to me, I replied), you will perhaps find you have the elements of the formula and its consequences which I was about to read you. It's quite as well to crack your own filberts as to borrow the use of other people's teeth. I think we will wait a while before we pour out the *Elixir Vitæ*.

—To tell the honest truth, I suspect the Master has found out that his formula does not hold water quite so perfectly as he was thinking, so long as he kept it to himself, and never thought of imparting it to anybody else. The very minute a thought is threatened with publicity it seems to shrink towards mediocrity, as I have noticed that a great pumpkin, the wonder of a village, seemed to lose at least a third of its dimensions between the field where it grew and the cattle-show fair-table, where it took its place with other enormous pumpkins from other wondering villages. But however that may be, I shall always regret that I had not the opportunity of judging for myself how completely the Master's formula, which, for him,

at least, seemed to have solved the great problem, would have accomplished that desirable end for me.

The Landlady's announcement of her intention to give up keeping boarders was heard with regret by all who met around her table. The Member of the Haouse inquired of me whether I could tell him if the Lamb Tahvern was kept well abaout these times. He knew that members from his place used to stop there, but he hadn't heerd much abaout it of late years.—I had to inform him that that fold of rural innocence had long ceased offering its hospitalities to the legislative flock. He found refuge at last, I have learned, in a great public-house in the northern section of the city, where, as he said, the folks all went up stairs in a rat-trap, and the last I heard of him was looking out of his somewhat elevated attic-window in a north-westerly direction in hopes that he might perhaps get a sight of the Grand Monadnock, a mountain in New Hampshire which I have myself seen from the top of Bunker Hill Monument.

The Member of the Haouse seems to have been more in a hurry to find a new resting-place than the other boarders. By the first of January, however, our whole company

was scattered, never to meet again around the board where we had been so long together.

The Lady moved to the house where she had passed many of her prosperous years. It had been occupied by a rich family who had taken it nearly as it stood, and as the pictures had been dusted regularly, and the books had never been handled, she found everything in many respects as she had left it, and in some points improved, for the rich people did not know what else to do, and so they spent money without stint on their house and its adornments, by all of which she could not help profiting. I do not choose to give the street and number of the house where she lives, but a great many poor people know very well where it is, and as a matter of course the rich ones roll up to her door in their carriages by the dozen every fine Monday while anybody is in town.

It is whispered that our two young folks are to be married before another season, and that the Lady has asked them to come and stay with her for a while. Our Scheherazade is to write no more stories. It is astonishing to see what a change for the better in her aspect a few weeks of brain-rest and heart's ease have wrought in her. I doubt very

much whether she ever returns to literary labour. The work itself was almost heart-breaking, but the effect upon her of the sneers and cynical insolences of the literary rough who came at her in mask and brass knuckles was to give her what I fear will be a lifelong disgust against any writing for the public, especially in any of the periodicals. I am not sorry that she should stop writing, but I am sorry that she should have been silenced in such a rude way. I doubt, too, whether the young Astronomer will pass the rest of his life in hunting for comets and planets. I think he has found an attraction that will call him down from the celestial luminaries to a light not less pure and far less remote. And I am inclined to believe that the best answer to many of those questions which have haunted him and found expression in his verse will be reached by a very different channel from that of lonely contemplation,— the duties, the cares, the responsible realities of a life drawn out of itself by the power of newly awakened instincts and affections. The double star was prophetic,—I thought it would be.

The Register of Deeds is understood to have been very handsomely treated by the boarder who owes her good fortune to his

sagacity and activity. He has engaged apartments at a very genteel boarding-house not far from the one where we have all been living. The Salesman found it a simple matter to transfer himself to an establishment over the way; he had very little to move, and required very small accommodations.

The Capitalist, however, seems to have felt it impossible to move without ridding himself of a part at least of his encumbrances. The community was startled by the announcement that a citizen who did not wish his name to be known had made a free gift of a large sum of money—it was in tens of thousands—to an institution of long standing and high character in the city of which he was a quiet resident. The source of such a gift could not long be kept secret. It was our economical, not to say parsimonious, Capitalist who had done this noble act, and the poor man had to skulk through back streets and keep out of sight, as if he were a show character in a travelling caravan, to avoid the acknowledgments of his liberality which met him on every hand and put him fairly out of countenance.

That Boy has gone, in virtue of a special invitation, to make a visit of indefinite

length at the house of the father of the older boy, whom we know by the name of Johnny. Of course he is having a good time, for Johnny's father is full of fun and tells first-rate stories, and if neither of the boys gets his brains kicked out by the pony, or blows himself up with gunpowder, or breaks through the ice and gets drowned, they will have a fine time of it this winter.

The Scarabee could not bear to remove his collections, and the old Master was equally unwilling to disturb his books. It was arranged, therefore, that they should keep their apartments until the new tenant should come into the house, when, if they were satisfied with her management, they would continue as her boarders.

The last time I saw the Scarabee he was still at work on the *meloë* question. He expressed himself very pleasantly towards all of us, his fellow-boarders, and spoke of the kindness and consideration with which the Landlady had treated him when he had been straitened at times for want of means. Especially he seemed to be interested in our young couple who were soon to be united. His tired old eyes glistened as he asked about them,—could it be that their little romance recalled some early vision of his own? How-

ever that may be, he got up presently and went to a little box in which, as he said, he kept some choice specimens. He brought to me in his hand something which glittered. It was an exquisite diamond beetle.

—If you could get that to her,—he said, —they tell me that ladies sometimes wear them in their hair. If they are out of fashion, she can keep it till after they 're married, and then perhaps after a while there may be—you know—you know what I mean—there may be—*larvæ*, that 's what I 'm thinking there may be, and they 'll like to look at it.

—As he got out the word *larvæ*, a faint sense of the ridiculous seemed to take hold of the Scarabee, and for the first and only time during my acquaintance with him a slight attempt at a smile showed itself on his features. It was barely perceptible, and gone almost as soon as seen, yet I am pleased to put it on record that on one occasion at least in his life the Scarabee smiled.

The old Master keeps adding notes and reflections and new suggestions to his interleaved volume, but I doubt if he ever gives them to the public. The study he has proposed to himself does not grow easier the longer it is pursued. The whole Order of

Things can hardly be completely unravelled in any single person's lifetime, and I suspect he will have to adjourn the final stage of his investigations to that more luminous realm where the Landlady hopes to rejoin the company of boarders who are never more to meet around her cheerful and well-ordered table.

The curtain has now fallen, and I show myself a moment before it to thank my audience and say farewell. The second comer is commonly less welcome than the first, and the third makes but a rash venture. I hope I have not wholly disappointed those who have been so kind to my predecessors.

To you, Beloved, who have never failed to cut the leaves which hold my record, who have never nodded over its pages, who have never hesitated in your allegiance, who have greeted me with unfailing smiles and part from me with unfeigned regrets, to you I look my last adieu as I bow myself out of sight, trusting my poor efforts to your always kind remembrance.

EPILOGUE TO THE BREAKFAST-TABLE SERIES:

AUTOCRAT—PROFESSOR—POET.

AT A BOOKSTORE.

Anno Domini 1972.

A CRAZY bookcase, placed before
A low-price dealer's open door;
Therein arrayed in broken rows
A ragged crew of rhyme and prose,
The homeless vagrants, waifs and strays
Whose low estate this line betrays
(Set forth the lesser birds to lime)
YOUR CHOICE AMONG THESE BOOKS, 1 *DIME!*

Ho! dealer; for its motto's sake
This scarecrow from the shelf I take;
Three starveling volumes bound in one,
Its covers warping in the sun.
Methinks it hath a musty smell,
I like its flavour none too well,
But Yorick's brain was far from dull,
Though Hamlet pah!'d, and dropped his skull.

Why, here comes rain! The sky grows dark,—
Was that the roll of thunder? Hark!

The shop affords a safe retreat,
A chair extends its welcome seat,
The tradesman has a civil look
(I 've paid, impromptu, for my book),
The clouds portend a sudden shower,—
I 'll read my purchase for an hour.

. . . . . .

What have I rescued from the shelf?
A Boswell, writing out himself!
For though he changes dress and name,
The man beneath is still the same,
Laughing or sad, by fits and starts,
One actor in a dozen parts,
And whatsoe'er the mask may be,
The voice assures us, *This is he.*

I say not this to cry him down;
I find my Shakespeare in his clown,
His rogues the selfsame parent own;
Nay! Satan talks in Milton's tone!
Where'er the ocean inlet strays,
The salt sea wave its source betrays,
Where'er the queen of summer blows,
She tells the zephyr, "I 'm the rose!"

And his is not the playwright's page;
His table does not ape the stage;
What matter if the figures seen
Are only shadows on a screen,

He finds in them his lurking thought,
And on their lips the words he sought,
Like one who sits before the keys
And plays a tune himself to please.

And was he noted in his day?
Read, flattered, honoured? Who shall say?
Poor wreck of time the wave has cast
To find a peaceful shore at last,
Once glorying in thy gilded name
And freighted deep with hopes of fame,
Thy leaf is moistened with a tear,
The first for many a long, long year!

For be it more or less of art
That veils the lowliest human heart
Where passion throbs, where friendship glows
Where pity's tender tribute flows,
Where love has lit its fragrant fire,
And sorrow quenched its vain desire,
For me the altar is divine,
Its flame, its ashes,—all are mine!

And thou, my brother, as I look
And see thee pictured in thy book,
Thy years on every page confessed
In shadows lengthening from the west,
Thy glance that wanders, as it sought
Some freshly opening flower of thought,

Thy hopeful nature, light and free,
I start to find myself in thee!

. . . . . .

Come, vagrant, outcast, wretch forlorn
In leather jerkin stained and torn,
Whose talk has filled my idle hour
And made me half forget the shower,
I'll do at least as much for you,
Your coat I'll patch, your gilt renew,
Read you—perhaps—some other time.
Not bad, my bargain! Price one dime!

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